

The Witches of Eriadne: Something Wicked this Way Comes - Part 4: Regrets

by [The Space Witches](#)



How long can Angel resist Lucas' charms?

Chapter 1

March 2277

Regula IV

Closing her eyes, Angel sat back and gently rocked on the porch swing. She'd just come back from enjoying a nice quiet lunch with Lucas, and was now reflecting on the time that had passed since she had arrived with him on Regula IV.

The first shock had been learning that she wasn't to call him Lucas any more. The name he went by here was Marcus Temple, and she had to remember to call him Marcus when any of the villagers were around. The name had stuck in Angel's throat, and she had berated Lucas,

asking him how he could be so cruel as to call himself by her nephew's name. Lucas had shrugged, telling her it was just a name, and it amused him to name himself after his two sons.

Angel had then remembered the information her friend Marcus Cole had sent her years before. Details of Lucas' life on Earth, and the son he'd raised there. A son called Caleb Temple. It hadn't been the best start to their life together, and Angel smiled wryly as she remembered how Lucas hadn't been pleased and had lip chewed for some time when she'd announced that she wouldn't live in the same house with him. Well, what had he expected? That they'd become housemates and lovers right from the beginning?

Angel hadn't been able to face the thought of living in the same house with Lucas, not so early on in their new relationship. To her surprise, Lucas had relented, much more easily than she'd anticipated, and within a day he'd presented her with a beautiful little house, tucked away at the edge of town. Once she'd settled in, Lucas' courtship had begun.

Opening her eyes, Angel smiled. She'd given him a difficult time, doing her best to resist his charm and the things he did for her. She'd done it just to bug the hell out of the Rage and several times it had worked. The mask of control on Lucas' face had slipped, revealing the Rage beneath, but then it would disappear again, as he regained control of his anger and the Rage backed off. The Rage frightened her, but she'd never backed down, knowing she was safe from its wrath, as long as it needed something from her. That gave her a small advantage over it.

A grin spread across Angel's face as she recalled one of the times, early on, when she'd done her level best to be as unpleasant and uncooperative as possible, without pushing the boundaries of Lucas' and the Rage's temper too far.

A few weeks after arriving, Lucas had invited Angel to his house for dinner. He'd arranged for her to be picked up and brought over to his big mansion, very similar in style to the house on Earth that he'd shown her in her dream years before, when he was still trapped in the Box, and had called to her in her sleep, leading her to release him with the spell that had cost the life of Dureena's baby. Memories of that event still gave Angel sleepless nights, filled with guilt-ridden dreams. The resemblance of Lucas' new house to the house she had seen in her dream did him no favors with her.

The evening of Lucas's invitation, he'd arranged a beautiful, private candlelit dinner for the two of them. Romantic music had been playing in the background and he'd had all her favorite foods prepared. He'd looked and smelled gorgeous, wearing his black velvet vest, the one that drew Angel's fingers like magnets. She'd just wanted to reach out and stroke the velvet, touching his chest, then maybe sliding her fingers down to unfasten the buttons and... Angel had been forced to rein in her thoughts as they'd threatened to take her places she knew she couldn't afford to go.

Lucas had been charming and conversational, but Angel had sat stubbornly, saying nothing, and despite being hungry, she'd pushed her food about on the plate. Finally, Lucas' irritation had got the better of him. He'd informed her that he'd gone to a lot of trouble to obtain the items on the dinner table, as a special treat for her. Unimpressed, Angel had just stared at him and remained silent.

As the silence stretched on, Angel could see Lucas chewing the inside of his lip; a sure sign that

he was steadily getting more annoyed. Finally, he'd broken the silence. "You said you were hungry when you arrived!" His sharp tone had only spurred Angel on to her next action.

Cocking her head to one side, she'd blinked at Lucas then picked up her plate, held it over the end of the table and let go. The sound of the plate breaking as it hit the floor, spilling its contents every which way, broke the silence. Then she'd stood up, carefully folded her napkin, placed it on the table and said, "I changed my mind." Angel had turned and walked out. She'd actually been both surprised and disappointed when he hadn't come marching after her.

That had been the way of things for some time, until finally she'd seen the anger in Lucas' eyes flashing dangerously, and she'd realized she was being reckless and pushing too far. Lucas was living up to his part of their bargain, while she wasn't even trying to keep her side of the deal. Besides that, Lucas had been slowly winning her over and she'd found herself regretting walking away from some of the things he'd done for her.

One occasion when she'd found herself giving in had been when Lucas had turned up on her door step with the most adorable beagle puppy she'd ever laid eyes on. Angel's heart had turned at the sight of the precious little bundle, half asleep in Lucas' arms. It was so tiny and so lovable that Angel's first instinct was to reach out and take it from Lucas. But of course she'd stopped herself and had asked Lucas coldly what he was doing there.

Lucas had gently stroked the puppy's head, telling her that he'd rescued the dog from a local farmer, who had been about to drown it, as it was the runt of the litter. That had shocked Angel, but she'd told herself that Lucas was just saying that to make her believe he was some kind of animal lover who went about rescuing strays.

"I'm sure you can find someone else who will take the dog, Lucas" Angel had said, while all the time wanting to snatch the puppy from his hands.

Lucas had sighed and informed her that the farmer had only allowed him to take the dog because Lucas had promised he would find someone to care for it and raise it as a pet. But he'd been around a few people and no one willing or able to care for a little puppy that would require a lot of attention.

"These folks are hard workers, Angel-face, you know that. To them a dog is bred for working, not for being a pet. If a dog ain't strong enough, then they have no use for it," Lucas had informed her softly, all the time stroking the sleepy puppy's ears. Just as he had been about to turn around, Angel had stopped him and asked him where he was going.

"Back to the farmer, who will probably do what he wanted to do to it in the first place," Lucas had answered softly. He'd paused before adding, "I guess I was wrong to bring it to you, but I thought you of all people wouldn't be able to resist this little guy and would take care of him." He'd sighed and had again turned to leave.

Angel had stopped him at once. She couldn't let him take the puppy back to be killed. And she had to admit, the thought of Lucas rescuing this little helpless thing and bringing it to her did melt her heart a little...OK, quite a lot.

So Angel had taken the puppy, now named Baby, and he was a source of great delight to her. Even Harry had taken a shine to the sweet little bundle of joy. When they had first returned to

Regula, Harry had moped about the place, obviously missing his brother, Bubba, who had been killed in some mysterious accident before they'd left Eriadne. Angel had been unable to find out any details of that 'accident' but she suspected the worse. Bubba had annoyed Lucas. That was an extremely dangerous thing to do, unless he wanted something from you, as he did from Angel.

So Harry had been depressed, and despite the way he had treated her on Eriadne, Angel had felt sorry for the big lug and tried to cheer him up. Where Angel had failed, Baby had succeeded with one wag of his little brown and white tail. In fact, Baby and Harry were off together today. Angel had no idea where, but she had no doubt they were getting into some kind of mischief. Angel smiled; sometimes she wondered who Baby really belonged to, her or Harry.

Baby had been the turning point in her relationship with Lucas. Not any grand attempt at wooing or overblown romantic gesture; it had just taken him bringing her the runt of the litter. That action had thawed the resistance Angel had been putting up until that moment. So after nearly five months of doing everything in her power to piss off the Rage by finding fault or refusing Lucas' attempts at courtship, she'd given in and stopped being such a hard ass. She and Lucas had settled into a routine, where they spent time together, with Angel discovering she really enjoyed herself and Lucas' charming, and often times amusing, company.

Her love for Lucas had grown over the months and her desire for him was mounting daily. The only thing still holding her back was the Rage: her nemesis, the thing that twisted what could be a normal relationship into something just short of a lie and a complete nightmare.

Angel sighed. Her good mood was in danger of evaporating because of thinking too much about the Rage. Whenever she thought about it, she always started thinking about her family and how much she missed her sisters. She was going to have to face having a baby on her own, without their support.

The sisters had been together during Demon's, Lily's and Ilas' pregnancies, but Angel would have to face hers alone, and that scared her. She didn't know what to expect and what to do when the time came. She worried that she was now over thirty, and she wondered what effect that might have. Demon had been that age when she'd carried Marcus, but Demon was physically stronger than Angel, and Luke had been there to help her in the latter months of her pregnancy. Angel would have to go through it alone, without her sisters' advice and moral support and without Luke's help. That was a bitter pill to swallow. Luke had been Angel's best friend on the Excalibur, and her mentor. In any other circumstances, he would have been with her through every stage of her pregnancy, supporting her and reassuring her.

Shaking her head, Angel forced herself to try and think about something else. She did herself no good thinking that way. Things were the way they were, and the only thing she could do was accept them and make the most of them. Angel knew the Rage and Lucas wouldn't remain patient for much longer, and her own love and need for Lucas was fast approaching the point where she didn't want to resist, even if it meant that the Rage finally got its heir.

Watching as the sun slowly began to set behind the trees beyond her house, Angel accepted the fact that soon the day would come when she finally returned to Lucas' bed. She couldn't lie to herself. That was what she had craved for a long time, and a small part of her didn't care if the Rage won, as long as she could be with Lucas.

Lucas watched Angel as she sat on the porch swing, reading a book, with the puppy he had given her lying on the swing at her side, with its head on her knee. The puppy, which Angel had called Baby--stupid name--was fast asleep, and Angel was obviously engrossed in her book, as neither had heard Lucas draw near. Not that anyone heard Lucas approaching if he didn't want them to. He could move silently, like a cat in the night, stalking its prey.

Watching Angel's head bent over her book made Lucas lick his lips in silent anticipation. This was his prey now; the prey that had eluded him for months. Well, that time was over. She'd evade him no more.

Clearing his throat, Lucas saw Angel's head lift abruptly, and she glared at him with startled, clear blue eyes. "Damn it, Lucas! Why do you always have to sneak up on me like that?"

Ignoring the irritation in Angel's eyes and voice, Lucas lowered himself to sit on the swing alongside her, running his hand gently over Baby's head, as the puppy still slept at his mistress' side.

"I don't sneak, darlin'. I'm just light on my feet."

Baby made little wuffling noises in his sleep, and turned his head slightly into Lucas' hand, obviously enjoying the gentle caresses of Lucas' fingers. The Sheriff looked forward to a time when Angel would respond to his touch in the same way, a time he knew was coming soon.

"What do you want, Lucas?" Angel still glared at him, and he could see her watching the movement of his hand carefully. Jealously? Wanting his caresses? Lucas could feel the heat emanating from Angel's body, smell her scent in the air, and he knew what it meant. Angel hadn't had a man in a long time. She might deny it, even to herself, but her needs were growing. She'd need satisfying soon, and Lucas was the man to give her what she needed.

"Harry's on his way over to collect Baby. He'll look after the dog while we're away." Lucas knew this wasn't the best way to approach Angel, but he loved to see her eyes flash and her lips pout with anger, so he couldn't resist teasing her a little.

"Away where? I have no intention of going anywhere, especially not with you, Lucas." Sure enough, those crystal blue eyes he lov...liked so much were flickering with annoyance.

Baby awoke at the sound of his mistress' voice, and looked up sleepily, turning from Angel to Lucas and back. Lucas felt the soft, wet touch of the puppy's tongue against his fingers and smiled. The dog loved Lucas. Somehow, he seemed to know that Lucas had saved his life, and although Baby was devoted to Angel, Lucas ran her a close second in the puppy's affections.

"You don't want to go to Disneyplanet? Hell, I don't think I can cancel now. I'll just have to find someone else to go with me." Lucas started to rise from the swing. He stood looking down at Angel, watching her biting her lip. She was torn. He knew that she'd always wanted to visit the planet famed throughout the galaxy for its attractions. The idea of turning down a trip there was obviously causing Angel to struggle with her conscience.

Lucas watched in silence for a moment. Just as Angel won her battle, and opened her mouth to tell him she didn't want to go, he played his ace. "I guess I'll take Claire, then. School's out now.

She'd enjoy a vacation away from here."

Angel was well aware that the village schoolteacher regularly warmed Lucas' bed. They'd had a confrontation about it soon after Angel had arrived on Regula. Angel had demanded that Lucas get rid of his mistress, but Lucas had refused, telling her that as long as she refused to share his bed, she had no right to expect him to sleep alone. Not that Claire got much sleep when she visited. Lucas always sent her home after he'd gotten what he wanted from her.

Lucas knew he was playing a dangerous game teasing Angel about Claire. She pretended not to care, but Lucas knew she was jealous, particularly as Claire was a blonde. Angel didn't much care for blondes, especially pretty, available ones.

Angel gave a snort of distaste and said, "Why don't you do that? I'm sure you can find a whorehouse that would take her in, although maybe not. Disneyplanet has high standards, I've heard."

Lucas grinned to himself, but made sure his face showed nothing but grave concern. "That's a little harsh, Angel. You know I'd get rid of her tomorrow if..." He trailed off, then leaned forward and stroked Baby's head again, provoking a whimper of pleasure from the little beagle. Straightening again, Lucas continued, "I'd much rather take you, Angel, if you'll join me. The hotel is supposed to be beautiful, the food great, the service excellent. I promise I won't try to do anything you don't want me to. You have my word on that."

Angel looked up at him seriously, and he could see her chewing over his offer. Lucas' word was always good. If he promised something, he always delivered. Of course, he always wanted something in return.

As the raven-haired beauty wavered, Lucas went on, "Harry would love to have Baby stay with him for a few days. Or you could call him and get him to stay over here." He waved up at the house he had provided for Angel on her arrival. It wasn't as grand as his own mansion, but it was light and airy, cool inside during the hot days of summer.

The previous few weeks on Regula had been very hot, and Lucas played his winning card last. "It's winter in the part of the planet where the hotel is located. I hear they may even have snow there right now."

Regula IV rarely got cold enough for snow, and Lucas knew that Angel hadn't enjoyed the recent heat. He knew he had won when she said querulously, "I don't have any winter clothes." She frowned as she looked down at Baby, who had started to chew the corner of the book that lay abandoned on Angel's knee.

Lucas smiled and said softly, so low that she couldn't hear his words, "You won't need clothes, Angel. You'll have me to keep you warm."

Angel looked up sharply. "What did you say?"

Lucas smiled again. "I said I'll get you whatever clothes you need, Angel. I'll make sure you stay warm."

Lucas stood at the top of the shuttle ramp and tapped his foot in irritation at the delay, muttering to himself that he wished he'd never given Angel the damned puppy. Three times now Angel had gotten herself settled into her seat on the ship, only to remember something she should have told Harry. Three times, she'd thrown herself out of her seat and run down the ramp to give Harry another instruction, as he stood holding Baby, waiting to watch the shuttle depart. Lucas watched impatiently as Angel gave Baby one last hug, stood on tiptoe to kiss Harry's cheek, then ran lightly up the shuttle ramp and back inside.

Turning to watch her strap herself into her safety harness, Lucas chewed the inside of his lip as Angel smiled up at him sweetly and said, "What are you holding us up for, Lucas? I thought you wanted us to get off on time?"

Not trusting himself to say a word, Lucas flung himself into his seat and buckled up. This was going to be an interesting few days.

Disneyplanet

Angel pressed her face against the window of the small helicopter as it descended. She was trying hard to contain her excitement, but she knew she was failing. Darkness was drawing in, but there was just enough light left to see by as they came in to land on the snow covered ground.

The hotel looked old and rambling, reminding Angel of an old hunting lodge she'd once visited, in Scotland on Earth. Surrounded by trees that looked like pines, the lights from the windows looked warm and inviting to visitors. Smoke lifted into the darkening sky from the numerous chimneys littered across the sloping roofs of the hotel, signaling to the arriving visitor that warming fires awaited them inside, ready to dispel the cold of the outdoors.

Angel shivered a little, looking down at her lightly shod feet. They were going to get cold and wet on the path across the snow covered lawns to the front door of the hotel. It also looked a lot colder outside than she had anticipated. Somehow she doubted if the jacket she wore would be warm enough. Lucas had told her he had more suitable clothes waiting for her in her room, but she wasn't quite sure how she was going to get there without losing a few toes to frostbite.

As the helicopter touched down, Angel turned to see Lucas reaching under his seat. She sat, her mouth gaping wide in amazement, as he pulled out the most beautiful black coat she had ever seen. He held it out toward her with a smile, but at first all Angel could do was to reach out and touch it. It was like a soft suede on the outside, incredibly sensual under her fingertips. The inside was lined with a dense black fur-like material, even softer than the outside. Angel almost purred with pleasure as she ran her fingers over the material of the coat then looked up at Lucas and whispered, "For me?"

Lucas laughed, unfastened his seatbelt and stood, holding out the coat toward her. "It ain't big enough for me, darlin', so I guess it must be yours."

Turning around quickly, Angel slid her arms into the sleeves, then lifted the deep hood over her head. At first, the hood slipped forward so far it completely covered her face, and Angel

growled at the sound of Lucas' laughter. She pushed the hood back until it framed her face and glared up at him. "The coat is all very well, Lucas, but what about my feet? How am I supposed to get into the hotel without freezing them solid? You said these shoes would be fine!" Lifting her foot, Angel waved it at Lucas, showing him her all too fragile shoes.

Lucas laughed again, and reached out to open the door of the helicopter. Angel shivered as a wave of cold air swept inside, and she pulled her beautiful new coat more tightly around her. She watched as Lucas leaped out into the snow, barely seeming to notice the low temperature. It was one of the many odd things about Lucas. He never seemed bothered by the heat or the cold.

Before Angel could move, Lucas lunged forward and grabbed her, sweeping her up into his arms. She gave a little squeal, and threw her arms around his neck, holding on tightly as he strode across the snow covered lawn to the front door of the hotel.

"You don't need to worry about cold feet, Angel. I'll soon get you warm."

Angel bit her lip and dropped her head, allowing the hood of her coat to fall forward again, concealing her face. That was her biggest worry. Lucas could get her very warm indeed, and her cold feet might soon be forgotten.

Lucas steered Angel into the bedroom, keeping his hand over her eyes. He could feel her quivering with excitement under his touch, and he knew that he'd done the right thing bringing her here. This place was like a dream for Angel, full of luxurious warmth and perfect service. The receptionist who had checked them in downstairs had been friendly and had made it obvious that he wanted nothing more than to make Angel and Lucas' stay as pleasurable as possible. Well, that was Lucas' goal, too, but he had his own ideas on how to achieve his pleasures.

"You can look now, darlin'." Lucas removed his hand from Angel's eyes and smiled as she gasped at the large room in front of them.

It was mostly decorated in warm tones of cream and gold. The carpet was deep and soft, caressing their feet as they moved toward the open fireplace where a log fire blazed brightly. A large, cream fur rug was spread in front of the fireplace, between two deep, comfortable looking sofas, upholstered in soft cream suede.

Over by the window stood a small dining table with two chairs. The table was laid with beautiful white china, crystal glasses and silverware. The window beyond was dark, but framed with cream and gold velvet drapes. Angel ran to look out of the window, dropping her new coat over the back of the sofa as she passed it, and beckoned Lucas over with a smile to show him the view.

Lucas joined her, casually draping his arm around Angel's shoulders as he looked out onto the garden below. It was softly illuminated, with little lights sparkling in the branches of the snow covered trees and shrubs. It looked like a fairy garden in an enchanted castle, with a tiny frozen pond glinting in the sparkling lights. Lucas had to admit that the hotel was everything his agent had promised, which was fortunate, as otherwise the agent's life expectancy would have

been short.

Angel looked up at Lucas, her eyes sparkling with happiness as she whispered, "It's beautiful, Lucas. Thank you for bringing me here."

Lucas leaned down and kissed her gently on the lips, keeping his mouth closed, reining back his desire to rip her clothes off her, sweep the table bare, and take her on it there and then. Ignoring the stirring of his groin, he pulled back and gave Angel a gentle smile, as he lifted his hand and ran his thumb along her cheekbone. She closed her eyes and leaned into his caress, and Lucas' smile became triumphant. He was almost there. Schooling his features back into gentleness, he whispered, "I just want you to be happy, Angel."

She opened her eyes and stared up at him, and Lucas could see the doubts that still lingered there. Well, he'd sweep those away soon enough. With another gentle smile, he took her by the shoulders and turned her to look at the rest of the room.

Angel gasped as she saw the huge bed on the far side of the room. It was a four poster, made from a dark wood, and hung with deep red velvet drapes. The bed cover was also red velvet, and the bed was piled high with cushions in every shade of red, cream and gold. Lucas hurriedly suppressed the image of how Angel would look spread naked across that bed, her wrists tied to the bedposts. Not now.

But later...

This time when Angel looked up at him, he could see she was frowning. "Lucas, I..."

Lucas interrupted her before she could continue, laying a gentle finger on her beautiful lips. "Shh. I know. You're not ready yet. That's OK. I'll sleep on the couch." Although he had no intention of sleeping there for long. If his plan worked, Angel would soon be begging him to join in her in the big, soft bed.

Before Angel could say anything more, Lucas said, "Why don't you check out the bathroom? I was told they're pretty fancy in this place."

Angel's face cleared and she gave Lucas a smile that made his stomach do a back flip. It had to be his stomach, of course. It couldn't possibly be his heart. Turning, she ran to look through the door into the bathroom, leaving Lucas to enjoy her rear view. Angel always did have the most beautiful ass in the universe as far as Lucas was concerned.

She let out a squeal of delight as she looked inside the bathroom, turning to beam at Lucas over her shoulder. "It has a huge tub, Lucas! Deep, too! You may never get me out of it."

Lucas bit his tongue, holding back the rejoinder he wanted to make. [I'd rather join you in there, darlin'.]

"Come over here and take a look in the wardrobe, Angel. I hope I got everything you need, but if there's anything I missed, let me know, and I'll get the hotel to order it and fly it in. It can be here in the morning."

Lucas flung open the wardrobe doors, and waited while Angel moved across and started looking through the clothes that hung there. She reached out to touch the deep red velvet

evening dress, which Lucas knew would cling to her beautiful body, displaying her breasts and ass to advantage. She moved on to look at the warm, soft sweaters he had chosen, the leather pants, the long woolen skirts, and the silk shirts. Everything was beautifully cut and made from the softest, most expensive materials.

Before she could reach the last of the hanging clothes, Lucas opened a drawer and displayed a froth of silk and lace lingerie; red, black and virginal white. The thought of how Angel would look in the items he'd provided threatened to arouse Lucas even further, so he clamped down on his feelings and watched stony faced as she ran her fingers through the scanty items in the drawer.

To Lucas' surprise, Angel started to laugh softly. "Very nice try, Lucas. I guess you'd like me to model these for you, wouldn't you?" She looked up at him, and even more to Lucas's astonishment, there was no anger flashing in her crystal blue eyes, just amusement.

He smiled back and said quietly, "When you're ready. I certainly wouldn't complain at the idea."

Angel laughed again and lifted herself on tiptoe to kiss Lucas' cheek. He held his arms rigidly by his sides, fighting the urge to wrap them around her, pulling her into a tight embrace and a passionate kiss. Now would be too soon, but later...

Angel started to turn away, but Lucas called her attention back to the wardrobe. "You didn't see everything I ordered for you, darlin'. Look here." He pointed to the last items hanging on the rail. Angel turned back and her eyes widened when she saw that he was pointing at a heavy sheepskin jacket, and a pair of riding jodhpurs. Knee high leather riding boots gleamed in the shadows beneath.

Running her fingers over the sheepskin coat, Angel looked up at Lucas expectantly. "Is this...? Do you mean...?"

Lucas laughed. "Yes, love, I mean that I've arranged for us to go riding in the morning. With this stuff and one of those sweaters, you should be warm enough."

Angel's eyes sparkled again, and Lucas wasn't sure whether it was happiness or amusement that lit them from inside. "We? We will go riding? I didn't know you could ride, Lucas."

"I'm a man of many talents, darlin'. Shame on you. You should have known that I'd enjoy mounting a fine filly." Lucas gave her a lecherous leer and a wink that made her laugh again.

"Now that I can believe." Angel laughed again, and then gave Lucas a smile that made his stomach do back-flips again. "Thank you, Lucas. I'd love to go riding. But for now I'm really hungry, so what's for dinner?"

Lucas lifted his hand and caressed her cheek again, saying softly, "Whatever you want, Angel. Whatever you want."

Angel sat curled up on one of the sofas, swirling the brandy around her glass, warming it, then inhaling the divine aroma. Along with everything else in the hotel, it was of the finest quality. She watched Lucas carefully as he stretched out his long legs across the fur rug, closed

his eyes and gave a deep sigh of contentment. She wasn't sure she'd ever seen Lucas so relaxed and at ease.

Not his usual sense of watchful control, his arrogant assumption that everyone and everything would do exactly what he wanted. No, this was complete relaxation. Lucas looked as if he would be happy whatever happened. He was just contented to be where he was, and in Angel's company.

Dinner had been delightful, with good food, good wine, and good company. Lucas had both talked and listened, drawing Angel out, seeming genuinely interested in what she had to say. If he was faking his interest, he was doing it extremely well. A small part of Angel, a part buried so deep that she hardly dared to listen to it, began to whisper softly to her that this was how it could be with Lucas. This was the real man, the man she could love. This was the man without the Rage. He could be witty and charming without being cruel. He could be kind and attentive, without demanding a return. It was very, very hard to resist Lucas when he behaved like this.

Angel looked over the edge of her glass and took a small sip to steady herself. Lucas was particularly hard to resist when he looked so damned sexy. His thick, soft, shining hair had grown long recently; long enough to just flick up at the back of his collar. Long enough so it almost begged for Angel to run her fingers through it. His long, long legs were encased in tight black jeans. Angel's eyes were irresistibly drawn to his groin, where she could see the bulge of his large cock pressing against the cloth. Her fingers almost twitched again, but this time with her desire to release that cock, to caress it, to lick it, to arouse it to give her the pleasure she longed for. It had been so long, so long...

Lucas cleared his throat and Angel flicked her eyes up to meet his. From the amused twinkle she could see in their hazel depths, she knew he had caught her gazing longingly at his crotch and she felt herself reddening.

[Nice going, Angel-girl! Next you'll be rolling over onto your back and spreading your legs, just begging for him!]

Just the thought of doing that sent a rush of heat through Angel's body. She wanted Lucas so badly it almost hurt. She was hot and wet, and it seemed like an eternity since she'd had a man inside her. She wanted a man again. She wanted this man, who sat watching her silently, his sensuous lips curved with amusement.

Angel shifted her gaze, taking in Lucas' white silk shirt and black velvet vest. He'd dressed up for her tonight, putting on his best vest to please her. And it did please her. Angel loved that black velvet vest, even though it made her long to run her hands over his hard body, caressing it, unfastening the buttons of the vest, then the shirt, then...

Taking another hurried sip of brandy, Angel looked away again, trying to suppress the memory of emerging from the bathroom earlier to find Lucas dressing. He had his shirt on, but it was open, leaving his chest and belly bare. The hairs on his chest had looked as soft as she remembered, but Angel had been surprised to see that Lucas looked as if he had been working out. His belly had always been flat, but now she could see his abdominal muscles, clearly defined under his skin. Lucas had a six-pack!

Just the thought sent another surge of heat racing through Angel, finding a spot deep between her legs and setting it burning slowly. There was only one thing that could quench that fire, and it was sitting right opposite her.

Angel finally broke the silence that had lasted so long, but so comfortably between them. "I think I saw some blankets in the wardrobe, Lucas. Shall I help you make up a bed on the sofa?"

Lucas shook his head. "I can do it."

Angel set her glass down on the small table by the sofa. "In that case, I'll say goodnight." She rose gracefully, careful not to let the slit at the front of her red velvet evening dress gape open too far, but all too aware that her hard nipples were pressing the thin, soft material out over her breasts, giving Lucas very a clear signal about how she was feeling. She could almost feel Lucas' gaze burning holes in the back of her dress as she moved to the bathroom, telling herself that she should take a cold shower before bed.

Lucas sat and watched Angel retreat into the bathroom. He smiled as he watched her hips sway under the figure hugging dress. Damn it, that dress looked good on her, but it would have looked even better off her. Telling himself that his patience would be rewarded soon, Lucas went and fetched the blankets, stripped off his clothes, and rolled himself up on the sofa, calling the lights to dim.

When Angel emerged from the bathroom, she was almost disappointed to see that Lucas had rolled himself up into the blankets and seemed fast asleep. She wouldn't have minded seeing his reaction to the negligee he had bought her. Telling herself it was for the best, Angel moved to the bed, throwing the cushions off and onto the floor. If she threw them a little harder than she needed to, out of pent up frustration, at least she was the only one who saw.

Lucas heard the cushions hit the floor and smiled to himself. Patience was paying off. Angel would soon be ripe and ready for plucking.

Lucas sat opposite Angel, the only light illuminating the room coming from the fire and candles scattered around the room and on the dinner table. His long legs were stretched out across the rug, his bare feet crossed at the ankles. Lucas was feeling completely relaxed. Arranging for them to go horse-riding had been an excellent idea, even if it had left him sore and stiff.

Angel was a superb horsewoman and had proved it by winning the race he'd challenged her to. [Even if she did have to cheat,] thought Lucas proudly. Lucas had taken the lead in the race and Angel had tricked him into stopping when she'd cried out to him, making him believe she was hurt. He'd stopped to turn and go to her, only because he hadn't wanted anything bad to happen to the prospective mother of his child, of course.

Just before he'd reached her, she'd sat upright in the saddle, shot him a wicked grin and spurred her horse into action. Lucas' mount had reared up, nearly unseating him, and then tried to bolt in completely the opposite direction. By the time he'd shown the horse who was boss and got it going where it should, it was too late. Angel had galloped ahead and was already nearing the row of trees that had been designated as the finishing line. He generally didn't like losing, but he'd smiled and enjoyed Angel's sneaky tactics. She was, deep down, a woman after his own heart.

They'd returned a few hours later, having explored the forest surrounding the hotel until the sun was going down. By that time Lucas' body had started to ache. He was by no means unfit, but riding had exercised muscles unaccustomed to the strain.

Now it was time to up the ante and get Angel into the final stretch. This time the finishing line would be the bed, with both of them reaching it together.

Leaning back in his chair, Lucas groaned, and gently rubbed the spot on his shoulder that had been injured when he'd healed Gideon's wound. He got the reaction he'd hoped for. Angel's eyes widened in concern. "Lucas, is something wrong?"

He shook his head, smiled and reached across to squeeze her hand. "Just stiff, Angel-face. After having spent the night on the sofa and then that horse ride, this old body of mine has taken a beating and is feeling a little the worse for wear."

Lucas hid a smile of pleasure when he saw the guilt in Angel's eyes, as well as an emotion that would really get her where he wanted her. Love. As distasteful as it was to him, love was useful, especially when you could use it to manipulate someone to get what you wanted.

"Is there anything I can do to help?" asked Angel softly.

"I managed to get some massage oil from downstairs. Would you be an angel," he paused to give her a quirky smile before continuing, "and use it on my shoulders?"

Telling herself to control herself Angel nodded, swallowing away a nervous lump in her throat. "Where is it?"

"I'll get it," said Lucas rising, pointing to the dressing table.

"I'll get it!" said Angel, rising as well. "Take your shirt off and go lie on the bed," she instructed before moving quickly over to the dressing table. Finding a blue bottle she turned to walk back over to Lucas, her stomach flip-flopping inside her at the sight of him, now shirtless, lying face down on the bed. The sight of his naked back, and his black jeans outlining the shape of his hard buttocks, was nearly enough to make her whimper aloud.

Angel had seen Lucas rubbing at his left shoulder, and she had instantly remembered treating the area with a regenerator, after he had healed Matt. Did Lucas still suffer the consequences of using his healing powers to save Matt's life? The very idea made her melt inside and she questioned the wisdom of having agreed to give Lucas a massage. Once she touched his back, would she be able to stop her hands wandering further?

Angel took a deep breath, telling herself that she needed to get him talking, distracting her, so she didn't focus too much on his body. Opening the bottle, she sat down beside him, level with his hips, and asked softly, "Why didn't you say anything earlier about being stiff? We didn't have to go horse-riding."

"I didn't want it to spoil our day," responded Lucas softly. He turned his head and looked over his shoulder at Angel, giving her a smile that made her hot inside.

Pouring some oil into her hands, Angel began working on Lucas' left shoulder, using both hands to gently massage the oil into his muscles. His skin was warm to the touch, and it felt wonderful. "Our day wouldn't have been spoiled if we hadn't gone riding," she said, absently.

She moved her hands down Lucas' back, stroking and gently working out the stiffness, the hard, firm muscles moving beneath her touch.

"I wouldn't have wanted to miss seeing how happy you were out there," answered Lucas with a soft drawl. He still had his head turned on the pillow, although his eyes were now closed, and a soft smile played on his lips, as he enjoyed the sensation of Angel's hands massaging his body.

Lucas' sexy voice sent a shiver through Angel. Having him so close to her, her hands on him, feeling him, his musk filling her nostrils, she was losing it fast. Angel wished he would roll over, taking her in his arms and kissing her hard, before drawing her against his chest and lowering her to the bed beneath him.

[Focus!] She ordered herself fiercely. She continued running her hands along Lucas' shoulders. The smell of the oil was intoxicating, making her feel light headed. The blood in her veins seemed to be getting hotter and hotter, melting her right to the core.

"I did love today," she admitted, almost in a whisper, [Especially the sight of you astride a horse,] she added silently.

Lucas opened his eyes, and looked over his shoulder at her, the smile still playing across his lips. "So did I, Angel-face."

Angel's stomach somersaulted as Lucas' eyes captured hers. Neither said anything, and the urge to lean forward and kiss Lucas' lips was strong. But she resisted. Clearing her throat, Angel said with forced cheerfulness, "I'm glad you did." Then she lowered her eyes and forced herself to concentrate on massaging Lucas' sore back.

As she moved downwards, gently kneading her fingers into his flesh, her hands froze. A large, ragged scar marred the smoothness of Lucas' back. Memories flashed through Angel's mind. The courtyard on Eriadne. Dureena, and a knife sticking out of Lucas' back. Angel had been forced to betray Lucas then, but she still felt pain and guilt at what had happened. Lucas could have been permanently paralyzed, or even killed. While it would have prevented a lot of future pain, the thought of Lucas dead was agony to Angel. No woman wanted to see the man she loved die because of her.

Shaking suddenly, Angel moved her hands, tentatively running her fingers over the scarred flesh. She felt Lucas tense as she stroked the area gently. "I'm sorry," she whispered.

Lucas said nothing. He'd said he'd forgiven her for betraying him and that he didn't blame her

for what had happened, but she still felt the need to apologize. She may have done so before, but then it had been from fear of what he'd do to her. Now she really meant it.

All her will to fight and resist was gone. It didn't matter that Lucas--or rather the Rage--wanted something from her. If she were honest, she wanted something from him, too. She wanted him and she couldn't deny it anymore. This was no longer so much about the Rage or Lucas and his heir; this was about her heart and what she needed.

Moving, Angel slid off the bed until she was kneeling beside it. Saying nothing, she caressed his scar then leaned forward and began to kiss Lucas' back. She heard his soft intake of breath, and taking that as encouragement she licked, sucked and kissed the damaged region of his back. Then she lifted her hands, letting them glide up his back, massaging gently.

Lucas moved suddenly, rolling over and sitting upright, entwining his hand in her hair, and gently pulling her head up to look at his face. He looked down at her questioningly, "What do you think you're doing?"

"What do you think, Lucas?" questioned Angel back. She tried to move forward again, this time to kiss his chest, but Lucas let go of her hair and reached for her shoulders, holding her off.

"Don't do anything you'll feel sorry for later, Angel-face," he warned. "I don't want to have to deal with your regrets," he finished, cautioning her.

Reaching up a hand, she touched his face, running her fingers along his mouth before saying huskily, "I won't regret it, Lucas. I don't want to play courtship games anymore."

His eyebrow show up, "You telling me you're ready to share my bed?" he asked in a low voice.

"Yes, Lucas."

Rising from her knees, Angel met Lucas' mouth as he pulled her onto the bed alongside him. It was an intense, passionate kiss, making Angel feel dizzy as Lucas' tongue plunged into her mouth. Arms came round her shoulders, drawing her tightly against his naked chest. She threw her arms around him and clung to him as he deepened the kiss.

Finally, Lucas leaned his head back to look at Angel as they lay next to each other. Angel ran her hands over his chest and down his abdomen, tracing the hard lines. "You've been working out," she said teasingly, tracing the defined line of his abdominal muscles.

Lucas chuckled. "I had to be in shape for you, darlin."

Angel laughed as she continued to caress the flat stomach, tracing a circle around his navel, "I'm flattered," she teased back.

Leaning forward, Lucas gave her a brief kiss, "You should be," he said, before claiming her mouth in another deep, passionate kiss.

This time, Angel was the one to break the kiss, breathing deeply as she raked her eyes hungrily over his body again. He was magnificent and she wanted him more than she'd ever wanted him before. "I want you, Lucas," she said gruffly.

He smiled and kissed her again. "You can have me, darlin'," he grinned wickedly at her.

Angel's heart rate quickened, her blood heated with arousal. She glanced down to see that Lucas too was growing aroused beneath the fabric of his jeans. Her hands lingered on his belly, stroking the fine line of hair that led to the thing she wanted. Then she moved her hands down and hooked her fingers inside the waistband of his jeans. She looked up and ordered softly, "I want these off you, now."

Wordlessly, Lucas lifted his hips and helped Angel remove his jeans and briefs. Angel discarded them quickly and focused her attention on the semi aroused cock lying against Lucas' thigh.

Shifting to her knees, Angel took him in her hand and lowered her head. She heard Lucas' intake of breath, as her mouth closed around the head of his cock. Her hand moved down his shaft and began fondling his balls. Lucas' hand rested on her head, encouraging her to take more of him into her mouth. Without hesitation she complied and took him in deeper, sucking gently, as the tip of her tongue teased the small slit at the end of his cock.

Sighing, Lucas leaned his head back. Everything he'd been forced to do to get to this moment, the constant gentle and romantic courtship, the tolerance and patience, had been worthwhile. Angel was finally going to share his bed and eventually give him the heir he needed.

Pushing all those thoughts aside for the moment, Lucas felt Angel's teeth gently grazing the back of his cock, sending a wave of pleasure surging through his body. He could feel his arousal growing dangerously close to explosion when Angel gently circled her tongue around the shaft of his cock, and her hands gently fondled his heavy balls. He wasn't about to waste his seed coming in her mouth.

Opening his eyes, Lucas gently entwined his hand in Angel's hair and pulled her head back, forcing her to release him. He smiled as she looked up at him, her eyes darkened with lust and arousal. He leaned forward and kissed her, the ever present honey taste of her mouth mixed with his own saltiness.

He released her mouth and reached out for her, pulling her into his arms. His hard cock was now pressed between them, the friction of Angel's clothes painful as she rubbed herself deliberately against him, arousing him further.

The wicked grin on Angel's face told Lucas that she knew exactly what she was doing. [Little minx], he thought with pleasure. This was the Angel he'd missed. Teasing, mischievous and as sexual an animal as he was.

He lifted a hand to her breast, and gently squeezed the firm mound through her clothes. He watched as her eyes closed and her head fell back slightly, a soft whimper escaping her lips as he rubbed a finger over a hardened nipple, so obvious beneath the thin fabric of her dress.

"It ain't right you're still dressed, darlin'," said Lucas softly. As Angel's eyes opened and her head snapped forward, he let go of her and moved away a little, letting his eyes pointedly rake down the length of her body.

A naughty grin spread across Angel's lips and her eyes sparkled. "I can soon fix that."

She rolled off the bed, and stood at the side, running her eyes down the length of Lucas' naked body. He could see she enjoyed what she saw. Taking one more step away from the bed, Angel slowly, teasingly, began to strip. Lucas watched her hungrily, as she gave him a slow, sensual striptease. Finally, Angel stood before him in all her naked glory, letting Lucas feast his eyes on her breasts, down the flat belly to the dark nest of curls at top of her legs. Lucas inhaled deeply, able to smell her arousal.

Then he sat up and pulled Angel back onto the bed and into his arms. He kept one arm around her slender waist, still perfect after all these years. As he kissed her, his tongue exploring the warm haven of her mouth, he let his free hand stroke and fondle her breasts, causing her to shake and tremble in his arms. After awhile, as their lips remained locked, he let his hand move from her breast downwards.

Angel needed no encouragement to part her legs, allowing Lucas to slide a finger to explore the damp folds. Moving his thumb over her swollen clit, Lucas caressed it, causing Angel to buck forward a little in his arms with a soft moan. Never ceasing the motion of his thumb, Lucas slid two fingers inside her. Angel was so wet with arousal that there was little resistance as he pushed deeper into her, before slowly beginning to pull his fingers in and out of her in a fast, rhythmic pace that left the raven-haired witch gasping for breath against his mouth and moaning in pleasure.

Stopping the gentle motion of his fingers and thumb, Lucas pulled Angel against him, his hard cock pressing into her belly as he smiled. "Something wrong, love?" he asked softly.

Before Angel could respond, he drove his fingers deep inside her again, chuckling softly as Angel's head lolled back and her eyes flickered shut. Lucas leaned forward and let his mouth trail kisses up along her throat, before pulling his fingers from inside her. He pulled her head forward to allow him to take her mouth in another deep, passionate kiss.

It was Angel who broke the kiss this time. "Please, Lucas..." her voice trailed off breathlessly. But Lucas didn't need her to elaborate. He wanted it, too, more than anything. He wanted to bury his aching cock deep inside that moist, warm center his fingers had been exploring moments before.

Giving her a brief kiss, Lucas rolled Angel onto her back.

Angel snuggled closer against Lucas with her head resting on his chest, her body still feeling high from making love and from the orgasms that had swept over her. She felt warm, satisfied and fulfilled. It had been even better than she had remembered. Lucas had always been the best lover she had ever had, but now it was somehow even better than before. Now she was older and wiser, she could appreciate just how incredible sensual and sexual a man Lucas was. For so long she had fought and resisted this. For so long she had denied herself the pleasure of the man she loved buried inside her.

[For good reason,] quipped her inner voice. Angel winced and closed her eyes. She didn't want to listen to her conscience; it was usually right and just for a little while she didn't want it to be. [Ignoring the facts doesn't make the truth go away,] cut in her inner voice again.

Angel bit back a sigh of frustration, not wanting Lucas to sense her inner battle. [I know it won't make the truth go away,] Angel told herself. She knew that so much of this was about Lucas' need for an heir, but she had to believe that the way Lucas had made love to her was more than just wanting to get her pregnant.

She wasn't so great a fool that she dared to think love might be involved, but Angel did believe that Lucas had some kind of feelings for her. [I don't know what they are, but I have to believe that.] And she had to hold onto the belief that Lucas and the Rage were separate.

[But not now. For now I just want to forget and be happy right here in Lucas' arms.]

Angel mentally shut the door on her inner voice before it could argue with her further. She opened her eyes just for a moment as she placed a brief kiss on Lucas shoulder, before once more settling against his chest.

Closing her eyes, Angel listened to the rhythmic beating of Lucas heart. Before long it had lulled her into a deep, contented sleep.

Lucas watched Angel as she lay snuggled against him. He'd sensed some turmoil going on inside her before she'd finally settled. She was now breathing evenly as she slept.

He didn't want to risk waking her, but the growing stiffness in the arm beneath her head wasn't to be ignored. Shifting carefully, Lucas pulled his arm free, freezing as Angel stirred in her sleep. A smile crept onto his lips, as she rolled onto her back, exposing her naked breasts to his view.

Sitting back against the headboard, Lucas folded his arms and continued to watch Angel. As he let his eyes scan over her face--so beautiful even in sleep--down to the rise and fall of her chest, he thought about finally having gotten what he wanted. Angel in his bed. The long wait had had been worth it. While he had been with other woman, even while courting Angel, none of them had been able to satisfy him physically as Angel could.

Reaching out, Lucas stroked his thumb tenderly across Angel's cheek. Even deep in sleep she responded by turning her face toward him, a soft smile on her lips. Dropping his hand, Lucas' thoughts turned darker, as the Rage forced him to focus on other things, before he started to think tender thoughts about the woman lying beside him. Dropping his eyes from Angel's face, Lucas lowered them to her flat belly. Moving his hand from her cheek, he gently--careful not to wake her--placed it on her stomach and closed his eyes. Angel was ripe for the plucking and all that was needed was for him to plant the seed.

[And there's only one way to do that.] A hungry smile spread across his face. It was time to wake the sleeping beauty. Leaning forward, Lucas began to kiss Angel. Soon he felt her responding and before long, she was moaning beneath the touch of his hands.

She may have fought him for longer than he had believed she would, but now she was his once again, completely responsive and willing. Lucas knew that in the morning there would be no regrets and that Angel would happily share his bed until she was pregnant--and even after.

Turning those thoughts aside, Lucas went back to focusing on the woman in his bed. His

beautiful, responsive, sexy, fiery Angel. The perfect choice for the mother of his heir.

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The Witches of Eriadne: Something Wicked this Way Comes

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