

The Witches of Eriadne: Toil and Trouble - Part 5: Breaking Away

by [The Space Witches](#)

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Angel

Chapter 1

Lucas entered the bedroom and stood by the bed, watching Angel as she slept, once again on her stomach. He mused that she must be a restless sleeper, considering how the sheets were now tangled about her waist and she was lying in a different position than the one he'd last seen her in. Her hands were tucked under the pillow and her face turned toward him. He knelt down beside the bed and gently brushed away a stray strand of hair that had fallen across her face.

He had a way to get off the planet now. He smiled as he thought about his conversation with Galen; he'd played the Technomage like a fiddle. There was no doubt that Magic Man wouldn't try anything stupid, and not only that, Galen would ensure that no one came after him and Angel for the next ten hours or so. Lucas had the Technomage exactly where he wanted him. Lucas smiled coldly. He'd told Galen that he would give Angel to him once they'd arrived at their destination. Of course that was a lie. Lucas Buck never gave up what he owned, besides, he was fond of her, and she would prove useful to him in the future. [Just like Selena,] he thought darkly.

His thoughts still on Angel, he stood up and looked down at her. There was still one part of the plan

that needed completion, but it was still too early. His plan for Angel could only be carried out at the last moment before they were to meet with Galen before dawn. Lucas looked up at the clock on the wall. Five o'clock; which left him with several hours to kill. A slow, lazy smile crept across his lips and he began to undress. It was time to awaken Sleeping Beauty.

Angel slowly came awake as she felt a hand stroking her back. She turned her head to the side and smiled contentedly as she saw Lucas lying beside her. He was leaning on his elbow, with his face resting on his hand. He gave her a sexy smile as he looked intensely at her.

"Hello, darlin', have a nice nap?" he asked softly.

Angel nodded and tried to turn over so she could face him, but his hand pushed down on her back as he moved forward to kiss her shoulder, while his other hand traced along her spine. Angel trembled at his touch and could feel her body responding. Again, she tried to turn to look at him, but Lucas whispered against her shoulder

"Lie still, Angel-face. I want you just like this." Her pulse picked up speed at the seductive tone in his voice. She shifted her arms so she could rest her head on them, happy to do whatever Lucas wanted.

He shifted his position closer to Angel. Moving his hand along her spine, he felt her tremble beneath him as her body responded to his caresses. He slowly moved his hand up to her hair and brushed it aside, exposing her long neck, and leaned in to kiss her, working his way from her shoulder to her neck.

Angel closed her eyes, savoring the feel of his mouth on her skin. She gasped softly when she felt him take the lobe of her ear into his mouth and begin sucking on it, and then he gently licked the rest of her ear. All the time his hand traced patterns on her back, working its way down to her buttocks.

"You like that don't you, darlin'?" he whispered in her ear.

She opened her eyes, "Oh yes, Lucas," her voice was husky as she replied. Her stomach flipped when he chuckled and lowered his mouth to her neck. Then he shifted closer to her again, so he could kiss the nape of her neck, allowing her to feel that he was as aroused as she was. Her breathing speeded up in anticipation.

Angel lay still as Lucas stroked, kissed, and caressed every inch of her back, his mouth and hands doing the most erotic things to her. Her breath caught in her throat when she felt his hand knead her buttocks for a moment and then move to her thighs. His hand slipped between her legs, finding her wet center. She whimpered into the pillow as he slid a finger into her and then another, and slowly began to finger-fuck her.

Lucas smiled as he heard Angel moan his name as he pushed his fingers deeper into her. He had to admit that she was the most responsive woman he'd ever had, [Well, other than Whiplash,] he thought with amusement as he remembered his encounter with Demon earlier. Thinking about it made his cock harden even more. It was time to satisfy himself, as well as Angel.

Angel felt a rush of disappointment when he moved his fingers out of her. Then she felt him move to kneel between her spread legs, and disappointment was replaced with excitement. She watched out of the corner of her eye as he leaned forward to pick up the pillow beside her.

"Lift up, Angel-face," he ordered.

Angel did as he said and he pushed the pillow underneath her, raising her hips so that she was positioned at a better angle beneath him. For a moment Lucas looked at her, her legs spread wide and her perfect buttocks raised. [Beautiful,] he thought as he reached down and caressed them, then he moved forward, placing his hands down on either side of her on the bed. He lowered his mouth to kiss the top of her shoulder, then nipped her roughly, causing her to lift up off the bed. As she did so, he thrust forward, entering her hard and fast.

Angel cried out as he moved, her hands grasping the pillow tightly as he drove into her. Her moans of pleasure were stifled as she buried her face in the pillow. He hammered into her over and over again. She felt his mouth on her neck and shoulders as he kissed her with every thrust.

Lucas pushed on into her, her walls the perfect fit around his cock. He heard her moaning and it encouraged him to move faster, taking them both into ecstasy. He heard Angel cry out as she came, her walls spasming around his cock, taking him over the edge with her.

Angel lay with her head on Lucas's chest. For the past few hours, she'd lain beside him, talking with him, telling him about herself and her sisters, and about how they'd come to the planet. Lucas listened attentively, asking her questions. She didn't realize that he was humoring her. There were still several hours to go until dawn and he knew they couldn't spend the whole time fucking. [Even I have my limits.] He already knew everything she was telling him; he'd read her completely when he was inside her, and knew almost everything she knew, but he listened, anyway. She'd asked him more about Trinity and about his life there. He told her a little, saying that she already knew what she needed to know and made her go back to talking about herself. Now she was lying still against him, content to just lie there, saying nothing.

Angel let her hand rest on his stomach as she turned her head slightly so that she could gently kiss him, working her way to his nipple to suck it. She felt his hand brushing her hair and she lifted her head to look at him. Lucas gave her one of those lazy smiles that she was beginning to know so well, and it made her heart turn over. His hazel eyes fixed upon her, and she smiled.

She pushed herself further up him to reach his mouth. She licked his lips softly and then pushed her tongue between them, her mouth merging with his. His arms came around Angel and she deepened the kiss. Her hand moved up to the back of Lucas' head, her fingers entwining in his hair, pulling him closer to her. She was lost in the taste of him when her stomach growled loudly.

Lucas gently pulled her head away and broke the kiss, teasingly lifting an eyebrow at her. Angel's stomach growled again and she giggled. "I think I must be hungry. I haven't eaten since yesterday." She leaned forward to kiss him again.

He pulled her head back again and said, "That's funny, darlin'. I distinctly remember telling you not to talk with your mouth full a couple of hours back." Angel flushed as she remembered what she'd been doing when he'd said that. Lucas went on, "And you swallowed plenty. Didn't that satisfy your hunger?"

She started to shift down the bed as she said, "Apparently not. Maybe I need more sustenance."

Lucas laughed and pulled back on her hair, stopping Angel when her mouth was only millimeters away from his cock, then grabbed the sheet and pulled it across himself. "Well, if you're not hungry, darlin', I am. You got anythin' to eat around here? Other than what I can see in front of me." He gave her a wicked smile and his tone was as sexy as hell when he looked into her eyes and then at her breasts. Lucas shifted so that his back was resting against the headboard. As he moved, Angel couldn't help but notice the sheet move low over his hips. She tore her eyes away with difficulty. [Stop it, Angel, can't you think about anything else?]

"You are bad, Lucas Buck." Lucas raised both eyebrows and Angel marveled at how his hazel eyes filled with mischief that made him look unbelievably gorgeous. Gods, if she didn't get up now and find something to eat, she would pounce on him and devour him again. She pushed the sheet off her legs and quickly moved off the bed. She was very aware of his eyes on her as she slipped into a silk gown.

Tying the belt tightly around her, Angel turned back to face him. "I don't have much, but there's some fruit and cheese next door, and maybe some crackers. It's all I have here in my rooms." She didn't think it would be good idea to call for food; she feared it would be drugged.

"I don't suppose you have any tuna sandwiches?" Lucas watched with concealed amusement as Angel frowned at him in confusion. He knew that on this world, it was highly unlikely there was anything like tuna. [Pity, I wouldn't mind seeing how she ate one.] He cut her off before she could ask what he meant. "Fruit and cheese is fine, darlin'. Now go and get it before I decide to snack on *you*." He watched the frown fade, replaced by a happy smile.

"Good. I'll get it now." Angel said happily. She turned toward the door, and as she did so, her eyes fell on the clock. She gasped in surprise; it was already after three in the morning. Had they been together that long? She slipped into the living room to fetch the food.

Lucas raised his hands behind his head and leaned against the headboard. He glanced at the clock. It would soon be time. He closed his eyes, thinking about what he had to do. They would eat first, and then he would make love to Angel again. He had to be as connected to her as he could possibly get, and that could only be achieved during sex. Two people couldn't get closer to each other in body and mind than when they were fucking.

He opened his eyes as he sensed Angel returning. She was carrying the large bowl of fruit that had been on the table in the living room. Balanced on top was a plate with several different types of cheese and crackers. Lucas watched her as she approached, the silk gown opening to reveal her legs as she walked. She came to a stop beside the bed and placed the bowl and plate beside him on the mattress.

Angel sat on the edge of the bed next to him as he reached for a small grape-like fruit and held it between his teeth. Lucas leaned forward and raised his hand to her neck, pulling her towards him. As her mouth reached his, she felt him push the fruit from his mouth into hers. She bit down and the juice trickled into her mouth and from hers into his. She swallowed and pulled her head away. Without taking her eyes from his, she reached for another of the fruit and placed it as he had done. He moved forward and took it from her teeth with his mouth, opening his lips to suck the fruit in, then using his tongue to push it back between her lips. As he did so, his arms went around her and he pulled her across him, so she was sitting sideways on his lap as he lay back against the headboard.

Lucas picked up a larger fruit, and placed it in her mouth. Angel bit down and the juice ran from her mouth, down his fingers, and onto her chin. She swallowed quickly, then licked the juice from his

fingers, taking them into her mouth one by one, and sucking them as he watched. When she was finished, Lucas leaned forward and licked her chin, following the line of juice down her neck to her collarbone. He lifted his head again and picked up a piece of soft cheese. Angel watched as he sank his teeth into the end, exposing the yellow softness within. He put the remaining piece back onto the plate and moved his hand to open her robe, exposing her breasts. Picking up the cheese again, he slowly rubbed the almost-liquid interior around her nipple, smearing the cheese across her breast. Then he bent and sucked her nipple, licking her breast until all traces of the cheese had gone. Angel's back arched with excitement at the sensations the rubbing and licking induced. She waited to see what he would do next, her eyes closed, content to let Lucas do whatever he wanted to do to her.

Lucas looked down at her, seeing the expression of rapture on her face, knowing that she was nearly ready for what he needed to do. He lifted Angel again, and laid her on her back next to him. Her eyes opened and he fed her a piece of cheese, letting her lick his hand clean again, enjoying the sensation of her tongue running across his fingers. He then used the fingers of one hand to open her mouth and placed a small fruit between her teeth, leaning over her to again take it from her with his mouth, turning the feeding into a deep, passionate kiss.

He sat up again and pushed Angel's robe back completely, so he could see her whole body. Lucas picked up another fruit, and placing it over her breasts, started to squeeze. The juice ran between his fingers onto her breasts, then down her ribcage. He paused to fill her navel with drops of liquid, then moved his hand to squeeze the last drops onto her mound. Angel was quivering with arousal as Lucas lowered his head and started to lap at the juices running over her body. Her nipples hardened as he licked and sucked each in turn. Her back arched as his tongue rotated in her navel, taking up every drop of juice that had pooled there. Then his mouth worked down her stomach. Her legs parted automatically and he shifted to lie between them without stopping the movements of his mouth.

Lucas lifted his head and she looked down the length of her body at him as he lay between her legs. Angel watched as he took a plum-like fruit from the bowl and squeezed it gently. [Good, no stone,] he thought as he brought his hand back and pushed the fruit gently inside her, leaving it half in and half out of her vagina. He felt her hips rise and her vagina pulse as he did so. "Gently now, darlin', you're gonna enjoy this." Lucas bit gently on the fruit, letting the juice run down between her legs, then sucked hard, pulling the fruit out of her. Angel moaned at the sensation of the fruit moving and the juice running over her ass. Then he started to lick her clean, his tongue moving inside her and over her, finding her clit, sucking and licking, then moving down to her anus, licking away all the juices.

Lucas heard her moan again and felt her body tremble as he worked his way back to her clit, where he licked the swollen bud. He raised his eyes to watch Angel, her head thrown back on the pillow, her eyes closed, her face and throat flushed with pleasure. He lifted his mouth from her clit, having stimulated her enough; he didn't want to push her too far. He was going to take this nice and slow.

Angel opened her eyes and watched as Lucas moved back up her body, trailing kisses on her stomach and ribcage. She arched her back as he lowered his mouth to take a nipple between his teeth, then closing his lips around the hardened tip, began to suck while his tongue licked the skin around it. After what seemed like an eternity of erotic attention, he lifted his head.

"Shall I feed you some more, darlin'?" Lucas asked seductively. She stared up at him and gave him an eager smile as she nodded. He never stopped looking into her eyes as he reached for another piece of cheese. He placed it between his teeth and then lowered his mouth to hers, offering it to her. Angel opened her mouth to take it, biting down on it, taking half into her mouth. She watched as Lucas ate his half, and then her breath caught in her throat as he reached out a hand to her face. He gently brushed the corner of her mouth, removing some of the cheese that had been spread over her lips. He

raised his thumb to show her.

"If you don't eat all your dinner, you don't get any dessert," Lucas informed her with a low seductive drawl that sent shivers down her spine. Angel took his hand in hers and lowered his thumb to her lips. Taking it in her mouth, she sucked gently, her tongue licking away the last traces of cheese. Slowly releasing his thumb, she looked up at him with mischief in her eyes.

"Please sir, can I have some more?" Angel giggled as Lucas arched his eyebrows. He didn't say a word as he picked up another plum-like fruit. She watched, transfixed, as instead of feeding it to her, he took a bite of it himself and then lowered it to her. She bit into it and chewed, savoring the delicious sweetness. Then Lucas took the rest of the fruit between his teeth and offered the other end to her. Again the feeding quickly turned into a passionate kiss.

Angel was quite breathless when Lucas finally pulled away. Her body was hot with arousal now and she found that she was no longer hungry. She wanted him, and she wanted him now. She reached up to stroke his face, her voice thick and husky when she spoke.

"I'm ready for dessert now." Angel pulled his face down to her and kissed him, her arms encircling his shoulders, holding him tightly to her.

Lucas let her take the lead in the kiss, setting the pace. The timing was perfect. Angel was totally lost in him and his seduction of her. They couldn't be any closer than they were now. He picked up the bowl of fruit and placed it on the bedside table, followed by the platter, then he moved over her and felt her spread her legs invitingly further apart. When she raised her hips he broke the kiss and brushed his thumb along her cheek.

"Gently, darlin'. We're gonna take this nice and slow," Lucas told her softly, before he leaned forward to kiss her again briefly on her mouth, then working his way along her jaw and down her neck. When he reached Angel's shoulder, he gently thrust forward, entering her slowly. Her hips arched up automatically to meet him, and he began to move gently and slowly in and out of her.

Angel closed her eyes. She'd never felt anything like this before, never before had felt anything that this good. She felt his cock move deeper into her and reached her arms to hold him tightly around the waist as he thrust into her again. Bending her knees, she raised her hips off the bed to take Lucas even deeper. She opened her eyes as she felt his hands hold her face and she watched with passion-filled eyes as he lowered his head to kiss her.

Lucas could feel Angel was close to release as he continued to move his cock into her gently. It was the perfect moment to do what was needed. As he kissed her, he tightened his hold on her face and began to move his mind deeper into hers, seeking out the telepathic link she had with her sisters.

Angel was lost in the intense feelings of being slowly driven closer to release and of Lucas' tongue meshing with hers in a deep demanding kiss, when she started to feel a pain building in her head. It was unlike anything she'd ever felt before, and she suddenly became afraid. Something was wrong, very wrong. She tried to pull away from the hold Lucas had on her face, but he was holding her too tightly. He broke the kiss to look at her, and she saw something in his eyes that scared her.

But Angel couldn't say or do anything as she lay beneath him. She gasped as Lucas suddenly picked up the pace, thrusting into her harder and deeper, while the pain in her head increased with every thrust. She wanted to tell him to stop, to tell him that she was in pain, that something was wrong with her, but she couldn't speak. Her body and mind were being overwhelmed by intense pleasure and

pain.

Lucas watched Angel closely as he moved deeper into her with his cock, while he reached deeper into her mind. He could see she was in pain, but there was nothing that could be done about it. He had to do this. He could feel the tightening of her internal muscles and knew that she was close to release. He found what he was searching for and thrust forcefully into her one more time, driving them over into an intense orgasm. Lucas reached into her mind with a brutal twist, and broke the link she had with her sisters.

Angel's cry of pleasure as she climaxed turned into a terrible scream. Her head felt as if something was being ripped apart inside. It was the most intense burning pain she'd ever felt, and she was barely aware of Lucas pulling her close to hold her tightly against him.

"L...Lucas?" she managed to whisper weakly against his shoulder before she dropped abruptly into unconsciousness.

Lucas felt Angel go limp in his arms, holding her tightly. He reached out into her mind again to make sure that he hadn't caused any permanent damage. He gave a cold smile when he found that her mind was still intact, except that now she was cut off from her sisters. It had worked. As Lucas gently lowered Angel's head to the pillow, he moved out of her. Half lying on her, he looked into her face. He saw how pale she was, and for the first time, noticed that her nose was bleeding.

"Aw, hell!" Lucas cursed under his breath. He hadn't expected that. He reached up and grabbed one of Angel's silk scarves. He waited for a while, holding the material under her nose, then removed it when he was satisfied that the bleeding had stopped. He frowned and reached to check her pulse, a little concerned that that he might have hurt her more than he'd intended. Lucas smiled slowly when he felt her pulse was strong and steady, then gently brushed his thumb down her cheekbone.

"You're gonna be just fine, darlin'," he whispered as he threw the scarf to the floor. He knew that later he would have to deal with a hysterical woman when Angel came around and found herself taken away from her home and cut off from her sisters. [Well, you'll learn to deal with it,] thought Lucas coldly. He didn't have a choice; he had to break her away. Not only so the sisters wouldn't sense when he took her away, but also because isolated from her 'family', she would depend solely on him. Exactly how he wanted it; he could control her more easily that way.

Lucas sighed, and breaking his thoughts away from Angel, he turned to look at the wall clock. [Perfect] It was time to catch up with Magic Man. He turned away from Angel and moved off the bed. He moved to where his clothes were lying, and as he dressed, looked at the naked and unconscious form lying on the bed.

He couldn't very well carry her out naked. [Though I'd love to see the expression on Magic Man's face if I did,] he thought, remembering the look on Galen's face when presented with a very naked Angel at his feet. Lucas stood for a moment, thinking. He could dress her, but he didn't really have the time to struggle with getting one of Angel's skintight outfits on her. He smiled as he saw the red silk of the robe beneath her. He may have opened it to reveal her body during their rather enjoyable feast, but technically, she was still wearing it. [Perfect.] He would cover her up with that and take some clothes along for her to change into when she regained consciousness.

Lucas finished dressing and then moved over to the bed. Reaching across, he gently pulled the robe around Angel, having to tug a little to get one end that was crushed beneath her. When he had it free, he closed it around her and then deftly tied the belt. He straightened up and let his eyes roam over the

room. They fell upon a carry-bag identical to the one she'd left down in the cellar. [That'll do nicely,] he thought as he walked over to it.

He opened it and dumped the contents onto the chair, then noticed the regenerator and picked it up, looking at it closely. "Well now, I think I'll just keep this; never know when it might come in handy," Lucas drawled to the unconscious Angel. Then he placed it in the pocket of his jacket and walked over to her cupboard.

Glancing over the clothes, Lucas picked out a pair of black leather pants, a black sleeveless half top, and a red leather jacket and stuffed them into the bag. Then he bent down and looked over the shoes at the bottom of the cupboard. Deciding on a pair of high black boots, he placed them in with the clothes and closed the bag as he straightened up. [Good thing she never bothers with underwear.] Now all that was left was to get Angel out of the castle and meet up with Galen before she regained consciousness.

Slinging the bag over his shoulder, Lucas moved over to the bed and slid his arms under Angel's shoulders and legs. He lifted her into his arms with ease, then looked down at her, as her head fell against his shoulder. Satisfied that there was no chance of her waking yet, he moved toward the door and into the living room. As he reached the outer door, Lucas let his mind search beyond, making sure that there was no one waiting to attack. He gave a cold, satisfied smile. Nothing. Magic Man had done his job, which meant there was no threat of him running into anyone on his way to Galen's ship. Moving forward, the door opened, seemingly of its own accord, and Lucas exited into the corridor and headed quickly for the back entrance of the castle.

Gideon lay in bed, his head propped on his arm, looking down at Deborah as she slept beside him. He'd never been a good sleeper and they'd got into the habit of leaving a light on in the living room and the door open. That way if he wanted to get up, he didn't need to put a light on, and he didn't fall over the bed in the dark. He still had a bruised toe from his first attempt to leave the room without disturbing her.

It had the added advantage that he could see her when he awoke. Gideon had spent several contented hours just looking at her sleeping. Despite his restlessness, he did sleep better when he was with Deborah than when he was alone. While he'd been with her, he'd normally woken just once a night, rather than the three or four times he did in his quarters on the Excalibur. Gideon tried to imagine convincing Earthforce that it would be good for the health and morale of the Captain, and therefore his crew, if Deborah moved into his quarters permanently.

Then he thought about the width of the bunk there. Even before he had gotten Deborah pregnant, it would have been a tight squeeze. [Why did I have to fall for an Amazon? Why couldn't I have gone for someone a bit smaller?] Gideon grinned at himself. He wouldn't change a single thing about her. Considering how much she was likely to expand in the next few months, by the time she gave birth, there'd hardly be room for her in his bunk, he would have to sleep on the floor. Gideon cursed his own inability to fantasize without thinking of practicalities. If he was going to have fantasies about Deborah living in his quarters, why couldn't he fantasize about a larger bunk?

But bringing her to the Excalibur was nothing but a fantasy. Gideon knew that in just over a week he would have to leave Deborah again, and he didn't know how he was going to do it. Every hour he spent with her made it more difficult to contemplate being without her. He watched her chest rise and fall as she breathed slowly and deeply. He smiled again as he realized that her breathing was nearly

heavy enough to be called a snore. [And she complains about me snoring!] But the view of her breasts as they moved with each breath was much more interesting. Her pregnancy had changed their shape and size, but they were still beautiful and Gideon never tired of looking at them. Deborah slept in her usual untidy sprawl, [Sleeping in a bunk would soon cure her of that habit!] with the covers half fallen off her. [But it's a habit I'd hate to cure. The view wouldn't be nearly as good.] He pushed all thoughts of having to leave out of his head and went over the events of the previous evening.

Galen had returned from Angel's rooms with a face like thunder. He was obviously not happy with the outcome of his meeting with Lucas, but had said little. Only that he'd seen Angel, she appeared unharmed, and that he had a plan for ridding them of Lucas, but it would take some time to work out the details. Galen had asked Gideon to give him overnight to work on it and suggested that they meet up at breakfast the following day.

Gideon had agreed reluctantly. He wasn't happy about the idea of having Lucas running loose in the castle in the meantime, and had suggested to Galen that they post guards outside Angel's rooms. Deborah's experience of meeting Lucas in her rooms had made him wary. Galen had insisted that this was unnecessary. He'd claimed that Lucas had no intention of leaving Angel's quarters, having achieved what he needed to, and knowing that he was much safer staying where he was. Galen wouldn't say why Lucas had been in Deborah's rooms, but had assured them that it had no impact on the rest of them. Galen's whole attitude made Gideon uneasy. Something was going on that Galen wasn't telling them about; the problem was in not knowing what. Was Galen trying to protect them from something? Gideon had to believe that Galen wouldn't betray his trust. He had Galen's promise on that, and it had held good so far. They were Galen's only family now; he wouldn't let them down.

Gideon had decided to give Galen the time he asked for, but if there were no signs of progress by breakfast tomorrow, [Well, today really, it must be close to dawn by now,] then he would go in and take Lucas out, using whatever force he had.

As he reached this decision, Gideon felt Deborah stir under his hand and found that, quite unconsciously, he'd started to fondle her breast as he lay thinking. He realized that her nipple had hardened under his touch and that he was arousing her even as she slept. He smiled as he thought that he'd never come across a woman who responded to his caresses as quickly and completely as she did.

Gideon reluctantly pulled his hand away. Deborah rolled toward him, her eyes still tightly closed, and whispered, "Don't stop. That was nice." He smiled and slid onto his back, then pulled her towards him, laying her head on his shoulder, his arm around her. She lifted her leg and entwined it with his, pulling herself closer still. Her hand came to rest on his stomach and she started to stroke the skin from his navel down.

Gideon slapped his hand on top of hers quickly and whispered back, "Stop it. Go back to sleep." Deborah turned her head into his shoulder to kiss it, and he could feel her mouth smiling as she did so.

She lifted her head to look up at him, and by the dim light, he could just see the grin on her face. "Too late. I'm awake now. You'd better finish what you started." Gideon could feel her fingers still moving under his, trying to work their way down to his groin. He grabbed her hand and pulled it back up to his chest, holding it tightly.

He tried to fend her off again. "It's too early. It's still dark. Go to sleep." But Gideon knew it was useless. He could already feel the blood rushing to his cock, stiffening it as he lay, in response to the movements of her mouth against his shoulder and chest.

When they'd left Galen the night before, they'd come back to her rooms and made love for hours, slowly stimulating each other to new heights of pleasure. Knowing that they had all night and with little danger of interruption, they'd taken the time to find new ways to enjoy each other. Moving from one position to another, trying different things, lifting each other to the point of climax, then cooling each other down, they'd taken hours to reach their first orgasm, but when they finally came, it was like nothing either of them had experienced before. Gideon had never thought that such complete pleasure of mind, body, and spirit was possible. He'd never felt so close to anyone, nor as mentally and physically complete, as he did at that moment, buried deep inside her. They'd fallen asleep soon after, completely exhausted but totally satisfied.

Deborah started to move her head down his chest, kissing, nibbling, and sucking as she went. Gideon gave up trying to stop her and lay back to enjoy whatever she had planned. He let go of her hand and felt it move down his chest, resting on his stomach again, then moving down over his hip. She moved her hand across his leg and started to draw circles on his inner thigh. Gideon could feel himself swelling further in response to her actions as her head reached his stomach and she moved her tongue around his navel. Then Deborah lightly kissed the tip of his cock and he groaned with pleasure. Her hand moved up to stroke his balls so lightly it almost tickled. She used the very tip of her tongue to lick around the head of his penis, then ran her tongue down the back of his shaft, barely making contact with his skin.

Gideon knew that his control was always weakest in the mornings and if he let Deborah continue doing what she was doing, he'd come in minutes. [And damn it, she knows that, too!] He reached down and pulled her head away from him, saying, "Get back up here, woman, and play fair." She turned her head to look at him and grinned, then started working her way back up his body, kissing and licking his skin at every point along the way, but her hand continued to play with his balls, keeping him aroused.

When she'd made her way back up to his neck, Gideon rolled onto his side, pushing her onto her back. He leaned over her and kissed her. Starting gently, he moved his tongue over her lips, just touching them, then as they parted, he darted his tongue in between them to touch her tongue, then withdrew. Deborah lifted her head, trying to deepen the kiss, but he pulled his head back and looked down at her, smiling as he said, "You should be asleep. You need the rest. Are you going to be good?"

Gideon watched as Deborah smiled lazily back up at him and shook her head. "No. I'm going to be very bad." He knew that she could feel his erection pressing hard against her hip. She knew damn well that she was going to get what she wanted. To prove the point, she moved her hips provocatively, brushing against his swollen cock, causing him to close his eyes and shudder with pleasure. The hand she'd been using to caress his balls came up to his neck as she tried to pull him back into a kiss, but Gideon held his head back from her, wanting to watch her face as he moved his hand between her legs. Deborah smiled again as his fingers found her opening and he slipped inside her, first using one, then two fingers to stimulate her. Her eyes closed as he watched, her head tilting back and her mouth opening to gasp for air. He felt her hips lift to take his fingers deeper inside her and started to move his thumb over her clitoris, feeling it swell beneath his touch.

Deborah's face showed the pleasure she felt, her eyes closed and her lips parted. Her tongue darted out to wet her lips as Gideon continued to rotate his fingers inside her, pushing down on her clit as he did so. Then she frowned and whimpered, and he wondered if he'd hurt her. Her eyes opened and he could see puzzlement and fear in her face. He pulled his hand out of her and moved it up to her neck. "What's the matter, Deborah?"

She stared up at him and whispered, "It hurts. Oh God, make it stop!" She started to writhe in the bed, flinging her head backwards and forwards on the pillow, bringing her hands to her face. Gideon sat up and watched for a moment, not knowing what had happened or what to do. Deborah was screaming now, obviously in severe pain.

"Deborah! What's going on? Where does it hurt?" He tried to grab her and hold her, but she was thrashing wildly, her legs kicking at him, her hands still gripping her head tightly.

"It's in my head, it's tearing, he's breaking it! Oh God, stop him! Make him stop! He'll kill her; he'll kill us all! He can't do this! It must stop! Please, make him stop! It hurts! Matthew, it hurts!" Deborah's voice ran down with each gasped phrase and her movements stilled as she slipped into unconsciousness.

Gideon lifted her off the bed toward him, screaming her name and shaking her. Deborah's head rolled back on her neck and she lay limp in his arms. She was barely breathing and a trickle of blood ran from her nose down to her mouth. He lowered her to the bed gently, and grabbed the sheet to wipe away the blood. At the same time, he leaned over to the table by the bed and grabbed his commlink, frantically keying Raven's call sign as he held the sheet to her nose.

Getting no answer, Gideon switched to Matheson's sign. The call went through, but it wasn't Matheson's voice he could hear at first. There were sounds of motion and then he heard Matheson in the distance saying, "What's happened to her, Luke? What's caused this?" Raven's response was indecipherable.

Gideon yelled into his wristband. "John! Is Raven there? I need help here immediately! Deborah's sick." More muffled noises came through, then Matheson's voice.

"I'm sorry, Matthew, he can't leave Lily. She just screamed and passed out. We don't know why, but she's hardly breathing and she's bleeding from the nose." Gideon could hear the fear and concern in Matheson's voice.

Gideon tried to control his own panic as he yelled back, "Deborah's in the same state. Something's going on here, John, but I need some help here NOW!" He heard Raven's voice again in the background, but couldn't make out the words.

Matheson came back on. "Luke says to get her to the infirmary. We're taking Lily there now." The line went dead and Gideon looked down at Deborah, lying almost lifeless on the bed beside him, her chest hardly moving. [Get her to the infirmary. How the hell do I do that?] He knew he couldn't carry her that distance; she was just too heavy. He needed help if he was going to move her.

Gideon leaped out of the bed and rushed through to the living room, over to the comm. unit and put a call through to the Guard Captain's office, praying that they kept it manned throughout the night. His call was answered immediately and Nikarran himself was on duty. Gideon explained quickly that he needed some men and a stretcher, Deborah was sick and they needed to move her to the infirmary. Nikarran nodded abruptly and cut the connection. Gideon raced back to the bedroom and checked her. [Still breathing.] He grabbed his jeans and pulled them on quickly, then snatched at the sheet that had fallen to the floor and wrapped it around her. Deborah was a dead weight and even rolling her into the sheet was an effort. He doubted if he could have carried her as far as the door.

He heard the door opening and running footsteps behind him. Nikarran burst into the room with two other Brakiri carrying a stretcher. Between them, they got her onto it and set off for the infirmary,

Gideon hardly noticing the cold pre-dawn air against his bare chest and the cold stone under his feet as they ran.

Something had awoken him. John surfaced from sleep, senses alert, and opened his eyes, trying to orient himself. [No, not Excalibur - Eriadne B. Lily's bed.] At that moment, the sound that had awakened him was repeated, slightly louder this time. It was a whimper.

He turned toward Lily, but couldn't see her clearly, so he quickly lit the candles in the small sconce on the wall next to the bed. When he turned back to her, he could see that she was still sleeping, but writhing under the sheet, her face showing pain as she whimpered again. John tried to feel what was wrong, and flinched when he felt the pain in his head. "Lily? What's wrong?" He wanted to touch her softly, but at that moment, the pain increased abruptly, and just as abruptly, Lily sat up with a cry, eyes wide and full of pain, holding her head.

"Stop it, no! Don't do it! Please!" she shouted.

John had to put his shields back up, because the pain was constantly increasing. He stared at Luke who'd been wakened by Lily's cry and was now sitting up on the other side of the bed, trying to pull her into his arms and calm her. "What is it, what happened?" Luke asked softly.

Lily shook him off, trembling violently, holding her head and repeating, "No! No! No!" Her voice became louder and shriller with every repetition.

John and Luke could only watch, unable to get through to her or do anything, let alone find out what was wrong with her. Suddenly, she jerked and let out an anguished cry. Despite his shields, John felt a wave of almost unbearable pain hit him, making him cry out, too. At the last moment, he caught Lily in his arms as she collapsed, with her nose bleeding.

Immediately, Luke bent over her and checked her pulse, his face grim as he saw the pallor of her skin, all too evident, even in the candlelight. "Too weak, and she's hardly breathing!" [Don't leave us, Lily. Fight!]

At that moment Matheson's commlink beeped. He reached under Lily's head with his left hand and pushed the button to take the call, still holding Lily and not daring to let go of her, while he asked Raven, "What's happened to her, Luke? What's caused this?"

"I don't know - she's in some kind of shock, but why?" Luke answered, his voice tense, and slipped his arms under her knees to get her feet higher and help increase the flow of blood to the heart.

Gideon's voice came out of the commlink. "John! Is Raven there? I need help here urgently, Deborah's sick."

John laid Lily down onto the mattress, still holding her, as if he was afraid she wouldn't stay with them if he didn't. John took one look at Luke and knew his answer to Gideon's request. "I'm sorry, Matthew, he can't leave Lily. She just screamed and passed out. We don't know why, but she's hardly breathing and she's bleeding from the nose."

Gideon's voice revealed the same anguish John and Luke felt when he answered, "Deborah's in the same state. Something's going on here, John, but I need some help here NOW!"

Luke frowned when he heard that. "Demon too?" He paused briefly, mind racing, then continued, "Tell him to get her to the infirmary, quick, we'll meet him there! I think we're in serious trouble."

Matheson relayed the message and signed off, then quickly put on some pants, wrapped Lily in the blanket, scooped her up, and headed for the infirmary at a run, Luke following on his heels with his medical bag.

Max's eyes flew open when he heard the scream. For a moment, he felt disoriented, but then realized that he was in the infirmary, in the bed Ilas had brought in for him after Raven had induced labor. He sat up with a start. [Dureena?] But at the same moment, he realized that it was Dureena's voice he now heard calling out frantically.

"Ilas! Ilas, wake up!" She was holding Ilas, whose eyes were closed, her face even paler than usual, blood trickling from her nose.

Max was at their side immediately. "What happened?" Dureena stared up at him wide-eyed, still not fully out of the sedation, but awakening more with every second. Stammering slightly, she said, "She just started thrashing around and screaming and then she passed out!"

Max tried to think of something to do, to clamp down on the panic he felt, but simply couldn't. One thought ran around in his head. [First Dureena's baby, and now...NO!]

Dureena noticed his state and screamed at him, "Don't stand there! Call Raven!"

Max automatically lifted his arm and keyed for Raven, but received no reply.

"Try ..." Dureena said, trying to remember the name. [Gotta think!]

"John!" Max filled in the blank. When he did, he only got a busy signal. "Shit!" [What can I do now?!] He could feel the panic start to rise again.

Dureena swallowed her frustration at her condition, knowing that Max and Ilas depended on her. "Go get 'em! NOW! I'll stay with Ilas!"

Max nodded and threw a last look at Ilas' sick-looking face before running out.

He'd crossed the main room and just as he went to open the door to the corridor, it was flung open from outside, just missing hitting him, thanks only to sheer luck and his quick reflexes. Raven stormed in, followed by Matheson with an unconscious Lily in his arms, the looks on their faces just as grim as his must have been. [This can't be coincidence!] Max spun around on his heel and followed them to the bed where John laid Lily down gently while Raven rummaged through some equipment.

"What happened? Ilas screamed and passed out. Did Lily..."

Max was interrupted by guards storming in, carrying Demon on a stretcher, closely followed by Gideon.

"And Demon," Raven confirmed, already running a scanner over the tiny redhead, his expression

softening a bit as he read the results. "Deeply unconscious, but stable. I get some strange readings, but nothing life-threatening."

John, who'd sat down at Lily's side and held her hand in his, exhaled heavily. Max hurried to tell Dureena that Raven was here, and that Ilas' sisters were in the same state.

The guards and Gideon had moved Demon to the bed next to Lily's, and Raven scanned her, with the same results. Then he immediately rushed into Dureena's room to find her sitting up in her bed, holding the unconscious Ilas in her arms, her eyes wide with fear. Max was sitting on the bed, his arm around Dureena's shoulders in an effort to comfort her.

Ilas' scan produced the same results as with her sisters, with some more anomalies due to species differences, but nothing that seemed dangerous. "Just let her sleep. Her body will know when it's safe to wake up," Raven said in a soothing voice. Then he looked at Dureena closely. "You need more rest."

Dureena caught the implied threat, and nodded reluctantly. "Don't worry, I'll lie still and hold Ilas, the way she's held me since..." Her voice broke as the realization set in, and she leaned into Max' chest, the memory of her baby's death overwhelming her.

Raven desperately wished he could do or say anything, but knew that only time could heal Dureena's wounds. He stood and looked at Max before he left. "I'll be here if you need me."

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The Witches of Eriadne: Toil and Trouble

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