

The Witches of Eriadne: Interlude Four N - Part 2: Discovery

by *The Space Witches*



*Some memories seem impossible to get over.
Montage donated by the lovely Bucksangel.*

Chapter 1

2nd August 2272: 08:32am EST

I stood staring out of the porthole in my quarters. That morning Matt had announced we were heading to the Independence celebrations on Ceti Gamma III. A year ago, while visiting that world, I'd had a rather shocking, albeit brief, encounter with Lucas Buck. The news that we were heading back to that place left me nervous and afraid. [What if he shows up again?] I told myself Lucas wouldn't be that bold a second time. [I hope.]

The fact that Matt told us that day of all days was almost ironic. Because that day also marked the fourth anniversary of the first time I had met Lucas, even if he was in Matthew's body at the time. I was anxious and agitated, as I always was when thinking about the man who'd had such an enormous impact on my life.

Over the past few years I hadn't been able to stop wondering about what drove Lucas to do the things he did, like showing up at a masquerade ball to play with my heart and mind as if they were his to do with



as he willed. What drove him to cruelty, and to do terrible things such as stealing the life of an unborn child? The more I reflected on the past with Lucas, the more I realized I really didn't know him. Not as Demon knows Matthew, or as Lily knows Luke and John. The sum total of my knowledge of Lucas was that he's a charming, seductive, evil bastard, a great lover and he's probably more demonic than human. Not a whole lot really, is it?

I had a dream once, where Lucas showed me the town of Trinity, and where he led me to believe he had been a much loved and benevolent Sheriff. Knowing all I now know about Lucas, I doubt whether anything about that dream was true. Lucas is a master manipulator, and he played me from the first moment we met. And I let him, because I loved him. [And I still do.] I chased that thought away vehemently. How could I love a man I knew next to nothing about?

Several times I've contemplated trying to research Lucas' past. Every time, I've chickened out. Call it a fear of knowing too much. But after Matthew's announcement that morning, I decided to begin the process of finding out everything I could about Lucas. Maybe if I encounter him again, knowing more about him would help me against him. I ignored that part of me that told me there was no help for me against Lucas. Not after the deal I'd made with him. The deal that gave him my body and soul.

Living on the Excalibur made it tricky to carry out the investigation without my family finding out about it. I knew they would never understand my need to discover Lucas' past. To avoid conflict and opening old wounds, I knew it would be best to get someone outside of the Excalibur to help me find out what I needed to know.

There was only one person I could trust to help me, who would keep the investigation secret, and who might be able to get the job done by the time I needed the information. I walked over to my Comm. unit and entered a code, then waited a couple of minutes before my call was answered.

Marcus Cole's face lit up when he saw me, and despite my mood, I couldn't help but return the infectious smile. "Hello, Marcus."

"Hello. Well, this is a wonderful surprise. To what do I owe this pleasure? Ah, wait I know. You missed my handsome face and delightful sense of humor and you just had to give me a call. Or maybe you just suddenly felt like playing a game of 'I Spy'?" asked Marcus with a grin.

"And maybe you'd like me to have a word with Susan about inserting a sharp object up your ass, if you try playing that game with me again," I shot back. I could feel the corner of my mouth twitching.

"Oh, now, that is just mean! You're a very wicked and cruel woman. I never knew you could be that unkind. Does your family know about this? Maybe I should have a word with them about it. There are drugs you can take to help you," said Marcus, starting one of his rambling dialogues.



I cut in, laughing. "Aw, poor Marcus! I'm sure Susan will kiss whatever injury I inflict on you. Of course, she'd only do it after having enjoyed watching me torture you a little,"

Marcus snorted. "You are heartless! And yes, Susan probably would kiss it better. But only if I begged nicely," he added, causing me to laugh again.

"How is Susan?" I asked. A part of me was anxious to ask Marcus to help me, but the other part didn't see any harm in delaying and inquiring after Marcus' wife.

"Absolutely terrific," answered Marcus with a grin. "She's keeps saying how she's the luckiest woman in the universe now she's married to the Love God that is me. Far be it from me to contradict her when she's right."

"Marcus, from all I've heard about Susan and what I know of you, she curses your very existence daily, especially when you're driving her up the wall. Which is probably every minute of every day," I responded, with an evil smile.

"Now, I'm convinced you contacted me just to abuse me. Whatever could I have done? I'm such a nice man. Great sense of humor, brave, honorable, dashing, positively gorgeous and adorable," finished Marcus with a grin spreading from ear to ear.

"Modest too," I added.

Marcus nodded, "Absolutely."

We grinned at each other for a moment, before I grew serious. Marcus must have read something in my expression because he frowned and asked softly, "This wasn't just a social call, was it?"

I lowered my eyes, for a moment not sure what to say. When I looked up at the screen I smiled sadly. "I'm afraid not."

Marcus's face softened. "Is something wrong?"

I shook my head. "Not exactly," I paused for a moment before continuing, "I need your help, Marcus. I couldn't think of anyone else who could do this. I know it's a lot to ask, especially since it will call on your contacts as a Ranger but..." I faltered. It suddenly seemed like a bad idea to be doing this. [No, it isn't. You have to do this. You have to understand. It might help you deal with Lucas and your feelings for him,] argued my inner voice.

"Angel, I owe you my life. You know you can ask me anything and I will do it," said Marcus encouragingly.

Marcus's words of encouragement and the care I could see in his eyes were all I needed. Taking a deep breath, I explained to him why I had contacted him.

I finished telling Marcus everything I knew about Lucas, including details of the time and place in the dream Lucas had shown me. Once I had filled him in on that, I explained what I wanted him to do for me. "Do you think you can help me with this, Marcus?" I asked softly.



He was silent for a moment. The serious expression on his face was not one I was used to. I'd become accustomed to the mischievous glint in his eyes and an ever-present smile on his face from the moment I'd met him. I became worried that he was going to tell me he was unable to do what I had asked.

"I don't understand why you want to know about Lucas' past, Angel. You've told me enough about this man for me to know he's probably best forgotten," said Marcus finally.

I sighed, "That's the problem, Marcus. I can't forget him. No matter how much I try, and believe me I have tried, I can't. Today is the 4th anniversary of the day I brought Lucas into my life. There's so much I don't know about him, and I need to know more. I need to know about his past, about who he was. What happened to him? How did he get into the Apocalypse Box? I need to know these things and whatever else I can learn. Maybe if I learn all this, I can understand him and I can move on." I stopped a moment to shrug, then went on, "I know it doesn't make much sense. I just need to do this."

"He really did a number on you, didn't he?" asked Marcus softly.

The lump that formed in my throat prevented me from answering his question, so I nodded.

"OK, I'll do it," responded Marcus, a gentle smile on his face.

I closed my eyes for a few seconds in relief. His answer had suddenly lifted a weight off my shoulders. I opened my eyes. "Thank you, Marcus."

"I'll try and get the information when you need it, but I won't promise anything. Lucas Buck lived a long time ago. It will take awhile to track him back to the 20th Century. I'll also have to do this outside normal channels if I'm to keep this investigation secret," explained Marcus.

I nodded. "I understand. Thank you, Marcus."

He smiled again. "Anything for the prettiest Angel in the Universe," said Marcus, with a wink that brought a smile to my face.

"You better not let Susan catch you flirting like that," I warned softly.

Marcus chuckled, "Oh no! If I let her hear me say that, then she'll call me a naughty boy and say she has to give me a spanking," he said, with a mischievous twinkle in his eye.

I laughed and shook my head. "Too much information, Marcus."

We bantered a little longer, which kept my spirits high and my thoughts away from Lucas. Eventually, our conversation drew to an end. Marcus said he would contact me on a secure channel as soon as he found any information on Lucas.

Once we had said our goodbyes I turned the Comm. unit off and stood staring at the blank screen. I hoped I wasn't making a mistake.

[Maybe the saying 'ignorance is bliss' is true. On the other hand, so is the saying 'know thy enemy'.] Neither of those thoughts comforted me much.

"No, this is for the best," I said out loud, but even to my own ears I didn't sound very sure. Sighing, I stepped away from the Comm. unit. The idea of staying in my quarters alone, where I'd do nothing but chase my own thoughts around and around until they made me want to scream, wasn't appealing.



It was my day off today, but I decided I'd rather work and keep my mind occupied than stay alone with my thoughts. I grabbed my coat and without hesitation headed out of my quarters.

[I wonder how long it will take before Marcus gets in touch with some news?] That was the only thought I had as I climbed into the bullet car and headed to Medbay.

13th August 2272: 14:53 EST

There were only five days left before we were due to arrive at Ceti Gamma III, and there was still no word from Marcus. I was more nervous than ever. I knew Marcus had told me it could take some time to track down the information I wanted, and that he might not get it before our arrival for the Independence celebrations on the planet, but I had hoped he would.

The closer we got to Ceti Gamma III, the more I avoided my family. Even though they hadn't said anything, I knew Demon and Lily guessed what was causing my state, and they had been trying to distract me daily. Actually, Demon seemed nearly as unhappy about going back there as I was. My sister insisted it was because she was afraid for me, but I wasn't sure she was being entirely honest. Matt and I were on the verge of being at each other's throats. He couldn't understand what my problem was, and there was no way I could explain to him, without revealing what had happened on our previous visit to Ceti Gamma III.



I sighed and nibbled on a nail, scowling when it broke. Well, that just made it like all the other nails that had been chewed down to stubs during the previous two weeks. I stood abruptly. Once again, I was alone in my quarters and I realized that being alone wasn't a good idea. I decided that a good workout in the gym would do me some good and would keep my mind off other matters for a while.

I was just about to head out of the door when my Comm. unit went off. I stopped abruptly. My heart skipped a beat and my stomach somersaulted. Don't ask me how, but I just knew who it was. For a moment, I was frozen, then I walked to the Comm. unit and accepted the incoming call.

It was Marcus. "Hello," I tried to smile as I greeted my friend, but my face wouldn't co-operate.

"Hello, Angel," greeted Marcus, a warm smile on his face. "How are you?"

"Nervous," I answered.

Marcus nodded. Before he could speak again, I cut in. "Forgive me, Marcus but I'm too wound up for small talk," I admitted honestly.

Again he nodded, "I understand."

"So," I began and faltered. I wanted to ask him if he'd found what I wanted, but I was suddenly unable to get the words out. Doubts flooded my mind. [Should you know? Will it help? Does it matter?]

"I've found what you asked for," said Marcus, anticipating the question I'd been about to ask.

I was still unable to respond. Bless him, Marcus must have guessed how I was feeling, because he smiled and said softly, "I know this is difficult for you, Angel, even though it's what you want. So you don't have to say anything. I'm going to send the file of information I found on Lucas through to you. It's encrypted, so the Excalibur's Comms crew can't get into it. The password is the name of a certain little unicorn, familiar to us both. Take a look at it when you're ready. Or not. I won't keep you."

"Marcus?" I cut in quickly before he could go on.

"Yes?"

I stared at the screen, watching as Marcus waited for me to speak. "I just..." again I faltered, not sure what I wanted to say

Marcus held up a hand, "It's OK. I'll let you get on with things. There's no need to say anything. I just hope this helps you, Angel. I hope it gives you the answers you need to move on." He smiled before going on, "Now, I'm going to say goodbye, but I'll be here for you if you have any questions, need more help or just need a friendly ear, OK?"

I nodded, a thick lump forming in my throat at Marcus' kindness and understanding.

He smiled again, "The file will be waiting for you by the time I've logged off. You take care, Angel."

With that, the screen blanked out. Almost instantly a light started flashing on the console, alerting me to a waiting message. It was the file. I stood there for what felt like an eternity, just staring at that light. Finally, I found my courage, quivering deep down in the bottom of my belly, and I dragged it up. I picked up a chair and took it back over to the console. I sat, stared at the blank screen for a moment then took a deep breath and activated the message. The screen came to life and I started reading.

13th August 2272: 20:14 EST

Marcus' report contained more information on Lucas than I could have possibly hoped for. I was amazed that he'd been able to find out so much given how long ago Lucas had lived. The file contained newspaper reports, police files, and--most stunning of all--a story written by a reporter from Charlotte, South Carolina in 2010, which featured a tell-all interview with a man called Caleb Temple--Lucas' son. The story Caleb told was filled with the supernatural, the need for family, and murder.



The story was written shortly after Lucas' dead body had been discovered in his garden in Trinity. There wasn't a mark on his corpse and the post-mortem had been unable to determine the cause of death. All the subsequent investigation could say was that his heart had stopped. From what the reporter said, Lucas' death was celebrated by some of his townsfolk and mourned by others. That intrigued me. His death had been mourned? Obviously he hadn't been cruel to everyone. Well, I had to be honest. I knew Lucas was capable of kindness--there had been rare occasions when he'd been very kind and gentle with me.

However, knowing Lucas as I do, if he tormented, manipulated and bullied some of the residents as he'd done with my family and me, it was easy to believe that his death would have been celebrated by those he'd hurt or whose lives he'd destroyed.

Lucas's son, Caleb's, story began in 1996--276 years ago. That year Caleb turned ten years of age. It was the year his life changed forever, as on the night of his birthday his father, Gage Temple, went crazy and killed his older sister, Merlyn Ann Temple, by hitting her over the head with a shovel.



My memory locked onto that name. Merlyn Temple had been the name on the plaque dedication I'd seen in my dream. I recalled that part of the dream.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Had any of that been the truth? I kept reading in the hope of finding out.

On the night of his sister's murder, Caleb had met Lucas Buck, Sheriff of Trinity, for the first time. Caleb

told how Gage Temple had been arrested and charged with the murder of Merlyn. How Gage was found dead in his prison cell the next day, having apparently killed himself by shoving a pen into his throat.

The tale got even more bizarre from there. Caleb went on to tell how while at the hospital, the voice of his dead sister told him to go home. Afraid and confused, he did. It was there that the ghost of his dead sister first appeared and warned him of the danger he was in from Lucas, by showing him how Lucas Buck had raped their mother. That night Caleb discovered that Lucas was his real father.

I went cold at that. [Lucas raped a woman?] Part of me cautioned that Lucas was capable of anything. But another part of me couldn't believe it. Maybe being in the Apocalypse Box had changed him, because the Lucas Buck I had known would never have needed to rape a woman. He'd have seduced her, and believe me, no woman can resist Lucas when he turns on the charm

The story went on to tell of Lucas' involvement in Caleb's life. How he slowly became seduced by Lucas and started to discover his true potential and power. He told of how Lucas was attacked in his home by



the local hospital's pharmacist and how Lucas subsequently died. It was during this period that Caleb discovered why it was so important for Lucas to have an heir. Or rather, it wasn't Lucas who needed the heir, but the thing that lived within him. The thing that drove him to do the evil things he did, and gave him all his power. Caleb called it the Rage.

Caleb wasn't really able to explain what the Rage was, but from how he described it, it sounded like a demonic entity that possessed a mortal being, gifting the person with longevity, and supernatural abilities. In exchange, it made them do evil things. It needed a host to survive, but not just any host. It needed the host of a specific bloodline. A bloodline carried on through a direct male line. That bloodline was Lucas Buck's.

The story went on with Caleb revealing that Lucas hadn't died after all, but had been buried alive. He was weakened, and for a brief time the Rage passed onto Caleb, and he became the ten year old from hell. He told how he had tried to kill his own cousin, Gail Emory, because he viewed the child she was carrying--Lucas' baby--as a threat to his power and dominance.

My mind reeled at the news of this Gail Emory and her relationship with Lucas. I felt jealous then told myself to stop being stupid. It had been a long time ago. In fact, I told myself to feel sorry for her. If my experiences with Lucas were anything to go by, the girl had not been happy, even if she'd been in love with him.

Caleb went on, telling of how he'd been about to beat his cousin to death when Lucas had suddenly appeared, very much alive. Gail had been surprised by Lucas' appearance and had fallen downstairs. Caleb found out later that her fall had caused her to miscarry her child.

I couldn't help but wonder how Lucas had felt about losing his child. Had he cared? Yes, he must have. Even Lucas must have cared about the life of his own unborn baby.

Caleb didn't go into great detail about what followed, but he did say that Lucas returned to the house, and together with the ghost of Merlyn, had saved Caleb. The Rage had left him and returned to its former host, Lucas. However, in order to save her brother, Merlyn had sacrificed her existence, and for

many years after, Caleb believed she was gone for good.

The story continued from there. Caleb told how the loss of her child at the hands of her own young cousin turned out to be too much for Gail to handle, and she had to be confined to a hospital for the mentally ill. It had been difficult for Caleb to be without any family but the monster who was his father. Gradually, the father and son became close, as Lucas won Caleb over and Caleb gave in to his darker nature. He became his father's right hand man and protégé. He even joined his father as his deputy, after Lucas' previous deputy, Ben Healy, resigned.



Together, they ran the town of Trinity, and kept the trains running on time so to speak. By the time Caleb was twenty-two years of age, he was close to being as bad as his father, even without the Rage in control. Then the ghost of his sister had reappeared. Merlyn had been given one last chance to save her brother's immortal soul. She revealed something to Caleb that changed the course of his life. She told him that Gage Temple hadn't killed her, that he had only injured her with the shovel. It had actually been Lucas who had killed her by breaking her neck.

Again Lucas' words from the dream came flooding back

"No Angel, just one of my people, one of those I tried to take care of. In her case -- well maybe I didn't try hard enough."

It seemed he'd taken care of her quite thoroughly, but his last words now rang with a different meaning. Lucas had probably meant that he should have tried harder to eliminate her spirit as well as her body. I wondered why he would have killed a young girl. What threat could she have been to him? What kind of monster would do that? Unfortunately, I knew the answer to that and it turned me cold inside.

The knowledge that Lucas had murdered Caleb's much-loved sister somehow broke through the hold and influence Lucas had over him. From then on, Caleb started working against Lucas. He knew that killing Lucas was out of the question. If he did that, the Rage would just pass on to him. Driven by his hatred for Lucas and unable to kill him, Caleb had searched for a way to rid himself of his father and trap the Rage forever.

It took two years, but finally he found a way--an ancient and powerful Box to hold the evil and a spell to put it in there. I could feel my eyes stinging with tears, when I read that two weeks after Caleb had found the Box and spell, Lucas Buck was found dead and the Rage was banished. I knew Caleb's story confirmed Lucas as being evil, and a murderer, but my heart broke at the knowledge of his death and what had happened to him. Lucas had been trapped for nearly 300 years in an Apocalypse Box, along with the Rage.



When Caleb had finished, the reporter had asked why he was telling his story. Especially to a newspaper like the National Enquirer, a tabloid known for its outrageous stories that weren't believed 95% of the time. Caleb admitted that the National Enquirer was the only newspaper that would print his story. As for why he was telling his story, Caleb explained that for too long events in Trinity had been covered up. He knew that many people outside Trinity would never believe the supernatural events described in his story, but he wanted the truth to be told.

The reporter went on to ask if Caleb was concerned that by revealing this story, the investigation into his father's death would be reopened, that his death would be ruled as murder and Caleb would be arrested. Caleb had just answered, "No. The cause of death is as they found it to be. His heart stopped beating. But if they were to decide otherwise, I don't care. All that matters is that the nightmare is over and I'm free. If I ever have children of my own one day, they'll be free, too."

The reporter asked why Caleb hadn't written a book about his life. Caleb had responded saying he was no writer; the chances of his book getting published were slim and he knew many people, while they would deny it, enjoyed reading the National Enquirer. Hence it seemed like the logical forum to get his story aired.

The story came to a close with the reporter telling that soon after the interview Caleb Temple had disappeared, never to be seen or heard from again. Trinity, which had been plagued with the highest number of disappearances and suicides in that part of North America, became a sleepy, friendly, little Southern town, where the people were happy, content and safe.

I sighed and closed my eyes, giving myself a break from staring at the screen. I'd discovered more than I'd bargained for. It seemed like a story of fantasy--or nightmare. How could it possibly be true? Yet I knew it was.

I opened my eyes and started reading through the newspaper articles. Articles which dated back even further than 1996, all coming from a single source, the Trinity Guardian. There was a piece announcing Lucas' election as Sheriff. Various articles told of numerous disappearances, suicides and unexplained deaths. At first, many of the pieces that mentioned Lucas were scathing. They spoke of corruption, murder and illegal activities, all under the control of Sheriff Buck. I was surprised to discover that all these earlier articles from the Trinity Guardian had been written by Gail Emory's parents. It didn't surprise me that both of them had died in a fire. It seemed anyone who spoke out against Lucas either disappeared, committed suicide or their deaths were ruled as accidental--by the Sheriff's office of course.

The later articles couldn't say one thing wrong about Lucas. He was praised as the hero of Trinity--a benefactor and friend. Clearly, there was no reporter around after the Emorys who had the courage to speak out against Lucas.

I stood and began to pace, going through what I'd discovered. I realized to my disappointment that I hadn't found anything that could help me. Everything I had discovered only confirmed that there was much to fear. One of the things that scared me most was learning why Lucas needed an heir. I felt sick inside, knowing it was that need that gave Lucas his interest in taking Marcus for his own, and knowing it was my fault, because I had freed Lucas and the Rage.

I closed my eyes and remembered how on B5 I had questioned Lucas about why he looked so much like Matthew. He'd revealed to me that Gideon was in fact his descendant, "We're blood, darlin'. Family." I shivered, knowing that I had helped free the Rage and in doing so, I had endangered Marcus' life and soul.

I stopped pacing and made a promise to myself. I would never, ever let Lucas take my nephew to be a host to some otherworldly evil. Whatever it took, I'd never let that happen. I also swore that I'd do whatever it took to rid my family of the threat that Lucas posed to them.

Nothing I'd learned comforted me much, nor did the past reveal anything new--it just confirmed things I'd already known. But it helped a little in my understanding of Lucas. I knew it wouldn't help me against him, and it wouldn't help me stop loving him. But it did help me feel a little less guilty for loving him. I

now knew that the Rage controlled most of his actions--at least I hoped it was the Rage--leaving me with hope that those few times when Lucas had been genuinely kind to me, it had been the real man showing through. That's who I'm in love with. The real Lucas.



Well, I'd wanted to find out about Lucas' past so I could know him. I guess to some extent I'd succeeded. I thought it would help me break away from him. How stupid am I? The knowledge had changed nothing, except for making me more afraid for my nephew. I may not have liked what I'd found out, but I was glad I'd asked Marcus Cole for his help. Knowing what you're dealing with is a lot better than not knowing.

I knew the thought was outrageous, but somehow what I had learned had softened my feelings a little. Somehow, I was even more in love with the man behind the Rage. If it were the Rage driving his actions then maybe--just maybe--if the Rage could be banished from the host, without the host dying, the real Lucas would be free. Maybe if he were, we could stand a chance together.

I laughed dryly at myself. [If wishes were horses, beggars would ride.] I knew it was hopeless, but I guess I needed to hope and to believe there was a chance, however small.

I moved back over to the Comm. unit and sat down again. I was driven to go back through everything, just in case I had missed something. I paused a moment before starting. I was amazed at myself and how calm I was after having found out so much about Lucas. Nevertheless, I was still afraid, and as I started reading again, I prayed to the Goddess that Lucas Buck wouldn't appear on Ceti Gamma III. I may have learned more about him, but I wasn't ready to see him again. I wondered if I ever would be.



The Witches of Eriadne: Interlude Four N

{Part 1: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardroom} {Part 2: Discovery}