

# *The Witches of Eriadne: Interlude Four M - Part 1: Awakening*

by *The Space Witches*



*Sleeping Beauty*

## *Chapter 2*

May 2272

Day 2 : Babylon 5 Medlab - 08:30am EST

*"You're not leaving this office until I get an explanation that I understand, and don't tell me again that it's too dangerous, as I don't accept that!" Dr. Hobbes was ready to explode and Angel was running out of ideas on how to pacify her. She'd explained quietly to the doctor that she had used the regenerator in a way that was known only to her, from her studies of the original instruments on Eriadne. She had also explained that it had not worked in the way she'd expected. Marcus Cole should *not* have nearly died. Angel had been firm in her refusal to disclose her exact technique, based on that unexpected outcome.*

*Hobbes wasn't buying a word of it. Before she could explode again, Luke stepped forward and quietly laid his hand on Hobbes' arm, saying calmly, "Dr. Hobbes. Lillian. I learned quite a lot about the operation of the regenerators during my time on Eriadne. While I don't know the exact technique Angel used, I may be able to provide you with some background information that will help with your investigation. Perhaps we could step into your office and discuss this? I doubt if either of the Captains would be interested in the esoteric medical details." He gave Hobbes his most charming smile, and pulled her gently, but irresistibly, in the direction of her office.*

*Hobbes followed, grumbling to herself, but quieter now that she had been promised some kind of explanation. Angel felt a rush of guilt as she realized Luke would have to lie to cover up for her. Her actions had put him in the difficult position of having to mislead a fellow medical professional. Angel's stomach churned as she wondered how Luke could ever forgive her.*

*As the two doctors left the main area of Medlab, Captain Marriot turned his chair slightly, bringing himself around to face Angel. His expression was not friendly. His brows lowered over his eyes, and his mouth was tight lipped with disapproval. He kept his voice low, but there was no doubting his displeasure as he asked softly, "And perhaps you could explain to me, Ms. Denier, what made you think it was acceptable for you to come onto my station, and carry out a medical procedure on somebody in my custody and safekeeping, without permission or approval from me or my medical staff?"*

*Angel swallowed hard. It was a good question, but she could only answer honestly. "I didn't think anyone would listen to me or believe me, as I couldn't prove that I could bring Marcus back. I thought they'd try to stop me so..." Her voice ran down, as she was unable to finish the sentence. All the time she was aware of Matthew Gideon, standing to one side of the Medlab, leaning against the wall with his arms crossed in front of him, his expression nearly as angry as Marriot's.*

*Marriot's tone was sarcastic as he completed Angel's sentence. "So you just decided to sneak into Medlab and do it illegally? What the hell kind of person are you? Do you get your jollies out of experimenting on innocent people on a whim?" His voice rose as he spoke, and his anger flooded out in his last sentence.*

*Gideon finally stepped forward, and Angel silently heaved a sigh of relief. Finally, her Captain was going to back her up. His words came as a shock. "You'll have to excuse my sister-in-law, Ben. She has a tendency to act impulsively, without regard for the consequences."*

*Angel was devastated. She'd hoped for his support and all she got was criticism. [Damn you, Matt! You're supposed to be trying to help me!] Nevertheless, she bit her tongue and didn't respond, just looking at Gideon, her eyes showing the disappointment she refused to voice.*

*Marriot sighed. "You know, I could have charges brought against Ms. Denier and let the Ombuds decide what to do with her?"*

*Angel started to panic. Memories of the trial on Mars rushed into her mind. Then she had been threatened with having her mind wiped, with losing her identity completely. They said it was more merciful, but how did it differ from death for the person wiped? Surely they wouldn't threaten her with that again? Would they?*

*"Oh no, please! Don't do that, I beg of you. I'm sorry, I didn't intend any harm. I just wanted to help. Surely Marcus being alive should count in my favor? Please, don't make me stand trial. I couldn't bear it, not..." she interrupted herself and looked pleadingly at Gideon. He would understand how the thought of a trial frightened her. He knew about what had happened on Mars. Surely Matt would intercede for her now?*

*Gideon reached out and patted her arm, his voice and expression less angry as he said, "Calm down, Angel. It needn't come to that." For the first time that day, Angel saw some warmth enter his amber eyes as he looked at her. He'd seen how fearful she was and wanted to reassure her. Turning to Marriot, Gideon went on, "I understand how you feel about this and you can believe me when I say that no one wants to see Angel punished for this more than I do."*

*That wasn't the most reassuring thing Angel had ever heard him say. But at least Marriot was listening, and he didn't look quite so angry any more. Gideon continued, "Maybe it would be best if I took Angel back to the Excalibur. I can confine her to quarters, or even put her in the brig, for whatever period we agree is appropriate. I know how busy you are and you have more important issues to deal with. Like letting the Rangers know that Marcus Cole is back in the land of the living. Why don't you concentrate on*

*those issues, and let me deal with Angel?"*

*Angel wasn't sure about that at all. What was that about the brig? And just how long might she be confined there? Even so, it was better than the alternative, and Angel decided that she'd just have to trust Demon to intercede on her behalf if necessary.*

*Marriot looked thoughtful then shook his head slowly, "That sounds like a good idea, Matt, but with all due respect, she's your family. How do I know you won't go easy on her?"*

*The calculating hardness in Gideon's eyes wasn't very reassuring, as he responded, "Trust me, Ben, when it comes to matters of discipline, I'm the Captain and Angel is a member of my crew. She'll be treated in the same way as any other crewmember in this situation. Angel will not get off lightly because she's my sister-in-law. In fact, this may be an opportunity to make an example." His eyes narrowed dangerously again, as he glared at Angel.*

*For a moment, Angel considered telling him to go to hell, that she'd rather face trial, and whatever the Ombuds might do, but somehow she remained silent. Deep down she knew that Gideon was the lesser of two evils. [Demon will never let him punish me too harshly.] Angel thought, as she watched and waited for Marriot's response.*

*There was a long silence as Captain Marriot considered Gideon's proposal, but he eventually nodded slowly, his voice full of reluctance as he finally said, "OK, take her. I'll accept your word that she'll be punished appropriately. And somehow I'll get Dr. Hobbes to agree to drop charges, too. Leave it with me."*

*Angel wanted to throw her arms around the wheelchair bound Captain and hug him. She promised herself that if she ever got the opportunity to repay him for his lenience, she would. She kept her head down and her face full of remorse as Marriot looked up at her saying, "You're to leave this station now, Ms. Denier, and you will not come back until whatever punishment Captain Gideon decides is appropriate is completed. Whenever you return to B5, you are not to come near Medlab. Do you understand? You are persona non grata in Medlab until I say differently."*

*Angel nodded sadly, and turned to watch Gideon as he added his assurances that Angel would leave immediately and not return until her punishment was complete. She tried to tell herself that she'd never wanted to come to B5 anyway, so being expelled from the station wasn't so bad. She just wished she knew what the Captain had in mind for her punishment on her return to the Excalibur. She wished he'd stop using the word with such relish. A fleeting image of paddles and handcuffs flew through Angel's mind, and she had to quickly suppress the naughty smile that nearly surfaced.*

*A voice from the door to Hobbes office interrupted the silence that followed Gideon's promise.*

*"I can't say I'm happy with that outcome, but I guess I can live with it, particularly in the light of the information Dr. Raven has given me."*

*Angel turned to see Hobbes standing in the doorway, glaring at her. Whatever Luke had said to the B5 Chief of Medicine had obviously placated her to some degree, but Angel knew that she had best keep out of Hobbes sight for the foreseeable future. Well, actually, forever might be a good idea.*

*Gideon spoke softly to Luke as the two doctors joined the two Captains, too softly for Angel to hear what was said, but Gideon then raised his voice, saying, "OK, I'll get Angel out of here and off B5. Luke is staying to consult with Dr. Hobbes about Mr. Cole's condition. Ben, I'll catch up with you later, after I've*

*seen Angel off your station."*

*Marriot nodded and the two doctors started to turn away. Angel knew she should keep her mouth shut, but she couldn't help asking softly, "Would it be OK if I saw Mr. Cole for a moment before I go?" The resulting explosion from Gideon, Marriot and Hobbes made it clear that it was very much *not* OK.*

*After all three had stopped yelling at her, and Luke and Hobbes had left, Angel sniffed back a tear, straightened her back, and said softly. "I understand. I'll go now." She turned to leave Medlab, but stopped on hearing a voice behind her.*

*"Mr. Cole, please! You must get back into bed!"*

*At the sound of Dr Hobbes' distressed voice, Angel spun around to see the doctor standing behind Marcus Cole, who wobbled unsteadily in the doorway to his room. Angel's breath caught in her throat at the sight of him slowly making his way toward her. Her eyes, and the eyes of everyone else, were riveted on Marcus as he came to a halt.*

*"Would you be the Angel the good doctor was so rude about, just because you were inconsiderate enough to save my life?" Angel watched in amazement, as the corners of Marcus' mouth quirked up at the sound of Hobbes' soft spluttering of indignation behind him. Awed and a little dumbstruck, all Angel could do was nod mutely.*

*Marcus' lips moved into a warm, genuine smile as he reached for Angel's hand. Raising it, he leaned forward to kiss it in a manner that reminded her of a gallant gentleman from centuries past. She felt butterflies flutter in her stomach, as Marcus' lips touched her skin, his beard and moustache lightly tickling her, before he lifted his head and said, "An Angel more fair I could not have met in heaven."*

*Angel could feel laughter bubbling up inside her at the mischievous twinkle in Marcus' pale green eyes. Before she could respond, she was distracted by Marriot questioning a disgruntled Hobbes on how Marcus had found out about his savior.*

*Hobbes glared at Angel then explained. "While Dr. Raven and I were going over Mr. Cole's charts earlier, we were discussing Ms. Denier and her actions." Hobbes paused to give Angel another scathing look, which the raven haired witch disdained to return. Hobbes continued, "Dr. Raven and I assumed that Mr. Cole was asleep at the time. Clearly he was faking it."*

*This time Marcus received a dark, accusing look. Angel had to smother a laugh as Marcus grinned at her, unrepentant. Hobbes sighed and went on, "Mr. Cole must have heard me mention Ms. Denier, and that she had been the one to save his life, albeit without permission. When we went back in just now, Mr. Cole had struggled out of bed, wanting to meet his savior. I tried to stop him, Captain, but..."*

*Captain Marriot held up a hand, "It's all right, Dr. Hobbes. You didn't do anything wrong."*

*Marcus grunted softly, drawing Angel's attention back to him. "I was under the impression that Dr. Hobbes was trying to keep me from an angel of salvation." Marcus stopped to look pointedly at Hobbes. "I've never met an angel before--well, not a real one, anyway. I did hear about a Vorlon who pretended to be an angel once, but frankly, I think most of the witnesses had been drinking, and rather heavily at that, so I didn't take a lot of notice of that. If Vorlons looked like angels why would they hide in encounter suits all the time? I guess we'll never know now, as they've all gone. Can you remind me what I was talking about? I seem to have lost my thread here. Perhaps I still have icicles in my brain." He looked quizzically at Angel*

*who opened her mouth to reply, then closed it again hurriedly. Marcus wasn't the only one who'd lost the thread.*

*Before she could work out what it was he'd been trying to say, Marcus resumed his monologue. "Got it! The ice must be thawing. I was saying I'd never met an angel. Well, now I have, and all the stories about how beautiful angels are seem to be true. You are truly an angel of beauty and mercy. Thank you." Marcus finished by giving Angel a smile that could have melted ice.*

*Angel felt her cheeks flush and she had to clear a lump from her throat before speaking. "Thank you. And you're welcome," she said, with a shy smile.*

*"I think we have a lot to talk about," said Marcus softly.*

*Angel nodded. She wanted more than anything to spend more time with this man. Although she had only met him a few moments before, she liked him already, and she wanted to get to know him better. Sadness washed over her, as she realized that wouldn't be possible.*

*Marcus turned to talk to Hobbes and Marriot. "I'd like to spend some time alone with my Angel of mercy, and get to know the person who brought me back."*

*Simultaneously, Hobbes and Marriot began to protest. Marcus raised an eyebrow, then smiled, "Oh, I insist. If you try to refuse me, I'll simply stand in the middle of Medlab and throw a temper tantrum. Trust me, Rangers are not a pretty sight when throwing tantrums." Marcus stopped to grin wickedly, then continued, "Now, considering Dr. Hobbes is worried about my frail state, I don't think she would recommend that. Would you, Dr. Hobbes?" Marcus gave Hobbes a smile that dared her to disagree.*

*For a moment, Angel thought the doctor was going to refuse, but Captain Marriot cut in. "All right, Mr. Cole, you can spend some time with Ms. Denier, but only because your reputation precedes you and I firmly believe you *would* throw a tantrum," Marriot smiled good naturedly, making Angel curious about Marcus' reputation.*

*Marcus grinned at Marriot, and ignored the look of disapproval on Hobbes' face, as he offered Angel his arm and said cheerfully, "Perfect! Now, how about you helping me back to my room oh heavenly apparition, so we can get to know each other?"*

*In the face of Marcus' smile, Angel grinned and nodded. She was elated that she would get to spend some time with him before she was forced to return to the Excalibur. As she hooked her arm through his, Angel was aware of Hobbes' scathing look. Marriot didn't look too happy either, and for a moment Angel hesitated. She didn't want to annoy the Captain of B5, just in case he decided to change his mind about the deal he'd done with Gideon. Then Angel's gaze fell on her brother-in-law, who she had almost forgotten was present. Gideon's expression was dark and disapproving. That look, added to Angel's anger with his recent behavior, made her push aside her doubts and turn to Marcus. "Let's go."*

*Smiling, they began to make their way toward his room. Almost immediately, Angel was aware of movement behind her. Dr Hobbes pushed past Luke--whose presence Angel had also forgotten in all the excitement--to follow her and Marcus.*

*Marcus turned to look over his shoulder. "I'm sure you understand. Angel and I want to be alone."*

*It looked as if Hobbes was about to object, but Marriot called her back, "Let them go." Then he turned his*

*gaze on Angel and Marcus. "I'm giving you twenty minutes, then I want Angel out of there." Marriot's tone brooked no argument, and both Angel and Marcus nodded. Without another word, they left the others watching them as they entered Marcus' room and closed the door behind them.*

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*Marriot addressed Hobbes, who was intently eyeing the closed door of Marcus' room. "After twenty minutes, you have my permission to go in and get Ms. Denier out."*

*Hobbes nodded and smiled coldly. "It will be my pleasure. If Ms. Denier won't come willingly, I'll drag her out."*

*"That won't be necessary, Doctor. I'll wait here and get Angel when the time's up," said Luke softly.*

*Hobbes looked at Luke silently for a moment then nodded. "I'll hold you to that, Dr. Raven."*

*"That sounds like a good idea," agreed Marriot before turning to Gideon. "I have another appointment. Will you call me later, to let me know that Ms. Denier is off my Station?"*

*Gideon nodded, then watched as Marriot turned and wheeled himself out of Medlab.*

*"I have other patients to check on, if you'll excuse me." Nodding to both Luke and Gideon, Hobbes turned on her heel and walked away, leaving the men alone.*

*Luke was the first to speak. "How did everything go?"*

*Gideon didn't need Luke to specify. He answered with a heavy sigh, "Better than I expected. I managed to keep Angel out of jail."*

*Luke smiled in relief. "That's good news, Matt!"*

*Gideon frowned, feeling suddenly tired and weary. "Is it Luke? Sometimes I have to wonder if it wouldn't be safer for everyone if Angel was locked up where she can't cause trouble." He was painfully aware of the shocked look Luke gave him.*

*"Matt, you don't mean that!"*

*Gideon sighed again and chewed the inside of his lower lip. A part of him did mean it, and it appalled him. But he couldn't help it. He was tired of dealing with the troubles created by Angel. If he didn't care so damned much for the raven-haired witch, and if Angel wasn't his wife's sister, Gideon might have considered having her locked away somewhere. But he did care about Angel and she was Deborah's sister, so...Gideon gave Luke a weak smile. "No, Luke, maybe I don't, but sometimes, it sounds pretty damn tempting."*

*Gideon looked over at the door to Marcus' room for a moment then turned back to Luke. "I have to arrange for Trace to come and take Angel back to the Excalibur," Gideon noticed Luke's questioning look. "I'll explain everything later. When Angel is finished with Marcus, can you take her back to her room and stay with her until you hear from me?"*

*Luke nodded, "Sure."*

*Gideon smiled at Luke gratefully. "Thanks." Casting one last brief glance at Marcus' door, the Captain turned and left Medlab.*

*Luke moved over to a chair besides Marcus' room, where he sat down and waited.*

### *Day 2 : Marcus' Room in Medlab - 09:17am EST*

*As Angel helped Marcus back into bed, she was aware of the tiredness showing in his face. He must have been aware of her concern, because he smiled at her, his eyes twinkling. "I look worse than I feel, believe me," he said, softly.*

*Angel hid her surprise at him apparently being able to read her mind. "I'm sure you do, but your body has been through a lot, and it does need to recuperate." She didn't want Marcus to have a relapse because of doing too much, too soon.*

*"In other words, 'don't do too much, too soon?'" Marcus half laughed.*

*Again, he surprised Angel. "Are you some kind of mind reader, Mr. Cole?"*

*Marcus grinned, "One of my many talents. That and you have very expressive eyes. It's not hard to read what's going on behind them."*

*"Oh dear! I'm going to have to work on not being so transparent," Angel forced herself to sound amused, when truthfully she was a little perturbed at being so easy to read. She pushed Marcus back against his pillows and changed the subject by saying sternly, "I'm in enough trouble as it is, so be a good boy for now, and just lie back and regain your strength."*

*"Anything my Guardian Angel wants, she shall have," he said with a grin and a mock salute.*

*Angel laughed and shook her head. "I've only known you for a few minutes, Marcus Cole, but already I can tell you're a mischief maker."*

*Marcus laughed. "It wouldn't be the first time someone has said that to me." He paused and indicated the chair besides his bed. "Sit down, pretty Angel. I have quite a lot to say and not much time in which to say it."*

*Angel nodded and pulled the chair closer to Marcus' bed. His expression turned serious as he sat up against the pillows and began to fire questions at her. Eventually, laughing softly, Angel had to hold up a hand to cut him off. "Whoa! I know you have a lot of questions, but let me answer them one at a time."*

*Marcus grinned apologetically. "Sorry, I..."*

*Angel interrupted by placing a hand over his and nodded, "I understand. Now let me see if I can answer your questions in order. First, as to who gave the order to put you in the cryogenic freezer unit. It was Captain Ivanova..."*

*"Susan?" Asked Marcus incredulously, then he cut Angel off before she could reply. "The healing device worked then." It was more a statement than a question, but his eyes shone with emotion at the thought of Ivanova being alive.*

*Angel nodded and smiled gently, "Yes, Marcus, it worked. You saved her life and she went on to become Captain of a Warlock Destroyer..."*

*"Susan's no longer on Babylon 5?" He frowned, seeming disappointed.*

*Angel shook her head. "If you give me a few minutes, I can explain everything," she said, chastising him gently. Marcus gave her another apologetic smile and motioned for her to continue.*

*Angel explained the events after Marcus' death, his being placed into cryogenic suspension and everything that followed. She had to give him a few minutes to adjust to the news that he had been frozen for ten years. Given the time limit Captain Marriot had set for her visit, Angel didn't have time to tell him everything that had occurred in the time he'd been in the cryo-chamber. All she could do was recap the major events that had taken place. The conclusion of the war with President Clark, the founding of the ISA, John Sheridan becoming President, the break away of the Centauri, the Drakh plague infecting Earth, and the Excalibur finding the cure, thanks to the technology found on Eriadne. Angel finally got to the Excalibur's arrival at Babylon 5 for maintenance and R&R for the crew.*

*"That's about it for all the major events of the past ten years, and it also explains what I'm doing here. There's a lot more to tell, but unfortunately I don't have the time right now," finished Angel regretfully, wishing that she had more than twenty minutes with Marcus. It wasn't enough time to tell him everything and get to know him.*

*For a few moments Marcus was silent, and Angel gave him the chance to digest everything she had told him. Eventually, somewhat sadly, Marcus admitted that it was rather daunting to discover he had been frozen for so long, and that he had missed so much. "Lennier? Did you hear what happened to Lennier? He was Deleem's aide when she was ambassador here?"*

*Angel had to admit that she'd never heard of the Minbari, and they continued talking, with Angel trying to encourage Marcus not to be afraid to contact Susan Ivanova about his revival. He was clearly apprehensive about talking with her after all this time, even if to him it seemed like yesterday when he had last seen her. Angel was aware that it would be awkward, but Captain Ivanova had a right to know he was alive and well. Marcus finally agreed that he would contact her, but he insisted that someone else should at least tell her of his revival beforehand. "I think it's only fair that Susan should be forewarned."*

*Angel nodded her agreement. "I'm sure Captain Marriott or Dr. Hobbes will be more than willing to do that for you."*

*"I was hoping that the person who saved my life would be the one to do it for me?" asked Marcus, hopefully.*

*Angel sighed sadly, "I wish I could Marcus, but I don't think I'll be allowed to do that."*

*Marcus asked why, and she told him about the trouble she was in for reviving him, and how after speaking with him, she was going to be escorted back up to the Excalibur, where she was to remain until the R&R was over for the rest of the crew.*

*"I knew the good Dr. Hobbes was angry with you, but I didn't think they would be that up in arms about it. You did save my life, after all," said Marcus, sounding rather annoyed. "Perhaps I should call my old friend John Sheridan, and see if he can talk some sense into them. From what you've said, it seems he's*



*actually gone and made something of himself. Must be Delenn's influence. Did I ever tell you about how I saved her life? Oh never mind, it's just the icicles again..."*

*Angel laughed quietly, "Well, I did it without permission. Something could have gone wrong, and in fact, something *did* go wrong. We nearly lost you. I may not be happy about being shipped off B5, but I can understand Marriott and Hobbes' reaction," she admitted.*

*Marcus made a small sound and folded his arms. Angel wasn't too sure she liked the smile that suddenly curved his lips before he said, "I think I'm going to have to have a word with those two."*

*Angel swallowed and held up her hand. "Marcus, I would love to spend more time with you and get to know you better, but I was nearly thrown into the brig for this..." Before Angel could ask him not to intervene, there was a knock at the door.*

*Angel and Marcus looked up as Luke entered. "I'm sorry, Angel, but we have to leave," said Luke. Angel could hear the regret in his voice.*

*She turned to Marcus, "I'd better go. I know Dr. Hobbes is probably heading this way right now, in the hope that I'll outstay my welcome and she can throw me out."*

*The Ranger nodded and took her hand, "I understand that, but don't look so glum, my dear Angel. We'll get to spend more time with each other. I think you and I will get on famously, given the chance, and I for one want that chance. Besides, I want to learn more about you and find out why you would risk getting yourself into trouble by bringing a sorry old sort like me back from the grave. Or back from a cryo-tube, anyway." Marcus smiled, then raised Angel's hand to his lips and kissed it lightly.*

*Before she could protest him doing anything about her removal from B5, Marcus let her hand go and said cheerfully. "Don't look so worried, Angel. I'll take care of everything. Dr. Hobbes and Captain Marriott will be eating out of my hand before the day is done."*

*Angel was about to protest, but she felt Luke's hand on her upper arm, "Come on, Angel." Gently, Luke started to pull her away. All she could do was let him guide her from the room, as Marcus waved and smiled at her happily, telling her that he'd see her again soon.*

## Day 2 : Demon and Gideon's room - 09:20am EST

*Gideon leaned against the corridor wall with one hand, inserting the key card into the lock, and waiting as the door swung up and to one side. He felt exhausted and the day had barely begun. Why did that always seem to happen when Angel was involved? Pulling himself away from the wall, he trudged through the doorway, mentally running through the list of tasks he needed to complete before he could resume his interrupted vacation. He'd barely got beyond, 'Call Trace and get him over here with a shuttle,' when he became aware that he wasn't alone.*

*The lights were dimmed and hadn't brightened when he'd entered, so it was dark, but a movement from the single arm chair drew his attention. Deborah uncurled herself and stood, moving to join him in front of the Babcom unit.*

*Gideon frowned at his wife. "I thought I asked you to stay with Lily and John. And why are you sitting in the dark?" As Deborah moved closer, in the light of the Babcom unit he could see that her cheeks were wet,*

*and her eyes red. She'd been crying. Lifting his hand to her face, he gently wiped the tears from her cheeks, and looked at her curiously. "Why are you crying? Has something else happened?"*

*Deborah shook her head and stood mutely in front of him. Then he realized what she wanted, and he smiled gently, opening his arms to let her flow against him. She hugged him tightly and laid her head on his shoulder as she whispered, "I hate it when you're mad with me, and I hate it when you and Angel fight. It hurts. I try to block your anger out, but it gets through, and it hurts. I didn't want to stay at Lily and John's. They wanted to talk in private anyway, so I came back here and waited for you. I was scared about what was happening and worried about you and Angel." Deborah sniffed loudly, and Gideon smiled as he stroked her hair with one hand, waiting for her to go on. "Is everything all right? Where's Angel? Captain Marriot didn't put her in the brig, did he?"*

*Gideon could hear the fear in his wife's voice and he rushed to soothe her. "Angel's fine. Ben agreed to release her to my custody, on condition she goes back to the Excalibur. I came back to call the ship and arrange transport." He kissed her forehead gently and hugged her more tightly, as she sighed with relief.*

*"So where's Angel now?" Deborah lifted her head and smiled weakly at Gideon.*

*"Marcus Cole wanted to spend some time with her, so she's with him. Luke will bring her back when their time is up. Now let me go, so I can call for the shuttle to take her back to the ship."*

*Gideon tried to remove Deborah's arms from around his neck, but she held him tightly and shook her head, pleading with him. "Give me a minute? Just hold me for a minute, please."*

*The Captain smiled, holding his wife tightly, stroking her hair and kissing her forehead as she regained her composure. As they stood in silence, he reminded himself that this was why he loved her. No one else ever saw this side of Deborah. The rest of the world saw a strong, competent, controlled woman, loyal to her family and friends, but cool and unemotional. Gideon knew that it was all an act.*

*When they were alone, the real Deborah emerged. She trusted him enough to let him see her vulnerabilities. She was willing to lean on him, to depend on him, as she was with no other person. But it didn't go all one way. When he needed her to be strong, Deborah was a rock for him to lean on, a foundation that remained solid beneath his feet, when everything else was shifting. She was his refuge and shelter when the trials of the world became too much to bear. He trusted his wife as he'd never trusted anyone else in his life. Which made it harder to bear when she didn't trust him in turn. Why hadn't she told him what she and her sisters planned? Why hadn't she allowed him to help? Gideon closed his eyes, and pushed those thoughts from his mind.*

*After a few moments, Deborah lifted her head and smiled gently at him in the dim light. She whispered, "Thank you," then went on, "What do you plan to do with Angel when you get her back to the Excalibur?"*

*Gideon shrugged, "I'm not sure. I ought to throw her in the brig and leave her there for a few weeks."*

*Deborah smiled sadly. "Then you should put Lily and me in there with her. We're all three of us equally guilty, you know."*

*The Captain chuckled and lifted his hand to run his thumb across her cheekbone. "Maybe I should do that, but the thought of what you three could get up to while you were locked up together is truly terrifying. Not to mention that Ilas would probably come screaming half-way across the universe with her family. With her shape-shifting abilities and Dureena's lock picking skills--plus Max's ability to talk*

*anyone to death--you'd be out before they got the door closed. Anyway, I'd never be able to sleep in our bed all by myself. I'd miss you."*

*Deborah's smile widened and became mischievous. "You could always let me have conjugal visits. That might be fun."*

*Gideon laughed. "I can just see myself sneaking down the corridors at night, ready to break into the brig for a night of passion with my wife. That would hardly set a good example for the crew, would it? I'll have to think of something else. Maybe I should give all three of you a damned good spanking."*

*Deborah's eyes sparkled in the dim light. "I'd enjoy it too much, and so would Angel. I'm not sure about Lily though. You'd have to be careful. She bites."*

*Gideon roared with laughter. "It might be worth the risk to see the three most beautiful butts in the galaxy all pink from a paddling." The image that brought to his mind started to arouse him, so the Captain pushed his wife away gently. "I'll think of something. Maybe I'll confine you all to quarters for a week. No socializing, no leaving your rooms except in an emergency, and above all, no linking with your sisters."*

*Deborah nodded seriously. "That would be difficult, but fair. You'd be punishing all three of us equally that way, but you should allow Angel to carry out her duties in Medbay. That would make up for the fact that Lily and I would have some company in the evenings."*

*The Captain kissed his wife quickly, saying, "I'll think about it," then turned to the Babcom unit, ready to make his call to the Excalibur. Before he could do so, the unit lit up with an incoming call. Wondering what trouble was on its way now, Gideon sighed and pressed the control to take the call, the good humor that his wife had restored rapidly dissipating.*

#### Day 2 : Corridor Outside Medlab - 09.45am EST

*Angel walked in silence as she and Luke headed back to her room. In the past hour she hadn't had much chance to think about how she must have hurt Luke by not confiding in him. Now that she was alone with him, it was foremost on her mind. Angel could sense that Luke's silence was born more from hurt than anger, and she had to tell him how sorry she was, before she left the station.*

*Angel reached for Luke's hand, and pulled him to a stop. Luke looked at her questioningly, so Angel explained. "Luke, before I leave the station, there's something I have to say..."*

*Luke shook his head slightly before she could finish. "It's OK, Angel, you don't have to say anything." The gentle smile he gave her tore at Angel's heart, and increased her guilt, especially since the smile didn't erase the sadness she saw in the depths of his eyes.*

*[No wonder Lily calls him Say Eyes,] she thought. She pushed the random thought aside and shook her head. "Yes, Luke, I do," she insisted. Taking a deep breath to calm her emotions, she continued, "I'm so sorry for hurting you!"*

*Luke opened his mouth to interrupt, but she quickly placed a finger over his lips. "Don't deny I hurt you, Luke. I can see it in your eyes, and I'm more sorry than you'll ever know. You're the last person I'd ever want to hurt. Please forgive me. I don't know what I'd do if my best friend didn't..." Angel's voice faltered, as she choked up with emotion, and she was vaguely aware of warm moisture on her cheeks.*

*Before she could go on, Luke placed a finger over her lips, while with the other hand he wiped away her tears. "Of course I forgive you, Angel!" The warmth in his eyes chased some of the sadness away.*

*For a moment, emotional relief robbed Angel of her voice. Going up on tiptoes, she put her arms around Luke and hugged him. She gained instant comfort from the warmth of his arms as he returned her hug. After a moment, she pulled away and smiled tentatively.*

*"Why didn't you come to me, Angel? Didn't you trust me? I may have been able to help you." Luke seemed genuinely puzzled by her lack of trust in him.*

*"I do trust you, Luke! I don't know why I didn't come to you..." Angel faltered, struggling for the words to explain. "Maybe I didn't tell you because I knew it was a crazy idea, and I didn't know if you'd agree to it. You might have tried to talk me out of it. Maybe I didn't think you'd be able to help, because I was so caught up in the idea of what I could do. It came so suddenly that I didn't stop to consider any other options. Perhaps Matt is right, and I just didn't think about my actions or the consequences," she sighed. "All I know is that I regret not having come to you, because I know my secrecy hurt you. And maybe you're right, you could have helped me and prevented me from getting myself into so much trouble." Angel shrugged and fell silent, unable to look Luke in the eye.*

*When she felt him taking her hand, Angel looked up. There was no sadness in his eyes, only warmth, kindness and understanding. "Not everyone is angry with you, Angel, and don't let the anger of others make you regret what you did. It was an exceptional thing to do and it was, in the end, the right thing to do, even if you went about it the wrong way." Luke smiled to soften the sting of his words.*

*"I don't and never will regret my actions, Luke. No matter what trouble I'm in, bringing Marcus Cole back is worth it."*

*They smiled at each other, then Luke became more somber. Angel knew why. They had to get back to her room. "We'd better get going," she said, before he could. He nodded and they walked to the elevator.*

*Once they were inside and on their way, Luke turned to her. "What is Marcus Cole like?"*

*A genuine smile curved Angel's lips, "From our short time together, I can tell he's an incredible individual. I remember stories about him. He's brave, loyal and...well, we know he's a romantic, considering what he did for Ivanova. And I get the distinct impression that Marcus Cole is a bit mischievous. But there's more to him than that, I think," said Angel, recalling something else about Marcus. There had been something about his eyes, a sad almost haunted look. "If I regret anything, it's that I won't get to spend more time getting to know Marcus better," finished Angel.*

*Luke looked down at her sadly. "I'm sorry for that, too. You like him, don't you?"*

*Angel nodded. "Yes, I do. I think we could become friends. There's something about him that you just can't help but like."*

*Luke echoed her smile, "Well, I'm sure you two will get an opportunity to meet up again, soon."*

*"Marcus said something along similar lines," responded Angel, remembering Marcus' last words. She prayed he didn't stir up a hornets nest with Hobbes and Marriott, [and Matt.] Angel couldn't help but hope he did manage something, but she knew it was unlikely. "Sadly, that's not going to happen. I'll be off*

*this Station soon"*

*There was regret in Luke's eyes as he squeezed her hand. "I'm sorry you have to leave, Angel, I..."*

*Before he could say anything further, Angel cut in, saying with forced humor, "Oh well, if you remember, I didn't want to come in the first place." The door of the elevator opened and before Luke could say anything, Angel half led, half dragged him out.*

*She came to a halt in front of the door to her room. She continued to put on a brave face about having to leave as she let go of Luke's hand and opened the door. Then she turned to him. "Well, I don't imagine I have much time to pack. I'm sure Gideon has already contacted Trace, and he's on his way to pick me up, so I better get packing."*

*When she felt Luke's hesitation, Angel looked at him curiously. "Don't worry about me, I'll be all right. I'm sure John and Lily are anxious to see you, and they'll want you to fill them in on what's happened," said Angel encouragingly. The truth was she wanted a moment alone. She wasn't happy about having to leave, and she was angry with Gideon for how he had treated her. Angel needed time to gather herself emotionally before she left.*

*When Luke didn't respond, Angel looked at him closely. This time she noticed how uncomfortable her friend looked. He wasn't quite meeting her eyes. It suddenly dawned on Angel why he was behaving like this. She had to clamp down on the sudden wave of anger she felt, as she didn't want Luke to feel it was directed at him. "So. Matt wants to you to stay with me. To watch me. To make sure I don't wander off, and cause anymore trouble before I'm escorted off the station?" Angel asked, as calmly as the knot in her stomach would allow.*

*The guilty and regretful expression on Luke's face was answer enough. Angel sighed, there was no point in getting upset with Luke; it wasn't his fault and he looked about as unhappy as she felt. [You bastard, Matt!]*

*Angel opened the door and waved Luke inside, "Come on, Doc. Don't look so guilty. None of this is your fault, and if I'm to have a watch-dog, I can't think of anyone better than you. We can get John and Lily to join us, and at least that way I'll get to spend some time with them before I have to leave. Maybe we can get Demon over here, too," said Angel, not quite able to prevent sadness creeping into her tone. Now that she had to go, she wanted to stay.*

*Luke followed her inside and the door closed behind him. Before Angel could walk away, he grabbed her hand, holding it gently in his as he said softly, "Angel, Matt's just concerned and a little upset over all this. Now that the worst is over, I'm sure things will settle down between you two."*

*"Will it, Luke?" asked Angel wearily.*

*"Yes, it will. It always does," said Luke, with a gentle smile.*

*[I'm not so sure this time.] Angel wished she could be as confident as he was.*

*She forced a smile to her face and pulled her hand free. "I'd better get packing," she said, making a move toward her bedroom. She paused in the doorway to say over her shoulder, "While I'm doing that, why don't you get John and Lily over here? If Lily helps me pack, it shouldn't take too long."*

*Luke nodded and moved over to the connecting door. Angel watched him disappear through it, then turned and entered the bedroom to start packing.*

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*Day 2 : Angel's Room - 10:30am EST*

*Lily had arrived and helped Angel pack. Since then Angel, Luke, Lily and John had been sitting having tea and talking. All of them avoided the issue of Angel's impending departure. Angel sat beside Luke, wishing Demon was there. She had considered calling her sister or sending Luke across the hallway to get her, but stopped herself when she realized that her sister and Gideon were probably together, talking about her leaving. Angel didn't want to disturb them, just in case Demon was able to talk her husband into convincing Marriott to allow Angel to stay. Angel shook that thought away. She didn't want to get her hopes up. She knew the chances of Demon being able to change Matt's mind were slim. Sighing mentally, Angel focused her attention back on her three companions.*

*The conversation continued, but it was obvious that everyone wanted to talk about Angel going back to the Excalibur. Lily finally gave up trying to avoid the subject. She sat forward, her green eyes bright as she looked at Angel and said angrily, "It's not fair, Angel! You shouldn't have to leave like this. You saved Marcus and now they're punishing you for it. It's not fair! Anyway, I want to meet this man, he was very good looking and he sounds rather cute." The little red head gave a leering wink.*

*Angel laughed softly, "I don't want to go either, Lily, but I don't have a choice," she said, with resignation.*

*Lily was about to say something when the door chimed. Angel's stomach dropped. She knew who it would be and why he was here. "Open," said Angel barely above a whisper.*

*The door opened and it was indeed who she thought it was. Gideon's face was a tight mask as he came inside, but thankfully Angel was spared having to face it for too long, as Demon appeared directly behind him. The tall blonde rushed past her husband and moved toward Angel, who was now standing. The two sisters hugged. Demon's voice was soft in Angel's ear as she asked if she was all right.*

*"I'm fine," said Angel, as she let go of her sister. She tried to smile to reinforce her words, but her face felt frozen. Her attention was dragged from Demon's concerned face as Gideon came to stand beside his wife. Angel lifted her chin slightly before she said stiffly, "I'm all packed and ready to go."*

*The muscle in Gideon's jaw jumped and Angel was aware of Demon's eyes pleading with her to not be difficult. "There's been a change of plan," responded Gideon, tightly.*

*For a moment, Angel wasn't sure she had heard right, then Gideon explained. "I just received a call from Captain Marriott, and he informed me that he has changed his mind about you leaving B5."*

*"What? How?" asked Angel, in disbelief.*

*"Apparently your Mr. Cole has had a few words with Marriott. In fact, he kicked up quite a fuss about his 'Guardian Angel' being forced to leave the station," explained Gideon.*

*"He did?" Angel was amazed. Marcus had said he would see about getting her to stay, but she had never dared to hope that he would actually succeed.*

*Gideon didn't look happy as he went on, "Yes, he did. It seems Marcus Cole informed Marriott that*

*President Sheridan was a good, personal friend of his. And Delenn. And half of the ISA Council. From Ben's tone of voice, I believe he took that as a threat that Marcus would ensure they all gave Marriott a hard time. Marcus told Ben he didn't consider it fair that he should be prevented from getting to know you, and he wouldn't accept anything less than being able to spend some time with you."*

*Demon interrupted Gideon and explained to Angel, her face beaming. "What Matthew is trying to tell you is that Captain Marriott got Marcus to agree that he would take full responsibility for you, if you stay. If you do anything to cause trouble, Marcus will pay the price. Marriott is letting you stay, Angel!" finished Demon, happily.*

*"Oh Goddess, that is wonderful news," said Lily happily, from where she was now standing with Luke and John. Angel turned to look at her, feeling her own happiness surging to the surface.*

*By the time she turned back to Gideon and Demon, she had a broad smile on her face. "I couldn't agree more!" But her happiness was cut short by the dark, disapproving expression on Gideon's face. Angel bit her lip to prevent herself from commenting on it.*

*"Don't get too excited, Angel. Your freedom on B5 is restricted," said Gideon.*

*[Get over yourself, Mr. Merry Sunshine,] thought Angel, before asking him what he meant.*

*Gideon explained. "You'll be allowed to visit Marcus Cole, but other than that, you'll be confined to your room. If Luke agrees, he'll escort you to Medlab for a few hours every day, until Mr. Cole is declared fit to leave or we leave. Luke will then bring you straight back here." Gideon didn't wait for Angel's response to this news. He turned to Luke. "You won't mind seeing Angel to and from Medlab?"*

*Angel turned to watch Luke's reaction. He looked at her apologetically, then he nodded to Gideon. Angel knew he wasn't happy and didn't want to do this. She smiled at him, telling him with her eyes that she didn't mind, before she turned back to Gideon. "If that's what it takes."*

*Gideon's eyes were cold as he said, "You don't have a choice."*

*Demon's arm moved, and Angel watched as her sister placed her hand on her husband's arm. It was Demon's way of asking Gideon not to be so hard on her sister. From the lack of change in his expression, Angel wasn't sure it had worked. But despite Gideon's foul mood, and the news that she would be restricted to her room, Angel was happy and she couldn't hide it. Ignoring her brother-in-law's sour face, she grinned at the thought of being able to spend time with Marcus.*

*Her joy was short lived as Gideon cut into her thoughts. "Just remember one thing, Angel. Just because Marriott has agreed to this, it doesn't mean that once we leave, and you're back on the Excalibur, you won't be punished," Angel felt her stomach lurch. She had forgotten about that part of Marriott and Gideon's deal.*

*"What do you intend doing, Matthew?" Demon's concerned question spared Angel having to ask.*

*Gideon sighed and locked eyes with Angel, "I haven't decided yet."*

*Not letting Gideon's words, or the idea of impending punishment dampen her recent good fortune, Angel asked him a question, not attempting to prevent a happy smile from spreading across her lips. "When will I get to see Marcus again?"*

*"Tomorrow morning at 10:00am, for two hours," was Gideon's short reply.*

*This time Angel grinned unabashedly. She couldn't wait. Her sisters joined in her excitement and four arms closed around her as they told her through their link how happy they were for her, and that she must promise to tell them everything afterwards. Angel promised. After all, her sisters had helped her bring Marcus back and naturally had an interest in the Ranger.*

*[[I just wish you weren't confined to your room, Angel. You won't be able to go out with us.]] Said Lily, her voice thick with disappointment.*

*Angel hugged her sister a little harder and thought back to her. [[That would be wonderful, but I think I've had as much good luck as I can expect. At least I'm still on the station and you can visit with me whenever you want, here in my room.]]*

*[[And that's exactly what we'll do, starting now,]] sent Demon, as the three sisters finally broke apart. Just at that point Angel yawned, for the first time realizing how exhausted she was. It wasn't surprising, considering she had only had a few hours sleep in the last twenty-four hours.*

*[[Then again...]] began Demon through their link, then as if remembering the men standing watching them, she switched to talking aloud. "You must be exhausted, Angel, Why don't we leave you for a bit and let you catch up on some sleep?"*

*Angel smiled at her sister gratefully. She really was feeling tired now, and she couldn't think of anything she wanted to do more than climbing into bed. "Thank you, I'd appreciate that." Angel paused to consider something. "Why don't you all go off somewhere and have lunch or something. It's still a holiday after all, and I want you out there having fun!" she said, encouragingly. "I'll be asleep for ages, so there's no point in all of you hanging about. If I wake up and need anything, I'll call you."*

*She waited as Demon and Lily considered this then smiled when they both nodded. "OK. We'll let you sleep, but call us when you wake up, and we'll come over," insisted Lily, while Demon nodded in agreement.*

*"I'd like that," said Angel. She could see everyone but Gideon seemed happy. Angel refused to let it upset her, but it did. Again she questioned whether after this, things would ever be the same between her and her sister's husband. Maybe this was the straw that broke the camel's back and the relationship between her and Gideon was damaged beyond repair. [I'm too tired to think about that now.] thought Angel, avoiding the issue. She'd worry about it later.*

*The sisters hugged again, and so did Angel and Luke, while she got a warm smile from John. Then Angel gently shooed all of them towards the door. "I'll see you later."*

*"Count on it," said Luke and Lily in unison just before they and John left through the connecting door to their room.*

*Demon paused in the other doorway and smiled at her sister. "Sleep well, Angel," said Demon then added through their link, [[We'll talk more about everything later]]. Angel nodded then waved to her sister as she left.*

*Gideon paused in the doorway, looking as if he was about to say something.*



*"Yes?" Asked Angel.*

*"Captain Marriott wanted to have a guard posted outside your door at all times. I assured him that wouldn't be necessary. Don't make me regret it, Angel, or I'll make you regret it," Gideon voice carried a clear warning.*

*Angel tensed, and she was sorely tempted to tell him to get out. Instead, she clamped down on her anger and said calmly, "Don't worry. I won't leave until I'm allowed to." [You bastard!] Added Angel, silently.*

*Gideon nodded, apparently satisfied with her response. Angel lowered her eyes so that he couldn't see them flash with anger. When she did lift her head, she could have sworn she saw a flicker of tenderness cross Gideon's face, but it was gone so swiftly that she decided she had imagined it. Wanting him to go, she said more harshly than she intended. "Is there anything else, Captain? Because if there isn't, I'm really tired and would like to get some sleep,"*

*Immediately, Gideon stiffened and left without a word, the door closing behind him. Angel let out a long, tired and weary sigh, then turned and walked into her bedroom. She was too tired to think anymore, not about Gideon and not about Marcus. She was even too tired to undress. Throwing herself down on the bed, Angel snuggled down and was asleep almost instantly.*

### *Day 3 : Angel's Room - 08:21am EST*

*Angel sat on the sofa, drinking a cup of tea, while she waited for Luke to come over and take her to Medlab. She went over the previous day's events in her mind as she sipped. After she had woken up late the previous afternoon she had contacted her sisters. They had come over and the three of them had talked about recent events and Marcus Cole. They had voiced their regret that Angel was the one who had ended up in so much trouble, and received most of Matthew's wrath. But she had hushed them and smiled, telling them it was what she had expected. She had reminded them that even though they had helped her, she had always planned to take sole responsibility. She was just happy that they weren't in as much trouble as she was.*

*They had talked for a few hours. Angel had asked Demon if she knew what her husband's intention was in regards to her punishment. Demon had been unable to confirm anything, but she doubted Matthew would throw Angel into the brig. [That's something at least,] thought Angel, as she took another sip of her tea. But it still left her not knowing what he had planned for her when they got back to the Excalibur.*

*Demon and Lily had assured Angel, when she had voiced her concern, that their partners had forgiven them and that all was well between them. They had continued talking until John, Luke and Matthew, much to Angel's surprise, had joined them. She'd been even more surprised when they'd had dinner from a restaurant in the Zocalo delivered to Angel's room.*

*Angel sighed as she reflected back on the dinner. Things had been fine between her, John and Luke, with the two men engaging her in conversation throughout dinner and even teasing her lightly. Unfortunately, the mood between Angel and Matt had been more strained. Neither had said much to the other and when they did, it was along the lines of, "Please pass the salt," said in an overly polite tone.*

*Eventually, the dinner had ended, as everyone had agreed they were tired. Angel knew it was only an excuse. The meal had been bearable, but it hadn't been the most entertaining repast they had ever shared. They had bid each other a quick goodnight, and left Angel for their respective rooms.*

Angel brought her thoughts back to the present. She still had over an hour before Luke came to collect her, and she wanted to do something. Putting her cup down, Angel stood and went over to the Babcom unit. She wanted to do a little research on events from the past ten years, just in case Marcus asked for more details. [Hopefully, I can find out some tit-bits about Susan Ivanova, too.] thought Angel, knowing that Marcus would be more interested in news about the love of his life than events in history. She activated the search console and got to work.

An hour later Angel had a good supply of news, both general and about Ivanova. She had even saved it onto a data crystal for Marcus, which he could watch at his leisure after their visit. There was a soft knock on the connecting door from Luke's room, heralding his arrival to escort her to Medlab. Angel smiled, as she called for Luke to come in.

"Good morning, Angel," said Luke with a smile.

Angel returned his smile, "Morning, Doc." She paused, then cocked her head to one side as she noticed that Luke was staring at her clothes. [Oh no, I made the wrong choice!] It had taken her a while to decide on what to wear that morning, as she wanted to dress nicely for Marcus.

"What? Is something wrong?" asked Angel nervously.

Luke grinned and shook his head. "Not at all, I was just thinking how pretty you look. I've never seen you wear that color before," said Luke, indicating Angel's sky blue blouse, worn over a long black suede skirt.

Angel laughed and stroked the hem of her top. "I decided to go for something totally different."

Luke smiled at her appreciatively. "The color really suits you, Angel. You should wear it more often." Angel felt herself blush with pleasure at his compliment, and thanked him

Luke winked at her, then said in a very stuffy English accent, "You're most welcome." He paused momentarily as he offered Angel his arm, "Would you allow me the honor and privilege of escorting you to Medlab, My Lady?"

Angel inclined her head and hooked her arm through his. "I'd be delighted, Sir," she replied, with an equally affected accent. They laughed and headed out the door. She was grateful to Luke for injecting some humor into the situation. It made it feel less as if he was guarding her, and more like a friend just keeping her company. Angel smiled up at him fondly as they headed toward the elevator. She didn't know what she would do without his friendship. She made a promise to herself there and then that she would never hurt him again.

### Day 3 : Medlab - 09:58am EST

On arrival in Medlab, Angel was relieved to find that Hobbes wasn't waiting for her. Not wanting to tempt fate, she smiled at Luke "I'm just going to disappear quickly into Marcus' room, before Dr. Hobbes makes an appearance."

Luke laughed and shook his head, "I had no idea you were frightened of Dr. Hobbes,"

Angel snorted and whispered, "You're damned right I am!"

*Luke laughed even harder and nodded towards Marcus' room. "Well go on then, you big scaredy-cat."*

*Angel pulled a face then moved toward the room. She stopped before the door to ask Luke, "What are you going to do for the next two hours?"*

*Luke shrugged, "There's still lots in Medlab I'd like to learn about, and it might be a good idea if I talked more with Hobbes about the regenerators." He didn't need to elaborate. "That way I can keep her from interrupting you and Marcus," he added conspiratorially*

*Angel smiled at him gratefully. "Thank you, Luke, and not just for keeping Hobbes off my back while I'm with Marcus."*

*Luke nodded. He smiled and waved his hand at the door. "Now stop yakking and get in there."*

### *Day 3 : Marcus' Room in Medlab - 10:05am EST*

*When Angel entered the room she was greeted by a stronger and healthier looking Marcus. He wasn't lying in bed, but was standing beside it, fully clothed. She looked at him in surprise, but before she could comment, Marcus grinned at her and said cheerfully, "Remarkable recovery, wouldn't you say?" He didn't give her a chance to respond as he continued, "I tell you, Angel, whatever or however you brought me back, it's made me feel younger than I was. Well OK, I'm older than I was, but I feel younger, if you know what I mean?" He slapped his chest with the palm of his hand and laughed. "I think Dr. Hobbes is wondering how it's possible that I've recovered so much so soon. But why question it, if it's working? Don't you agree?"*

*Again, Angel wasn't given a chance to answer as he continued, while looking her up and down, with a broad smile on his face, "And might I add how lovely you look this morning? A fair and beautiful Angel, who would outshine all other Angels in heaven."*

*Angel would have thanked him if he hadn't rendered her totally speechless with his lively chatter and tendency to switch topics so suddenly. She was still trying to figure out the age thing when Marcus frowned and walked up to her. He lifted his hand and pushed up her jaw, forcing her mouth closed. She hadn't realized it was open. Marcus grinned at her. "You're far too pretty an Angel to play at being a flycatcher."*

*Angel finally found her voice and slapped his arm away lightly, scowling at him, "Very funny, Marcus. It was a surprise coming in and finding you like this. It's as if you were never frozen for ten years. And not only that, but," Angel indicated Marcus' clothes, "you're all dressed! How? Where did you find those clothes? And what are you doing dressed and out of bed?"*

*Marcus grinned. Angel decided that grin could only mean trouble. "These are my clothes, and apparently they were stored in a compartment beneath the cryo-chamber. Some clever person must have realized I would need them when I was thawed out. Can't have a Ranger prancing around stark naked, you know. Not seemly. And I'm dressed because you and I are going out," finished Marcus.*

*Angel wasn't too sure she'd heard him correctly, but when he reached for a long coat that was lying draped across the bed, she knew she had. She just couldn't believe it. "What do you mean, we're going out?" she asked, suspiciously.*

*"What I mean, my dear Angel, is that I was frozen for a decade. I've spent my first waking hours for ten years in a bed in Medlab and I've got itchy feet. I want to get out for a bit," said Marcus, putting on the coat.*

*Angel shook her head and stood blocking the door. "No way, Marcus. You can't leave Medlab," she said with determination. The look on his face, or more correctly the grin and twinkle in his eyes, made her decidedly nervous.*

*"Yes, I can. I'm not a prisoner here. I feel much better and I think I'll be fine. I don't see why we can't go out for a bit and have a little adventure," said Marcus lightly, as he headed toward her.*

*Angel laughed nervously and placed her palm on his chest to stop him. "There's one good reason why we can't go on this little adventure of yours, and I'll tell you now, I don't like the sound of that word 'adventure'. That reason is Dr. Hobbes. She probably hasn't cleared you medically fit to leave Medlab, and even if she has, I'm not allowed to leave Medlab. I'm restricted. I can stay on B5 and visit with you, but when I'm not visiting with you, I'm confined to my room. That means I can't leave and go wandering off somewhere else on a little 'adventure' with you." Angel breathed in deeply and felt warning bells going off as Marcus just smiled at her.*

*"I know the agreement under which you get to stay on B5 and visit with me, Angel. I proposed it..." Marcus broke into a wicked grin before continuing, "And if you remember, Captain Marriott agreed to it, as long as I promised I would take responsibility for you. If you do anything, I'll be the one who gets into trouble for it, in other words..."*

*"Oh no, don't you try that, Marcus! That won't fly with Marriott or Matt. Look, just get back into bed and let's talk. I have something to show you." Angel tried to distract him, but before she could get the data crystal out of her pocket, Marcus shook his head.*

*"Come on, Angel. I really want to see what things are like out there. Besides that, I have this craving for barbecue beef and the only decent place to get it on B5 is from a Drazi vendor in Downbelow. Now, I promise I won't let you get into trouble. I'll take responsibility for leading you astray. If we get caught, I'll tell them that I didn't give you a choice. I wanted to go and you were concerned for my health, so all you could do was follow. They'll believe me and if they don't, well I'll think of something. Maybe I'll threaten to call John Sheridan and Delenn again. That seemed to do the trick last time. Or maybe it was holding my breath." Marcus' tone was so lively and excited that for a moment Angel's resistance wavered.*

*It was clear that he was eager to get out, and she loved the idea of going with him, but as soon as he mentioned going Downbelow, her mind froze. For the first time she was faced with the memory of Lucas. Downbelow was the place where her memories of him would be the strongest. Angel couldn't keep a tremor from her voice as she spoke. "No, Marcus. I'm not going Downbelow. I'm sorry, I know you want to get out and I can understand that, but there are good reasons why I can't go there."*

*Marcus' face softened with concern. He came up to her and put his arm around her shoulders, asking her softly, "Why are you afraid to go there?"*

*Angel didn't want to lie to him. She explained briefly that she had bad memories of living there for a while and she didn't want to revive them. Marcus nodded sadly, saying he understood, but he went on, "Look, I know sometimes you might not want to remember the past, but trying to avoid it can be the worst way of trying to forget. I know that might not make sense, but sometimes, you have to confront the memories and*

*face them down. Then you can get past them. Do you understand what I mean, Angel?"*

*What Marcus said made sense to Angel, but she was still reluctant. She had come to B5 and had so far managed to avoid memories of Lucas, but could she continue to do so in Downbelow? She tried to convince him to stay in Medlab, but he pleaded with her, his eyes looking puppy-like as he said, "I'll show you a good time and you can replace the bad old memories with good new ones? I'll buy you a hamburger or whatever it is that Drazi vendor sells; I promise you'll love them. Best burger in all the galaxy. How can you resist that offer? A burger, new memories and me. Come on, say yes, please?" Marcus asked so genuinely, and he made it sound so plausible, that Angel found herself nodding. It was worth trying.*

*Having expressed his enthusiastic appreciation for her change of heart, Marcus took Angel's hand and led her toward the door. For a moment, she felt the urge to pull him back. She knew she shouldn't let him lead her out of Medlab. Matt would be pissed with her, and so would Marriott and Hobbes. Then there was Luke. It would be like betraying his trust. Or would it? Luke had never asked her not to leave Medlab without him. Angel pulled on Marcus' hand, stopping him before he opened the door.*

*"Marcus, just one thing. Do you think we could make it back before our visiting time is over?" She would go along, if they could make it there and back in less than two hours.*

*Marcus nodded, "Of course. We'll grab a burger in Downbelow then we'll come straight back. I heard your friend saying he'd keep Dr. Hobbes away from my room while you were here. We should be able to get out and back, and no one will ever know we were ever gone."*

*Angel chewed her lip as she considered. [Oh what the hell.] She grinned at Marcus. "Then let's get going."*

*She let go of Marcus' hand and watched him poke his head around the door. A second later, he turned to look over his shoulder at her. "The coast is clear. Come on!" Grabbing her hand again, he pulled Angel along behind him. Together, they ran across the room and out of Medlab without anyone seeing them. They ran down the corridor and into the elevator, both almost collapsing on the floor with laughter as the elevator headed toward Brown Sector.*

*"I can't believe I let you talk me into this," said Angel, breathlessly.*

*"We'll have one hell of a time and get to know each other along the way. I couldn't think of anything better. Well, I could but it's probably illegal, and Rangers have reputations to preserve," said Marcus with a mischievous grin.*

*Angel laughed, not daring to ask Marcus what he meant, just in case he answered her. "I can see this is going to be an interesting couple of hours."*

*Putting his arm around her shoulders, Marcus leaned his head forward and whispered in her ear, "My dear, it's going to be the start of a beautiful friendship."*

*Angel was still laughing at his Bogart impression when the elevator arrived in Brown Sector. Marcus didn't give her a chance to reconsider, as he led her out and down a dimly lit passageway. He kept chatting, telling her about the hamburger he was going to buy her, and about the times he had spent down here as a Ranger. The stories were so colorful that Angel didn't have time to think about the past or Lucas.*

*The hamburger turned out, as Marcus had promised, to be the best Angel had ever tasted. She still wasn't convinced it was beef, but as long as she didn't find out what it was exactly, she could live with having eaten it.*

*While they ate, in a quiet secluded corner, they talked, and Angel found herself telling Marcus about herself, including why she had bad memories of Downbelow. It felt strangely therapeutic to talk about Lucas, although she couldn't bring herself to tell about Dureena's baby or some of the other things that had happened in her time there. Marcus was a good listener. He understood how after all this time, she wasn't completely over Lucas.*

*"Sometimes someone just gets inside you, into your soul and into your blood. You can't get them out, even when you want to," Marcus explained.*

*They continued talking, with Marcus telling Angel about Susan Ivanova. Angel laughed herself silly at some of his misadventures with the former second in command of B5. One in particular involved him and Susan searching for the First Ones and Ivanova teasing him about unicorns, after he'd admitted he was still a virgin. Marcus surprised Angel with that revelation, but it pleased her that he felt comfortable enough to admit it to her, as he had to Susan.*

*"You probably think it's strange that a man of my age is still a..." Marcus trailed off as Angel placed her hand over his.*

*"No, I don't. I think it just proves what a noble, wonderfully romantic man you are. You're saving yourself for her and that's really special, Marcus," said Angel gently.*

*"I just hope she'll want me," said Marcus.*

*Angel could hear the uncertainty in his voice and rushed to reassure him. "Marcus, I'm sure Susan will. You have to tell her how you feel, and if you love her as much as I think you do, you'll go after her. Never let love go, Marcus. Not if you have real chance at making it work."*

*Marcus watched her intently for a moment, "You're speaking from experience, aren't you?"*

*"Not exactly. Love with Lucas...well, it was just an illusion. All I know is that if I loved someone, as you love Susan, and there was even the smallest chance that they loved me back, I'd fight to win them. I'd go to hell and back if I had to," said Angel passionately.*

*"In other words, you're telling me not to delay in contacting her." Marcus gave a wry grin.*

*"Exactly! You don't want to be hunting unicorns for the rest of your life," said Angel teasingly.*

*Marcus laughed and told her she was as bad as Susan. Angel just grinned at him. "If it spurs you on to call her soon, I'll keep it up."*

*Marcus snorted. "Well then I promise I will soon. I just need a couple more days, OK?"*

*"OK, and I promise to hold back on any unicorn jokes," answered Angel with a smile.*

*They fell silent for a moment, until Angel asked Marcus about his time as a Ranger. He told her all about his time on B5, his part in the war against Earth and his friendship with Stephen Franklin. Again*

Marcus had her in fits of laughter as he retold stories of times with Franklin, including when they had traveled to Mars, to contact the Mars Resistance during the Earth War. They had been virtually trapped together on a cargo ship.

"I think I nearly drove poor Stephen mad with my games of 'I spy'," said Marcus.

Angel doubled over with laughter as he explained what had happened, and she was breathless as she shook her head at him, "I could almost feel sorry for Stephen Franklin if it weren't so funny!"

Marcus continued telling Angel more stories about him and Stephen. "He didn't seem to appreciate my rendition of Gilbert and Sullivan." He paused, took a deep breath then launched into song, or what he described as a song.

Angel decided she'd heard cats wailing more tunelessly, and begged him to stop, threatening to join in if he didn't. "And I can sing even flatter than you can, Marcus!"

The Ranger stopped singing and resumed his storytelling. Angel was literally crying with laughter after he related a story about him and Stephen having to pretend to be a married couple to get onto Mars. Eventually, she had to beg him to stop before she laughed so hard she did herself an injury.

"I hope to see him soon," said Marcus with a warm smile. Angel could tell that his friendship with Franklin had meant a lot to him.

Angel wiped the tears of laughter from her face and asked more seriously, "Why haven't you contacted him yet?"

"I don't know. Maybe the same reason I haven't contacted Susan," shrugged Marcus.

Angel took his hand. "I know it can't be easy for you. Now that I'm able to stay on the station and visit, would it help if I were with you when you contacted them? Maybe I can even contact them beforehand, if you want?"

She was rewarded with a grateful smile and a squeeze to her hand. "I'd really appreciate that, Angel."

"Then I'd be more than happy to do it," said Angel kindly.

"You really are an Angel," said Marcus as he raised her hand to his lips and kissed it lightly.

"Flatterer!" said Angel with an amused smile. Suddenly, she remembered the time and she looked at her watch. Gasping, she stood up. "It's getting late. If we want to make it back before my two hours are up, we'd better get going."

She could see Marcus was reluctant. He was enjoying being out of Medlab, but he stood, saying, "Yes, we'd better go." Angel took the hand Marcus offered her, and together they headed back the way they had come.

As they walked toward the elevator, Angel could have sworn they were being followed. She was aware that Marcus looked over his shoulder a couple of times, but when he stopped, she told herself she had been imagining it.

*"Are you sure it's her?" asked the bearded man, as he and his companion watched the couple walk past them. They had been watching for an hour, ever since the couple had arrived in Downbelow.*

*"More than sure, I'd bet my life on it. She's that bastard's woman," hissed his tall, skinny companion.*

*"Well, we owe him for what he did to us. I bet she knows where he is, so let's get her," said the bearded man, moving out from the dark alcove where they were hiding*

*The skinny man chuckled coldly. "What about the guy she's with?"*

*"We'll grab him too. He might be involved with that bastard as well," said the bearded man.*

*"And if he ain't?"*

*"Then we'll kill him." The bearded man had a cold, murderous gleam in his eye.*

*Together, they moved out of the shadows and started to follow the couple ahead of them. Just before the couple reached the elevator, the men struck. They didn't bother trying to grab the couple. They had weapons that contained small darts with a strong sedative. The bearded man aimed one at the woman and fired. She stumbled and cried out, as it hit the back of her neck. Her companion reached for her, but jerked as a dart from the skinny man's weapon hit him. He swung around, to face the two attackers, and tried to advance toward them, but then he stumbled and fell unconscious on the floor.*

*The woman remained standing, which surprised the bearded man. One dart should have done the trick. "You're a strong bitch," said the man, as he advanced toward her. She swung to face his voice. He raised his arm and aimed his weapon to fire another dart. Obviously one wasn't enough.*

*He suddenly found his arm was feeling heavy, as if a weight were pushing it down. It took an enormous effort, but he was able to resist it and he fired. The second dart hit the woman just below the collarbone. Within seconds, her legs gave way under her, and she fell unconscious beside her male companion.*

*The two men rushed forward. "You carry her," said the bearded man, as he reached for the woman's male friend. He would have preferred to carry the woman, but he doubted that skinny Earl could carry the weight of the man.*

*Earl grinned, "I don't mind if I do." He bent down and scooped the unconscious female up into his arms. "Damn, she don't weigh more than a child, Bobby"*

*Bobby scowled at his friend. He wished he could say the same about the man. Although the man was of slight build, he was heavy. "Let's get going, you jackass," he said, as he strained under the weight of the unconscious man.*

*Although there was little security in Downbelow, Bobby wanted to get out of sight before anyone saw them. If the man and woman were reported missing, he didn't want any witnesses pointing B5 Security in his and Earl's direction. Shifting the weight on his shoulder, Bobby led the way to a place where no one would find them, and where he and Earl could question the woman in private. She would know the location of the man they hated. The man who had nearly destroyed them.*

*[And when we find you, you're a dead man, Lucas Buck] thought Bobby, relishing the idea of spilling the bastard's blood.*



Day 3 : Marcus' Room in Medlab - 12:00pm EST

Luke knocked lightly on the door to Marcus' room, then waited for a response. He frowned slightly when he heard nothing. He knocked again, a little louder this time. There was still no reply. Luke pursed his lips, thinking that there could only be one reason why he wasn't getting any response. [But I hope to God it's not what I think it is,] thought Luke, as he opened the door and went inside. He groaned softly when he found the room empty.

Luke sighed, telling himself not to jump to conclusions just yet. Turning, he exited the room and scanned Medlab, in the hope of spotting a familiar raven head. To his dismay, Luke could see neither hide nor hair of Angel or Marcus. "This is not good. Not good at all," muttered Luke to himself.

"What's not good?"

Luke literally jumped at the sound of Dr. Hobbes' voice beside him. He turned to look at her in surprise. She was supposed to have left Medlab before he came to collect Angel. Clearing his throat, Luke tried to sound as normal as possible, "Oh, I was just talking to myself."

To Luke's dismay, Dr. Hobbes looked at him closely, and even worse, looked past him to the door of Marcus' room. "Is something wrong, Dr. Raven? Is your sister-in-law being difficult about leaving," asked Hobbes, suspiciously.

"No, of course not, Dr. Hobbes. I haven't yet..." began Luke, a little too hastily.

"Why don't I believe you?" cut in Hobbes.

"Because you're the only female that fails to be influenced by my good looks and charm?" Muttered Luke, under his breath, wishing he believed his own comment. Hobbes didn't give Luke a chance to answer out loud, as she moved around him toward the door.

"How about I just see for myself," she said, as she opened the door. Luke was helpless to stop her, as she rushed inside Marcus' room. "What the hell?" exclaimed Hobbes. Luke winced as she launched into a diatribe of less than ladylike language, then barged past him out of the room.

Luke followed, trying to calm the irate woman. It took a lot of fast-talking to prevent her from contacting Captain Marriott immediately, and to convince her to wait to see if Angel and Marcus returned. Hobbes wasn't happy about it, stating that she would wait for twenty minutes, but if there was no sign of the two runaways, she would get on the line to Marriott, demanding that Angel be found and arrested this time.

Together, Luke and Hobbes waited. Luke watched as she paced back and forth in her office, every now and then ranting about Angel, and demanding to know how the little bitch dared take Marcus Cole out of Medlab.

Luke wondered if it had been all Angel's doing, but he kept those thoughts to himself. Hobbes wouldn't believe him anyway. When after twenty minutes of waiting there was still no sign of them, Luke had to admit that something was wrong. He just hoped it was nothing too serious that had prevented Angel and Marcus from returning. [Where are you, Angel?] wondered Luke desperately.

*Dr Hobbes was by then virtually hovering, and Luke had to relent and agree to let her inform Captain Marriott that Marcus and Angel were no longer in Medlab. Luke remained with Hobbes, as she informed B5's Captain, who to Luke's surprise, took the news quite calmly. He said he would send out a Security detail to search for them, then he would contact Gideon to let him know that his sister-in-law had left Medlab. Luke quickly interrupted, and asked if he could inform his friend of the news. After some thought Marriott agreed, but insisted that Luke get Gideon to contact him, as soon as he had been advised. Luke agreed and then Marriott excused himself to call Security.*

*Hobbes turned to Luke and fumed, "You'd better hope for Angel's sake that when she and Marcus are found, there's nothing wrong with my patient. I never should have let Marriott agree to that deal. She should have been thrown in the brig from the start!"*

*"I'm sure Marcus is fine," said Luke, calmly.*

*Hobbes snorted. "We'll see. Now if you'll excuse me, I have to go and call my husband, to let him know why I missed meeting him for lunch."*

*Luke knew that would just be one more thing the doctor would hold against Angel. He nodded, "And if you'll excuse me, I have to go and speak with Captain Gideon," He was not looking forward to that. The explosion was not going to be pretty.*

*"You do that, and I hope he tosses her into the brig this time and throws away the key!" said Hobbes, maliciously.*

*Luke didn't respond. He shrugged and bid Hobbes a quick goodbye, as he left her office and made his way to Demon and Gideon's room. He knew that John, Lily, Demon and Gideon had planned on taking a walk through the Zocalo that morning while he and Angel were in Medlab. They had planned to meet up at their rooms later. Luke wasn't sure if he hoped Gideon was back or not. With a heavy sigh, Luke arrived at the door to Gideon and Demon's room. He stood there for a moment, thinking, [Angel, I just hope you have a very good reason for this.]*

*He didn't want to believe that Angel had deliberately left Medlab after she'd agreed to the conditions for her staying on B5. If she had left Medlab, she must have had a good reason, and there had to be an even better explanation for why she still hadn't returned. Luke just couldn't figure out what that reason was. He knew she'd agreed to the conditions for her staying, so why had she broken them? Taking a deep breath, Luke cleared his mind, and pressed the door buzzer. After a few seconds it opened.*

*"Hi Luke. You're back late," stated Gideon. Luke didn't like the fact that Gideon's smile was tense, and his tone of voice uneasy. The Captain suspected something.*

*"Eh, yes. Matt, can I come in?" asked Luke. Gideon nodded and allowed the doctor inside. Demon greeted him, as he walked into the middle of the room. He nodded and smiled in her direction, noticing that she frowned slightly as she looked at him. He knew she must be picking up on his emotions.*

*"Did everything go all right this morning?" asked Gideon. Luke turned to face his friend, aware that Demon had risen from the sofa to stand beside her husband.*

*Luke cleared his throat, "Not exactly," he admitted, suddenly wishing he could be anywhere else at that moment.*

*Gideon's eyes narrowed suspiciously. "What do you mean, 'not exactly'?"*

*There was no way Luke could lie. Taking a deep breath, he quickly explained that Angel and Marcus were missing from Medlab. Gideon looked at him, and for a moment Luke thought his friend was going to take the news calmly. Then he saw Demon reach out to take her husband's hand, saying soothingly, "Just remain calm, Matthew, please."*

*Luke knew that he wasn't going to be that lucky. And he was right, because despite Demon trying to soothe him, Gideon exploded.*

### *Day 3 : Cargo Hold in Brown Sector - 6:00pm EST*

*"Angel? Angel, please wake up. If you don't wake up soon, I'll have to kiss you, just like in Sleeping Beauty, and it will be the death of my ego if it doesn't work. After all, my Mum always called me her little Prince Charming, and if you don't wake up, I'll finally have to accept that I'm a complete and utter failure in the handsome-Prince-who-breaks-enchantments field. Please don't let that happen, Angel. Be a good girl and wake up now, will you?"*

*The words echoed around inside Angel's skull, bouncing back and forth and sending little needles of pain into the backs of her eyes. She understood what was being said to her, but she couldn't figure out who was speaking. Who did she know who prattled inanely and incessantly in a strong English accent? Demon would be distinctly miffed if anyone ever thought she prattled, so that left only one other option.*

*Angel kept her eyes shut while Marcus' voice rattled on. She wondered if they taught droning as a special class at Ranger Academy, or wherever it was that they trained Rangers. You know, grab the bad guy and then talk his ear off until he begged to confess to anything and everything, as long as it made his tormentor shut up. Or perhaps it was just a natural talent Marcus had. She never remembered Trulann babbling on and on like a brook. One thing was for sure. Marcus was damned good at prattling on endlessly.*

*After a few moments, she could bear it no longer. She licked her dry lips and said as strongly as she could manage, "Shut up, will you? You're making my head hurt."*

*The yell of jubilation her words produced made Angel regret having spoken. She could also have done without being grabbed from whatever surface she was lying on, and then being squeezed vigorously. For a moment, Angel seriously considered throwing up all over the Ranger. Then she decided that she'd probably have to help him clean up, so reconsidered. But it was touch and go.*

*Despite her protest, Marcus continued to bellow his pleasure at her revival in her ear. Having serious regrets about ever having revived the insensitive idiot, Angel sighed to herself, thinking, [No good deed goes unpunished. Whoever said that knew what he was talking about.]*

*Growling deep in her throat, Angel pushed Marcus away, saying softly but in a voice full of menace, "If you keep on shaking me like that, I'm going to vomit all over you. And when I'm done, I'm going to take your Denn'bok and shove it where the sun don't shine."*

*The Ranger's voice cut off in mid-blather. Angel felt him release her, gently resting her back against*

*something hard, then moving away from her. She became aware that she was sitting on the floor. She considered opening her eyes, then decided not to. It would probably hurt, and she was sure that whatever she saw, it wouldn't be good. For the moment at least, darkness was preferable.*

*Marcus cleared his throat, and said nervously, "Uh, you can't do that."*

*Angel carefully pried one eyelid partly open, and skewered him with an evil look. She saw him flinch as he caught the full impact of her malevolent glare. "You wanna bet? You'd be surprised how much force I could apply to its insertion, and how little lubrication it would need."*

*As far as she could tell behind all the hair, Marcus paled a little and hurriedly corrected himself. "No, I didn't mean 'you can't' in that sense. I meant 'you can't because it's not here.' When those men captured us, they disarmed us, which is quite sensible from their point of view, if a little irritating from our perspective. It would have been much better if they'd neglected to take such an elementary precaution, thinking 'Oh well, they'll be out for hours yet, no need to worry about any weapons they're carrying until later' but unfortunately we seem to have been captured by criminals with IQ's slightly higher than the average gnat, so..." Marcus ran down as Angel slowly opened her other eye and pierced him with the full force of her bright blue, baleful glance. If ever a look held a promise of imminent violence, it was that one.*

*The Ranger swallowed hurriedly, appearing at last to recognize that he was in more danger from his companion than their abductors, and finished his sentence. "So they took my Denn'bok away. It's over there."*

*Angel's gaze followed the direction in which his hand was pointing, taking in her surroundings on the way. She and Marcus were penned inside a large cage-like structure, within a larger room. She guessed that the cage was normally used to hold goods that needed protection from theft. It appeared to be designed more to keep people out than in, but it was equally effective in either direction. Outside the cage, a few packing cases lay scattered around the floor of an otherwise bare room. From her experience of living on B5, Angel guessed this was some sort of cargo holding area.*

*Thankful that Marcus had fallen silent at last, Angel saw that his Denn'bok was lying on one of the packing cases. Now if she could only...*

*A shaft of pain pierced Angel's brain as she tried to use her telekinetic powers. Whatever drug the men had used to overpower her, it was still lingering in her system, making her feel nauseous and weak. There was no chance that she was going to be able to lift anything the size of the Denn'bok--an instrument that was heavier than it looked--before she'd recovered her strength. Angel glanced at the lock on the cage, and had to admit to herself that in her current state, she wasn't capable of mentally fiddling with the intricate mechanism, either. She was going to have to wait until she felt a little better.*

*Angel quickly tried to link to her sisters, hoping that at least she could let them know what had happened. She wondered how long she had been unconscious, and how much time had passed. One thing was for sure. They were overdue, and Gideon would be throwing fits. Maybe if she could let Demon know what had happened...? It was useless. The drugs still in her body blocked her mental link as effectively as they blocked her telekinetic powers.*

*Then she remembered the stiletto she always wore in her shoulder holster and reached up to pull it out, but the holster was empty. The kidnappers had obviously checked them for weapons before imprisoning them in the cage.*

*With a deep sigh, Angel leaned back against the wall, and peered at Marcus between narrowed lids, asking quietly, "Do you have any idea why they've kidnapped us? Do you have any enemies on B5 who would still hate you after all this time?"*

*Marcus smiled brightly. "No idea. I mean, I've got hundreds of enemies. I never was very good at making friends, but once I learned not to repress my anger, I became extremely proficient in the enemy making field. Could be any one of a cast of thousands, I suppose, but I don't see how any of them could have found out that I'm alive again so quickly. It really is a bit much, you know. Can't a man come back from the dead in peace, without getting mugged on his first day back among the living? If it's going to be like this, maybe I should take another ten year nap. Or maybe I'll do a hundred years next time. That'll teach the bastards. I'll just outlive them all!"*

*Angel sighed deeply again. Didn't he ever shut up? The thought of putting him back in the cryo-tube suddenly seemed incredibly attractive, just to get some peace and quiet. How dare he be so chirpy after having been drugged and abducted! If he prattled on and on like this all the time, why the hell had Susana Ivanova put him a cryo-tube? Angel would have left him for mercifully dead and finally silent, and her tears would have been of relief rather than grief! Why didn't Marcus' head ache as much as hers? It wasn't fair, and Angel felt she deserved some serious pouting time. Preferably in silence.*

*Not a chance.*

*Marcus tone became solicitous as he changed the subject. "Are you feeling any better yet? I could try and attract their attention if you like, and get some water. I'm sure if I scream loudly and bang the bars for a bit someone will come." The Ranger leaped to his feet and inhaled deeply, obviously preparing himself to yell at the top of his voice.*

*Angel reached up and grabbed his hand, yanking him off balance with more strength that she'd thought she possessed. Marcus wobbled, his legs caved in under him, and he ended up in an ungainly heap on the ground. At that point, Angel realized that it was all bravado. The Ranger was feeling as weak and sick as she was, but he was trying to hide it under all the bluster.*

*Squeezing his hand gently, Angel tried to smile, but was half-convinced that it came out as a grimace. "Just keep quiet for a while, Marcus. Give me a little time to recover, and I can probably get us out of here. I just need to get my head screwed back on straight, OK?"*

*Marcus opened his mouth, and Angel knew that a flood of questions was about to emerge, so she gently pushed her hand under his chin and closed it. "Later. For now, silence, please."*

*The Ranger cocked his head on one side, then nodded and fell silent. Angel wondered how long he could keep it up.*

*Approximately thirty seconds passed before Marcus began whistling. Not a tuneful, melodious whistle, but a high-pitched, piercing, bat-like screech. The noise went straight through Angel's temples and hit the exact point inside her head that caused the maximum discomfort. This time she couldn't be bothered to speak. Her right hand lashed out and hit Marcus' shoulder. Hard.*

*"What? What did I do?" The Ranger's face was a picture of wounded innocence. Angel gave him another menacing glower, and they subsided into silence again. Not quite silence. The ever-present noises of the operation of Babylon 5's machines gradually intruded themselves. The thumps of the recycling plant, the hiss of the air filters, the soft sighing of the pumps that circulated the air around the space station,*

*making sure it stayed pure and clean. Every sound was a reminder of the inhabitants' dependency on technology.*

*This time, Marcus managed to stay quiet for a whole minute. Then he chuckled to himself, smiled at Angel and said, "I spy with my little eye..."*

*"Stop right there, Marcus. You told me that story, remember? It was funny at the time, but you're lucky Franklin didn't kill you. You won't be so lucky again. And don't even think of singing the Modern Major General song. I hate that damned song when I'm feeling fine. I'll kill if I hear it when I'm feeling like this." Angel's tone made her threat a promise. She could hardly believe it when Marcus opened his mouth, ready to speak. Did the man have no sense of self-preservation? It was no wonder he'd died ten years before! The only surprise was that he hadn't been murdered.*

*Before the Ranger could speak and sentence himself to a slow, painful death, the opening of the door on the far side of the cargo hold interrupted him. His head swung around to watch the two men entering, and Angel followed the direction of his gaze.*

*The men looked vaguely familiar, but for the moment she couldn't place them. One was tall and skinny, with straggly, greasy looking, thin hair. The color was a non-descript brown, and the only thing that could be said in its favor was that it fell forward and helped conceal the man's weasel like face. He grinned vacantly across the room at the prisoners, revealing a set of stained and broken teeth. A real Prince Charming if Angel had ever seen one.*

*The other man looked more intelligent, if no more handsome than his companion. Thick-set and sturdy, he balanced a heavy torso on top of the bandiest pair of legs Angel had ever seen. The full beard he wore compensated for the almost complete lack of hair on his head. He had allowed the remaining graying fringe around the base of his skull to grow long, and tied it back into a pony tail. His dull brown eyes stared calculatingly at his prisoners, and Angel could almost imagine him weighing up how much they were worth. The way he looked at her and then smiled, lazily and maliciously, made her shudder. She didn't want to be in the same room as this man, and was actually grateful for the bars that separated them.*

*Marcus leaped to his feet again, and started talking. "I think there's been some mistake. I don't know you, and I'm sure I'd remember you if we'd met before, so I can only assume you've got the wrong man. Why don't you just be good fellows and let us go? We'll say nothing more about it, and one day we can all meet up in a bar somewhere and have a good laugh about all this. 'Ho, ho' you'll say, 'do you remember when we thought you were that other person we didn't like very much, and we accidentally shot you full of drugs and locked you in a cage?' Then we'll all laugh together, slap each other on the backs and buy each other drinks. That's something to look forward to, isn't it?"*

*The bearded man went up in Angel's estimation when his eyes slid across to Marcus and he said quietly, "Shut up." He didn't shout it or bellow, for which Angel was eternally grateful; he just said it quietly, but with a threatening look. Marcus subsided, but Angel had a horrible feeling it wouldn't last long.*

*Before the Ranger could speak again, the bearded man returned his gaze to Angel, stepping closer to the cage, then squatting down to peer more closely at her. He nodded and smiled slowly, revealing teeth in considerably better condition than his companion.*

*"It's her, Earl. There's no doubt about it. I remember those eyes. Never seen another pair like them. This is Lucas Buck's woman all right."*

*Angel froze in shock and for a moment wondered whether she might faint.*

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*Day 3 : Demon and Gideon's room - 6:20pm EST*

*Demon curled up in the arm chair in the semi-darkness, and tried to link with Angel again. Nothing. She kept telling herself that her sister was probably asleep or unconscious, but nothing worse than that. Angel couldn't be dead. That was impossible. Demon would have known if her sister had died. She would have felt it, would have felt her soul being wrenched apart. No, Angel was alive somewhere. She was either out of range of their link or unconscious. That was the only explanation.*

*Hugging her arms tightly around her legs, Demon rocked herself, squeezing her eyes shut against the tears that had threatened to fall ever since Luke had left earlier that afternoon.*

*The memory of Matthew's explosion of temper when Luke had arrived to tell them that Angel and Marcus were missing made Demon shudder. She couldn't remember him ever having been so angry before. He had stormed, yelled, paced back and forth across the room, threatening Angel with every punishment he could think of. The force of his anger had made Demon feel physically sick, and she'd eventually fled to the bathroom and thrown up.*

*As she'd vomited, she knew it was pointless trying to calm her husband when he was in that state. He had to work his anger out before he'd be able to listen to her. Demon had thrown up again, as another wave of fury swept through her. She had heard Matthew's voice raging through the walls of the living area, even though she couldn't make out his words.*

*Luke's quiet voice had been barely audible in response, but Demon had heard another outburst from Matthew, as another surge of anger had made her retch again. Then it had gone quiet, and the emotional temperature started to cool. Demon had rested her pounding head against the cool tiles of the bathroom wall, waiting for the nausea to subside, tears of pain and fear sliding down her face.*

*After a few moments of silence, she'd heard the bathroom door opening. A cool hand had pulled the hair back from around her face, and another hand had held a glass of water in front of her. Demon had turned to look up into Luke's warm brown eyes. As she'd taken the glass and sipped gingerly, Luke had squatted in front of her and said softly, "Matt's gone to see Captain Marriot. They'll put together a search party. They'll find her. Don't worry."*

*Demon had looked up into Luke's sad face and whispered, "I can't link to her, Luke. She's gone."*

*Luke had held her tightly during the storm of tears that had followed, and when she'd eventually calmed, he'd led her through to the living area, sat her in the arm chair, and got her more water.*

*Once Demon had got herself under control again, she'd smiled sadly at Luke, saying, "You need to get back to Lily and John. They'll be wondering what's happening. Go on, I'll be all right now. Matthew will come back soon, I'm sure. Let me have a little time alone to pull myself together, please."*

*Luke had left her reluctantly, but Demon knew he'd been eager to get back to his partners, so she'd shooed him out of her rooms. Then she'd settled down to wait, periodically testing her link to Angel, wishing that Matthew would return, or at least call. The tall blonde had considered calling her husband on his commlink, but had rejected that possibility. Matthew would be busy and wouldn't welcome being*

*interrupted. Contacting him then would only have made things worse than they already were. Demon had decided to wait.*

*The hours had passed slowly and painfully, and Demon looked at the clock again, wondering for the thousandth time if it had stopped. 18:30. Angel and Marcus had been missing for over six hours. If they'd been taken from the station they could be well outside the Epsilon Eridani system by now. They could be anywhere.*

*The door opened suddenly and a dark figure stood motionless in the opening, silhouetted against the light from the corridor outside. Demon looked up, and a surge of love and hope escaped her as Matthew moved into the pool of light emitted by the lamp beside her chair.*

*He rushed across the room and dropped to his knees, pulling her into his arms, kissing her face and her hair as he said, "I'm sorry. I'm so sorry. I shouldn't have lost my temper like that. I shouldn't have left you alone for so long. You must have been worried half out of your mind. I'm so sorry."*

*Demon laid her fingers on his lips to silence him and looked into his sad, golden eyes. "It's OK," she whispered, "it doesn't matter. Just tell me you've found them and that they're all right. Please tell me that."*

*Matthew knelt on the floor in front of the chair and his eyes were full of sorrow as he sadly shook his head. "We can't find a trace of them anywhere. We've had Security out looking all over the station, but they've vanished." As a wave of panic escaped Demon, Matthew pulled her back into his arms, hugging her tightly as he said, "We'll find them, Deborah. Try to be patient. We'll find them."*

### *Day 3 : Cargo Hold in Brown Sector - 6:30pm EST*

*The memory of when she'd seen the men before came flooding back to Angel. She'd been in a bar with Lucas. The memory stood out, because she hadn't often gone to such places during the time she'd spent on B5. Normally, when she'd gone out with Lucas, he'd taken her to nice restaurants, expensive shops, or to the gardens in the central core of the station. This time, they'd been on their way home from dinner when Lucas had said he needed to see someone in the bar. Angel had waited at a table while Lucas had gone to get them drinks. While he was at the counter, she had seen him speaking to the man with the beard. The skinny man had been hovering nearby, grinning vacantly in the background.*

*Whatever Lucas and the man had spoken about, it hadn't been very friendly. Lucas had kept smiling all the way through their conversation, but Angel knew that smile. A shark gave the same smile when it was about to bite. The bearded man had shaken his head violently, and at one point had even raised his hand. The smile had vanished from Lucas' face, and the look he had given the man was enough to make him back down. The two men had left the bar soon after, and Lucas had rejoined Angel, bringing her drink with him. When she had asked him who the men were, he had just said, "Soon to be ex-associates, darlin'. Don't worry about them."*

*Angel had forgotten all about the incident and had never seen the men again. Until now. Like so much of her past with Lucas, the memory had now come back to haunt her. She licked her dry lips and waited for the bearded man to speak again. It was pointless trying to deny who she was. He was sure.*

*The thin man spoke in a flat monotone, his voice a clear indicator of his low intelligence. "How much do you think he'll pay for her, Bobby? He'll want her back, won't he?"*



Bearded Bobby shook his head. "Don't care whether he wants her or not, Earl. This time, we're not trying to sell something to Lucas Buck. We tried that before, and look where it got us. He turned us in and we spent three long, hard years on that prison planet. Lucas Buck is going to pay for that." He turned his head to look at Angel through the bars. "And you're going to help us. Tell us where he is."

Angel shook her head and stuttered, "I don't know. For all I know, he's dead." It was true, yet it wasn't. Angel was sure Lucas was still alive. In her heart, in her soul, she knew that one day she and Lucas would meet again. Their brief encounter at the masked ball on Ceti Gamma III the year before had been a rude reminder that Lucas wasn't finished with her.

The memory of his last words still gave her nightmares. *'But you still betrayed me, and one day you'll have to pay for that. Not today, but one day.'* Was this the day? Were these men in league with Lucas? Had they kidnapped her, to take her back to him? The very thought of it filled Angel with terror and longing.

Before Bobby could respond, Marcus interrupted. "It sounds to me as if you two have nearly as much against this Lucas Buck as the lady does. It might make sense if you became allies instead of enemies. Why not let us out and we can talk about how we can work together to track him down?"

Bobby laughed, an unpleasant sound made even less agreeable by the disharmony created by Earl's high pitched giggle. The bearded man's gaze flickered across to the Ranger, then returned to Angel. "Tell us where we can find Lucas Buck, or you'll regret it. Think it over. We'll give you some time. Then we're coming back, and we'll start by slicing bits off him." A straight edged razor appeared in his hand. He flashed it back and forth, allowing the light to catch the edge. His mouth widened into a malicious smile, as he continued, "And if that doesn't persuade you, when we've finished with him, we'll start on you."

Angel watched, frozen in fear, as the bearded man stood, closing the razor and pushing it into his pocket. Then the two men left the hold.

### Day 3 : Another part of Brown Sector - 6:40pm EST

Zack Allan stood with his hands on his hips, quietly cursing. Why did this have to happen on his station? He'd been pleased, if a little stunned, when he'd been told that Marcus Cole was back from the dead. While he and Marcus had never been close, the Ranger had been a good friend to Garibaldi, Franklin, Ivanova, and others who Zack had cared about.

The Security Chief had harbored some warm feelings toward the dead Ranger, especially knowing that Marcus had worked closely with Lyta on occasion. Lyta. His poor doomed Lyta. Zack wondered for the thousandth time if he could have saved the telepath from her fate. If he'd only had the courage to repeat the words he'd spoken to her that time in the elevator, maybe...

Zack shook his head. Why did his thoughts always stray to Lyta when he was looking for something that was lost? Perhaps because she was something he had lost that could never be found.

Well, that wasn't going to happen to Marcus Cole. Dead or alive, Zack planned to find the Ranger, along with this mysterious woman, Angelique Denier.

The Security Chief had been startled when he'd seen Denier's picture. Surely this was the woman Captain Gideon had brought to B5 on his secret mission at the end of '68? It may have been three and half years

before, but Zack never forgot a face, especially not a pretty one. Yet now that woman was supposed to be Gideon's sister-in-law. Missing along with Marcus Cole. Zack wondered whether Gideon had met his wife through her sister, then shrugged and dismissed the issue. It was none of his business. His business was finding the little lost sheep.

Raising his link to his mouth, Zack called each of the search teams in turn, getting their latest reports. Still nothing. He moved them on to the next search area.

### Day 3 : Cargo hold in Brown Sector - 6:45pm EST

"Angel! Angel, snap out of it! Come on now, talk to me." The words slowly penetrated the fog that seemed to have frozen Angel's mind and body. She gradually became aware of the concerned face hovering over her. Marcus squatted by her side, peering at her, his face etched with worry. His deep, English voice continued, "We'll find a way out of here, I promise. Don't give up now. We can do this."

As the mists of fear rolled away, Angel made a discovery. She was angry. No, that was an understatement. She was abso-fraggin'-lutely furious. Lucas Buck was messing with her life again. It seemed that she couldn't get away from him. Like a bad smell, his influence lingered long after the source had departed. Well, enough was enough. Time to fight back. She was *not* going to let Lucas Buck, or his influence, wreck her life again.

Angel leaped to her feet, knocking Marcus back onto his butt. Her bright blue eyes blazed with fury, and she could see the Ranger was almost flinching back, startled by her sudden recovery. The witch focused her strength, concentrating on dispelling the lingering traces of drugs in her body. She wasn't totally recovered, but she was as ready as she was likely to get.

Turning to Marcus, Angel said quietly, "You have to promise me that you'll never tell anyone about what I'm going to do now."

It was inevitable that Marcus would argue. "Why? What are you going to do that's so terrible?"

Angel glared at him. "I'm going to help you save our butts. I'm going to stop you getting cut up into itty bitty little pieces, but if you don't promise, I'll wait until they've finished carving you up, then I'll just save myself! Now promise. Your word as a Ranger." Angel chose an oath she knew Marcus would never break.

With an eyebrow raised at her vehemence, Marcus promised. Angel turned her attention to the packing case on the far side of the cargo hold. The Denn'bok rested on it, standing on end. Closing her eyes, Angel focused her power and lifted.

"Great Booji's bollocks!" Marcus' startled exclamation made Angel's concentration falter, and she felt her hold on the weapon slipping.

"Shut up!" She hissed the words through gritted teeth, and concentrated again. This was more difficult than she'd expected. Her powers were still diminished by the after-effects of the drugs, and the Denn'bok was much denser than anything she'd tried to lift before. The shape was also difficult to grasp with her mind. Readjusting her mental grip, Angel opened her eyes and watched the progress of the staff across the room. For once, Marcus was blessedly speechless.

The Denn'bok inched its way toward them. Angel would have liked to have moved it faster, but that

would have increased the risk of her dropping it. She felt a sweat break out on her brow with effort it was costing her to keep the staff moving. Slowly but surely, it got closer to the cage.

"Reach out as far as you can." Angel's words were a strained whisper. She could feel the weapon slipping away from her as her powers weakened.

Marcus stood quickly and squeezed his arm through the bars, reaching out as far as he could. Angel gritted her teeth, ignoring the pain that lanced through her brain as somehow she kept the staff aloft. Painfully slowly, its distance from Marcus' grasping hand reduced. Just when Angel thought she couldn't stand the throbbing in her head any more, the staff touched the tips of Marcus' fingers.

With a groan of pain, Angel collapsed, and released her hold. To her horror, the Denn'bok slipped through the Ranger's fingers and fell to the floor. Then it rolled just a centimeter or two toward the cage. Marcus dropped flat on his face and pushed his arm so far through the bars that Angel knew he must be badly bruising his shoulder. With a grimace of agony, he brushed the tips of his fingers against the staff and drew it a little closer. Just enough to enable him to grasp it firmly, then pull it back through the bars.

The two captives sat side by side, both breathing heavily. Angel clasped her aching head in her hands, wishing the pain would go away. Marcus sat next to her, rubbing his sore shoulder. After a few moments silence, Marcus spoke softly. "Are you all right? That was quite remarkable. I've never seen a telekinetic at work before. I assume you don't want anyone to know about your ability."

Angel nodded slowly, careful not to make her head hurt more. She answered in a whisper. "They'd take me away. Maybe even experiment on me, to find out how I do it. I don't want that." She kept her eyes closed, as the light in the room was too painful to bear.

A moment later, Angel felt an arm move around her shoulders and hug her gently. Marcus' voice was soft in her ear. "I'll never tell a soul. Your secret is safe with me." Then she felt him kiss her gently on the cheek, a kiss full of kindness and reassurance that made her want to weep. No wonder Susan Ivanova had put up with his non-stop drivel. Although if Susan had shagged him, maybe he'd have stop talking so much.

Opening her eyes, Angel smiled gratefully at the Ranger. "Thank you," she whispered. "Now, can you do anything with that weapon of yours? It looks a little small to do much damage." She managed a naughty grin to accompany her words.

Marcus laughed softly, saying, "Oh, it's bigger than you think, and you'd be surprised how much damage it can do." He stood quickly, and placed one end of the stubby cylinder against the lock of the cage door. "Watch."

Angel couldn't see what he did, but suddenly there was a loud bang, and the door exploded outwards. The lock flew across the cargo hold, torn out of the cage door with the force of the expanding staff. Marcus rushed out of the cage, holding a weapon that was now nearly two meters long.

The outer door to the cargo hold burst open, and Earl ran in, holding a PPG in front of him. Marcus was ready for him, and brought his Denn'bok crashing down on the man's wrist. Earl howled in pain, dropping the PPG and cradling his broken wrist with his free hand. The Ranger brought his staff up quickly, catching the criminal under the chin, lifting him off the floor and sending him crashing backwards into the wall.

*Before Earl hit the ground, Bobby rushed in, also carrying a PPG. Angel realized with horror that Marcus didn't have time to turn. His back was still toward Bobby, as the bandy legged man's finger tightened on the trigger.*

*Angel decided that she hadn't brought Marcus back from the dead just to have him killed by some stupid enemies of Lucas Buck. She used every bit of mental power she could summon, and with a huge effort she managed to deflect Bobby's arm upward. The shot passed harmlessly over Marcus' head, but close enough to leave the smell of singed hair in the air. Bobby didn't get a second chance to fire. Marcus spun around and the staff caught his opponent squarely on the side of his head, knocking him the length of the cargo hold.*

*It was all over in seconds. The two criminals were both unconscious on the floor. Marcus stood over them, breathing heavily, grinning back at Angel as she struggled to her feet. "That was what you might call a close shave. I hadn't planned on getting a haircut just yet, but that PPG shot was close enough to nearly scalp me. Let's get out of here."*

*Angel staggered toward him, and he put his arm around her as she almost lost her balance. Marcus grinned at her again. "Careful. Can't have my savior falling down and hurting herself, can we? That's twice you've saved my life now. It's getting to be a bit of a habit, isn't it?"*

*Angel let him support her as they staggered out of the cargo hold together. "If it's a habit, it's a bad one. Remind me to break myself of it when we get back to safety, will you?"*

*Marcus laughed. "As habits go, I'm rather fond of that one. Now, will your legs hold you up? Yes? Then join in with the chorus. 'Hi ho, hi ho, it's off to Medlab we go.' Come on now, it'll help get those legs moving."*

*Angel groaned and staggered along beside him, mulishly refusing to join in with his song.*

*Angel leaned back against the wall of the elevator with her eyes closed. Her head still hurt, and she did her best to block out Marcus' constant chatter. Did the man never shut up? Angel really liked the Ranger, but at that point she wouldn't have thought twice about shoving a sock in the man's mouth. [A sock, a sock! My kingdom for a sock,] thought Angel wryly.*

*To her blessed relief the elevator arrived at its destination, cutting Marcus off in mid-sentence. Angel opened her eyes only to find him grinning happily at her, holding his hand over the contact that prevented the doors from opening. The man was incredible. They had just been in mortal danger, and had been forced to fight their way to freedom. On top of that, as soon as the elevator doors opened they would have to answer for their disappearance from Medlab.*

*Angel wasn't looking forward to that at all. She was in no doubt that she would be chewed out by Gideon, Marriott, and Hobbes for having broken the terms for her continued presence on the station. Yet while she was worried, it appeared that Marcus wasn't. In fact, he looked downright cheerful. Angel peered at him dubiously. [I wonder if his elevator goes all the way to the top?] The young witch was seriously beginning to doubt it.*

*Still grinning, Marcus said cheerfully, "Well, our little adventure has come to an end. I would imagine we'll have a few people wondering where we got to, don't you? I'm sure they'll be happy to see us back safe and sound."*

Angel looked at him incredulously, "Have you lost your mind? Marcus, we--especially me--are going to be in big trouble. I'm probably going to get thrown in the brig for having left Medlab! And you think they'll be happy to see us back?" Angel winced; having just yelled made her head throb. She instantly felt guilty as she saw Marcus' face fall. She sighed and smiled apologetically, "Sorry, I didn't mean to yell. I'm just not looking forward to getting into more trouble."

Marcus took hold of her hand and squeezed it understandingly. "Don't worry about anything. I won't let them throw you in the brig. After all, it was my idea to go walkabout, right? Of course it was, so I'll just tell them I didn't give you any choice. I'll tell them I forced you to go with me. I'm sure they'll believe me. I can be very convincing when I put my mind to it. I could convince a person the sky was pink and pigs really could fly, if I wanted to. I remember once..."

"Marcus!" barked Angel, cutting the Ranger off before he launched into another one of his rambling monologues.

"What?" asked Marcus, innocently.

Angel counted to ten before answering calmly, "We don't have time to chat about pink sky and flying pigs." She indicated the still closed elevator doors.

Marcus looked at the doors then turned back to Angel, "I didn't think you were that eager to leave," he commented, his lips twitching teasingly.

"Marcus!" ground out Angel, warningly.

Marcus got the hint. "Doors open, before I find myself on the receiving end of your ability, right?" Angel nodded and the Ranger released the elevator doors. As they opened, he took hold of her hand and said with confidence, "Don't worry about a thing. I'll take care of you and I won't let you get into trouble." She wasn't given a chance to say anything, as Marcus led her off the elevator.

To her horror, just as they emerged into the corridor, Gideon appeared around the corner. Beside him was Zack Allen. Angel felt her breath catch. She had only seen the Security Chief once before, when she had been on board B5 with Lucas. She had hoped all reminders of Lucas Buck had been left behind in Downbelow. She wasn't going to be that lucky. Angel dragged her eyes from Zack, and forced herself to focus nervously on the security officers following him and Gideon.

As she and Marcus came to a halt, so did Gideon and the Security Chief, as for the first time they noticed the two people who had just gotten off the elevator. There was a flicker of surprise on both the men's faces, but while Allen was focused more on Marcus, Gideon's attention was fixed on Angel. For a moment, Angel saw relief on the Captain's face, and she let herself relax a little. Her respite was short lived. She saw relief replaced with anger, as Gideon marched right up to her and started yelling.

"Where the hell have you been? Do you have any idea the trouble you've caused? We've been searching for you for hours! Marriott is foaming at the mouth, and I can't say I blame him. What about your sisters? Do you have any idea how your disappearing act has made them feel? They're sick with worry, especially since for some reason they couldn't link with you. What the hell were you thinking, leaving Medlab when you knew you weren't allowed? God dammit, Angel, do you ever stop to consider the consequences of your actions?" Gideon raged furiously, as he towered over Angel.

*In the wake of Gideon's anger, Angel was robbed of her voice. The Captain took her hesitation as a negative. He snorted in disgust and stood back, shaking his head at her. "Of course you don't, do you? You still act without thinking. I wish I hadn't been so lenient on you. I should never have let you stay. I should have done what I wanted to in the first place, and sent you back to the Excalibur! Well, I won't make the same mistake twice, and this time I'll personally escort you back and throw your ass in the brig!"*

*The nausea Angel had been experiencing earlier returned in full force in the face of Gideon's threats, and she could feel tears burning her eyes and throat. "I'm sorry..." she choked, then stopped, unable to continue. Then she felt an arm placed around her shoulders, and she glanced up to see Marcus standing beside her. The happy-go-lucky expression he always seemed to have plastered on his face, even when in danger, was gone and had been replaced by something Angel had not seen before in Marcus' eyes. He was angry. In fact, he was pissed.*

*"That's enough, Captain Gideon. No more threats." Marcus' voice was calm yet steely. Angel was suddenly reminded of a bow, taut and ready for release. She glanced at Gideon to see how he would react to Marcus' statement. She wasn't surprised when she saw a mix of both surprise and anger in the Captain's eyes.*

*Angel could see the muscle in Gideon's jaw tighten before he answered, "Angel is my responsibility, Mr. Cole. She broke the rules and she'll be punished accordingly."*

*"No, she won't," argued Marcus. "If you want to lay blame, blame me. Angel didn't want to leave Medlab, but I did. I would have left whether Angel came with me or not. I can be a very stubborn man, Captain. Angel realized that. She didn't want me to go out alone so soon after being revived, so she had no choice but to go with me. She took the risk of getting into trouble, to make sure I would be all right."*

*Angel didn't dare look at the Ranger. Her surprise at how believable he sounded would have given her away. She felt guilty for the lie, but hoped Gideon would believe it. She watched the Captain from under lowered eyelids to gauge his reaction.*

*Gideon was silent for a moment, as he chewed the inside of his bottom lip. Finally, he spoke, this time a lot more calmly than before. "All right, I can understand that, but it still doesn't change the fact that Angel shouldn't have left. She could have called someone, like Luke Raven, to tell him you were leaving Medlab. You both sneaked out, knowing that if you asked, you--and especially Angel--wouldn't be allowed to leave. Angel could and should have stopped you, even if it meant calling Dr. Hobbes to prevent you leaving. I know my sister-in-law, Mr. Cole, better than you do. I know she wouldn't have left unless she wanted to, which means she still broke the rules." Gideon looked hard at Angel. His reaction wasn't exactly what Angel had hoped for and she felt her heart sink.*

*Marcus sighed. "Captain Gideon, don't be so harsh on Angel. You may not think so, but she had only good intentions. We're back now. That should at least count for something?"*

*Gideon raised an eyebrow. "It might, if you can give a good reason why you were gone for several hours and where you were."*

*Before the Ranger could answer, Zack's commlink went off. Everyone's attention was diverted to the Security Chief as he answered. It was Captain Marriott, asking if any progress has been made in the search for Marcus and Angel. Zack quickly confirmed that they had been located. There was a pause from Marriott, before he ordered Zack to bring the two miscreants to Medlab. Dr. Hobbes was anxious to*

ensure her patient hadn't suffered any ill effects while away from Medlab. Marriott also informed Zack that he would meet them in Medlab, to find out where the hell the two had been. Zack confirmed and signed off.

Gideon turned his attention back onto Marcus and Angel, and informed them that once Hobbes had checked Marcus out, they would have to give some answers.

Marcus nodded, "You won't hear me argue, although I will do whatever I have to, to prevent Angel from being thrown in the brig. She doesn't deserve that. And before we answer any questions," Marcus paused to squeeze Angel's shoulder, "I want Dr. Hobbes to make sure Angel is all right."

Gideon's head snapped up and he peered sharply at Angel. "Why, what's wrong with you, Angel?" Was it Angel's imagination or did Gideon actually sound concerned?

"Angel's feeling a little under the weather at the moment," answered Marcus. Angel sighed, grateful for Marcus stepping in. She hadn't been sure what to say, as she didn't feel up to explaining about their run in with Bobby and Earl just yet.

Gideon was about to speak, but Marcus raised a hand to cut him off, "We'll explain everything in due course, Captain."

Gideon looked about to argue, he obviously wanted answers and wasn't keen to wait, but again he was cut off, this time by Zack. "I'm sorry, Captain Gideon, but we really should get going. We don't want to keep Captain Marriott waiting."

Gideon hesitated for a moment, then nodded, albeit reluctantly. "You're right, Mr. Allen." He turned again to Marcus and Angel, saying, "Let's go." He didn't wait for a response as he turned on his heel and headed for Medlab, leaving Marcus and Angel to follow. Zack and his security officers flanked them on either side.

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### Day 3 : Medlab - 8:00 pm EST

"They've both been drugged. I'm not familiar with the compound, but it would act as a suppressant on the nervous system, paralyzing quickly, then rendering the victim unconscious. It's fast acting, but fortunately, it's also metabolized quickly, so there shouldn't be any long term after effects." Hobbes gave a brisk summary to the two Captains facing her.

Gideon looked from the doctor to Angel with concern. He'd used his anger to hide his relief at finding her, but now his anxiety was overwhelming his anger. The young witch looked forlorn and disheveled, dark shadows under her eyes showing her exhaustion. Her usually sparkling blue eyes looked dull and listless, and it took everything Gideon had not to sweep her up into his arms, hugging her and carrying her back to her quarters. [And then what would you do with her, Matt? Kiss her better? Undress her and put her to bed? Then climb in with her no doubt, and comfort her in the way you always want to.] The Captain told his inner voice to shut up, and he shifted uncomfortably, well aware that his thoughts had started to arouse him. Damn Angel for always having this effect on him!

He watched, biting his lip, as Marcus Cole reached out and tucked a stray strand of hair behind Angel's ear, smiling at her gently. Gideon clenched his hands into fists, only just stopping himself from slapping the Ranger's hand away, and telling him to keep his hands to himself. Before he could speak, Marriot

*intervened.*

*"Are they fit to be questioned, Doctor? I want some answers to what's been going on in the last few hours. Where have the two of you been?" Ben was glowering, his face clearly showing his annoyance at the events of the day. Gideon sighed to himself, thinking that his old friend would never let the Excalibur re-supply at B5 again. Last time it had been the Narns in the Casino, this time Angel and her spells.*

*Angel's voice was soft, but firm, as she interrupted. "Captain Marriot, before I can say anything, I need to speak to my Captain." Gideon was startled. Angel rarely referred to him in that way. What was going on here? He watched her closely as she laid her hand on Marcus Cole's arm, silently begging him to go along with what she asked. Marcus smiled, patted her hand and nodded, leaving his hand covering hers. Gideon suppressed a growl, decided to play along with Angel for the moment, and turned to Marriot.*

*"Will you give me a few minutes in private with Angel? I promise I'll tell you everything I can later." Gideon wasn't completely sure why he was doing this. Perhaps because Angel's story might have something to do with her powers and those of her sisters, things that he didn't want becoming general knowledge. Or perhaps because he felt guilty at his earlier display of temper.*

*Marriot nodded slowly, and waved his hand at Hobbes' office. "Ms. Denier is one of your crew, Matt, so I guess she should speak to you first. I'm sure the doctor won't mind you using her office for a few minutes. When you're done, I want the full story. No evasions or half-truths." Gideon tried to look hurt, but his old friend knew him too well. All he could do was nod and move to Angel's side, helping her stand and supporting her with his arm around her waist as they moved toward Hobbes' office. The warmth of her body against his arm, and the smell of her perfume threatened to arouse Gideon's passions again, and he was almost relieved to see Marcus move to join them. If the Ranger was present to act as chaperone, then Gideon could stop himself from showing Angel just how glad he was to see her safe.*

*Gideon paced the office floor, trying to decide just how much of Angel's story he could tell Marriot. Not much. If the Captain of B5 found out about Angel's previous sojourn on the station, her relationship with Lucas Buck could become more widely known, and that was something to be avoided if possible. The use of Angel's powers in aiding her and Marcus' escape was something he also wanted forgotten. If Marriot and Hobbes found out about Angel, they might start looking more closely at her sister, then at her sister's son, and then... Gideon shook his head as he paced. There was no way anyone--not even his old friend Ben Marriot--was going to find out about Deborah and Marcus.*

*Coming to a sudden halt, Gideon stood with his hands on his hips and glared at Angel and Marcus. "OK, here's what we tell Marriot."*

*As they emerged from Hobbes' office, Angel was relieved to see her sisters waiting for them. The drugs in her system still prevented her from linking with them, but she threw herself happily into Demon's arms, feeling her sister's love surrounding her and comforting her. Lily threw her arms around both of them as far as she could reach, and the three of them cried happy tears at their reunion.*

*In the background, Angel was aware that Marcus and Matt had moved across to where Hobbes, Allan and Marriot stood watching the sisters. Matt spoke quietly, occasionally interrupted by Marcus, as they gave the Captain of B5 the explanation they had agreed upon.*



*The official story was that an old enemy of Marcus had seen him and Angel walking through the Zocalo. Deciding to take revenge, albeit belated, he had decided to drug and kidnap the couple, then allowing them to awaken, so Marcus and Angel could be told exactly how they were going to die. That had been a mistake, as it had given Angel the opportunity to distract the villain by flirting with him, and promising him favors if he wouldn't harm her. The kidnapper had fallen for her wiles, and while releasing her, had given Marcus the opportunity to attack, rendering their captor unconscious. The couple had escaped before he could come around, and had made their way back to the upper levels of B5. Angel's reluctance to tell Hobbes and Marriot the full story was explained by her embarrassment at the role she'd had to play to achieve their escape.*

*Marriot and Hobbes looked skeptical, and asked many questions, most of which Marcus dealt with promptly and courteously. The fact that he was lying through his teeth didn't seem to worry him at all. Angel wasn't sure if Marriot and Hobbes believed everything they were being told, but she found that she didn't care. She'd had enough of B5. She never wanted to see the place again. The young witch leaned into her sisters' embrace and decided that all her instincts had been correct. Babylon 5 was a very bad place for her. She would never return, and all she really wanted to do was to leave at once, even if she had to commandeer the Excalibur single-handedly to do it.*

*Angel felt a huge sense of relief as she heard Gideon say, "I think we've caused enough trouble here, Ben. The best thing I can do now is to take my people back to my ship, and we'll stay there for the rest of the time the supplies are being loaded. We've disrupted your station enough. We'll leave you in peace."*

*Turning in Demon's arms to watch the wheelchair bound Captain's response, Angel saw the look of relief on his face. Marriot raised his hand to shake Gideon's, saying, "I can't say that the idea is unwelcome, Matt. I don't know what it is about the Excalibur, but you and your crew sure do make things fly around here. I've always preferred things to be dull myself. Dull is good. I like dull. Take your people and leave me to my dull life again, please."*

*Gideon laughed and turned to steer his people out of Medlab. John and Luke had stood quietly to one side, watching the reunion taking place between the sisters without interfering or commenting. Now they moved forward to take Lily into their arms. Demon kept one arm around Angel's waist, while reaching out to her husband, smiling gently at him. Matt stepped forward to take Demon's hand, and smiled at Angel as he guided them toward the door. Before they could leave, a voice spoke from the other side of the room.*

*"Don't I even get a goodbye?" Marcus' voice was like that of a forlorn little boy.*

*Angel paused to look back at Marcus, before she turned to Gideon and the others to ask softly, "Could Marcus and I have a moment to say goodbye?"*

*She watched and waited as Gideon looked to Marriot and Hobbes for. To Angel's relief, Marriot nodded before Hobbes could object.*

*"Thank you, Captain Marriot," said Angel with a grateful smile.*

*Before she could turn to go to Marcus, Gideon stopped her. "Ten minutes, Angel, and then we leave. Understood?"*

*Angel ignored Gideon's commanding tone and nodded, saying stiffly, "Believe me, Captain, I want to leave this station even more than you do. With one exception, it's been nothing but bad news for me. I just want*

*to say goodbye to Marcus, and then we can go."*

*The young witch was aware of the sad looks she received from her sisters. She smiled at them to indicate she was all right, then walked over to Marcus, who put his arms around her shoulders and led her to his room, where they could have a little privacy.*

*"I was beginning to think you had forgotten me already," said Marcus, giving Angel an injured look as he closed the door behind them.*

*She laughed softly. "Marcus, I could never forget you."*

*The Ranger broke into a grin as he sat down on the edge of the bed and gazed up at her. "Good, because otherwise, I'd have followed you around for the rest of your life singing, 'I'm Henry the VIII' at the top of my lungs, to remind you who I was."*

*Angel burst out laughing, sat down on the bed beside him, and shook her head. "You know something? I don't doubt you would do that."*

*Both grinned at each other for a moment, then Marcus became serious, reminding Angel again that beneath the jovial exterior, there was a serious person. "I wish we could have had more time together, Angel," he admitted.*

*Angel smiled sadly. "So do I, but this won't be the last time we see each other, Marcus. Now that we're friends, I hope we'll get together sometime and exchange a few outrageous stories, without the danger and adventure," she added with a wry grin.*

*Marcus nodded and patted her hand. "I like the sound of that."*

*For a moment, silence fell between them and Angel watched Marcus' face crease with a frown. There was something on his mind.*

*"What is it, Marcus?"*

*Marcus lifted his eyes from where he had them focused on his lap and looked at Angel. "Why?"*

*"Why what?" she asked, a little confused.*

*"Why did you bring me back?"*

*For a while, Angel sat there with the Ranger watching her closely, as she mulled over her reasons. She knew part of the reason, but to her surprise, she found herself discovering a much deeper motivation for reviving him. Although the realization came as a revelation to Angel, at the same time it made perfect sense. Up until that moment she had always thought Marcus' revival had been to make right a wrong, but it was far more than just that.*

*"Angel?"*

*Angel looked up as Marcus' voice called to her. She smiled apologetically. "Sorry, I was just finding the answer to your question."*

*"And what is it?" asked Marcus, softly.*

*"There are two reasons, actually. At first, I thought it was just about trying to balance a right for a wrong. A long time ago, I did something bad. I've been waiting a long time to make up for what I did. When I found out about you, I had the means to bring you back and I felt it would be my atonement, so I did it," explained Angel.*

*"Even at the risk of getting into trouble?" inquired Marcus, then he went on, "I get the feeling whatever it was that happened, it had something to do with Lucas Buck?"*

*Smiling weakly at his insightfulness, she nodded. "Yes, but that's not something I want to go into right now."*

*Marcus took hold of her hand. "I can understand that, but I hope one day you'll share more of your pain with me. I want to know you better, Angel."*

*Angel squeezed his hand. "And you will, Marcus. Just as I want to get to know you better."*

*Another silence fell between them, until Marcus finally broke it by asking, "You said there were two reasons?"*

*Taking in a deep breath, Angel nodded and said slowly, "The other reason is because I owe you my life."*

*"What?" Marcus looked completely astonished, "I don't understand! How do you owe me your life? Until a couple of days ago, we didn't even know each other. Have I lost my memory of certain events? Hmmm, no I definitely would have remembered you if we'd ever met before, or if I'd saved your life, but I don..."*

*Angel couldn't help herself. She burst out laughing, and raising a finger, placed it over his mouth, silencing him. "Marcus, you're rambling again."*

*"I'm confused. I ramble when I'm confused," explained Marcus, a little petulantly.*

*Shaking her head, Angel grinned at him. "Well, if you'll let me finish, I'll explain so you aren't confused and won't ramble."*

*Marcus' mouth opened about to say something, but then it shut again quickly, and he lifted a hand to indicate she should go on.*

*"Thank you," said Angel with a grin.*

*Becoming serious again, she started to explain. "I guess I should explain it from the beginning. It's weird. I only realized it myself a few minutes ago, but we've come full circle." Angel paused, as she saw Marcus looking more confused.*

*"OK, let me clarify that. If you hadn't saved Susan Ivanova's life, she wouldn't have been around to save Captain Gideon's life when the Excalibur was on its way home with the cure to the Drakh plague. If Gideon had died, he wouldn't have been able to go back to Eriadne--my home--and ask my sister to marry him. If that hadn't happened, they wouldn't have gone to Mars to get married. At that time, I was living on Mars; homeless, stealing to survive, and barely managing to do that. They found me on their wedding day, when I was close to giving up. It wouldn't have been long before I just gave up and died. A lot of*

*things happened after that, and one day I'll tell you about them, but the most important thing is that I was saved. And if I hadn't been saved, then I wouldn't be here today."*

*Angel paused to smile at Marcus, who was looking at her in awe. She continued. "Because of you and your sacrifice, you not only saved Susan Ivanova, but Matthew Gideon, me and indirectly, every person on Earth. You saved my life, Marcus, and the least I could do was to bring you back, not only to redeem a wrong I did, but to give you a second chance at the life you deserve."*

*For a moment, Marcus was completely silent. Finally, he spoke. "I usually have no problem finding words, but right now, I have to admit, I have no idea how to respond to that."*

*Smiling, Angel leaned forward and hugged him. "You don't have to say anything, Marcus."*

*The Ranger hugged her back and whispered against her ear. "Yes, I do. You're one hell of a lady, Angel, and I can never repay you for what you have given me."*

*"You've already repaid me, Marcus, a long time ago," said Angel softly, as she pulled away.*

*"Maybe, but I feel I should give you something, say something." Marcus looked at Angel intently.*

*Angel smiled gently, saying, "If you feel that way, then maybe there is something you can do for me, Marcus."*

*"Anything!" agreed Marcus.*

*"Next time I hear from you, I want you to tell me that you and Susan are together. I'm a terrible romantic, Marcus, and that's all part of bringing you back. You saved Susan because you loved her, and I want you to go after her. I know I said I would be there for you when you contacted her, but things have changed, and you'll have to do it alone. I just want you to promise me that you'll do that. Will you promise?" asked Angel quietly.*

*She watched Marcus' face for a moment. When he started to smile, she knew his answer even before he said it. "You have my word, Angel. Susan will soon know I'm back, and what my intentions are."*

*Nodding with satisfaction, Angel hugged her friend again. "Good."*

*Before either of them could say anything further, there was a soft knock on the door, followed by Demon's voice "Angel?"*

*Releasing Marcus, Angel stood up and called to her sister. "Come in."*

*As Demon entered, she smiled at Marcus and her sister. "I'm sorry, but Matthew is getting a little anxious..." her voice tapered off, and she looked sadly at Angel.*

*Giving her sister an understanding nod, Angel turned to the Ranger. "I'd better get going."*

*Marcus stood and nodded. "I understand."*

*Both moved toward each other and hugged again. Angel felt her throat tighten emotionally, as Marcus softly bid her goodbye. Swallowing tears, she pulled back from his hold and looked up at him. "Let's not*

*say goodbye, Marcus, but rather 'until we meet again?'"*

*"Au revoir, Angel. At least the French have the right phrase for it." Smiling, Marcus leaned his head forward, and to Angel's surprise, his lips found hers in a tender, brief kiss of two friends bidding farewell.*

*She pulled away from his arms and smiled up at him. "Au revoir, Ranger. And remember that promise. I'll be waiting anxiously for a message from you in the near future!"*

*Marcus laughed and inclined his head in acknowledgement. Smiling at Marcus, Angel nodded, then without another word turned to Demon. Together they left the room, to join the others as they departed Medlab and soon afterwards, Babylon 5.*

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## *The Witches of Eriadne: Interlude Four M*

*{[Part 1: Awakenings](#)}*