

~ Serving The Conqueror ~

(The Conqueror Part Two)

by Mavis Applewater

May 2004

Disclaimers, the story is mine, the characters are not. Xena, Gabrielle and others belong to those nice folks at Renaissance Pictures, Universal/MCA and a host of others. I'm just borrowing them for a little fun. If for any reason, real or imagined, you are uncomfortable with or do not wish to read stories with graphic descriptions of consenting adult women in a loving and sexual relationship then do not read this story or anything else I have ever written. If for any reason it is illegal for you to view this material you have my sympathy, but you must go now and don't come back until it is no longer a crime. Since this is my second Conqueror story you might want to read part one first. I wrote this one for the Goddess Lisa who toils endlessly to maintain my Website and watches over my egroup while I do nothing but hang around the hot tub playing sink the cork. I'm shameless.

A special thank you goes out to my beta reader Mountain Girl.

Happy Birthday Lisa!

Gabrielle scratched her arms furiously as she tried to make herself comfortable on the straw mattress in the tiny cell the guards had tossed her in. "Come on Xena," she muttered under her breath. It was a familiar game with them. Whenever Xena went away Gabrielle would wait until the Conqueror was almost home and then she would try to escape. Her attempts were half hearted at best. She had no real intention of leaving Xena; she just had to make it look like she was. Gabrielle grew pensive, as she peered out the tiny window of her cell.

She knew that Xena had returned to the palace quite sometime ago. Normally by this time she would be languishing in the ruler's bed basking in the after glow from Xena's amazing touch. Gabrielle felt suddenly sullen, wondering that if, just perchance, she had pulled her little stunts one too many times. *'How long did I really think the bliss would endure our differences? She wants to rule the world and I want to set it free,'* the tiny bard pondered as she felt her heart sinking. It wasn't the first time these thoughts weighed heavily on her soul.

She cast her emerald eyes over at the bars of her cell as she heard heavy footsteps approaching. Her frown deepened knowing that the person approaching was not her lover. "Malik," she muttered as the slender dark young man approached her cell. "She's not coming is she?"

"She has guests," he shyly confessed.

"Yes, it wouldn't bode well for her to take time out to visit a runaway slave now would it?" She sneered hating the games they played for the pleasure of the outside world.

"I haven't been afforded the opportunity to inform her that you have been incarcerated," he

feebly offered.

"Malik, she left I ran away," Gabrielle tersely explained. "She knows I'm in the dungeon. I'm always in the dungeon when she returns from battle," she added bitterly under her breath. *'She comes and lets me out berating me in front of everyone in an effort to save face. Then we spend the night making love. Has she finally grown tired of me? Did she finally find another to take my place? After a heated battle did she give into the blood lust and take another to her bed. Someone more willing to serve her, to bend to her will?'* The young bard's mind screamed. "Take me to my room?" She quietly requested. "If it is still my room," she added as she felt her throat constricting.

"Of course it is," he reassured her in a hushed tone as he unlocked the cell door. She wanted to believe his words as the heavy metal door swung open. "She's just busy," he added as he guided her through the dank corridor.

"Look it is the Conqueror's little whore?" A woman shouted out as they passed her cell. Gabrielle stumbled at the harsh words. Normally when she was led out of the dungeon she was standing at Xena's side and no one would dare say a word against either of them. This time she was alone. Malik swung around ready to deal with the group of woman clad in skimpy leather outfits.

"Stop," Gabrielle choked out. "It's the truth. The people should be allowed to speak the truth," she asserted as he gaped down at her while she fought against the tears that were threatening to escape. "I'm the Conqueror's whore," she shouted out suddenly for all to hear. "Everyone knows it," she hissed at him before nudging the young man who had always been kind to her. She glanced over her shoulder catching the surprised looks on the women's faces as she was led out of the dungeon.

"Who were they?" She asked as he guided her through the palace.

"Amazons," he offered in a hushed whisper as he escorted back to her room.

"I thought all of the Amazons had died?" She curiously inquired as they stopped in front of her door. "In the war between the Amazons and the Centaurs both sides were slaughtered by Krykus," she bitterly spat out his name.

"Almost all of them," Malik informed her sullenly. "Those are the only ones who survived the massacre. They should honor you for killing him. Not calling you,"

"I am a whore," she cut him off. "I belong to her," she sniffed as she glanced at the door next to her own. The bard's heart sank as she realized that the room was empty. "She'll be looking for you," she urged him to leave so she could be alone.

Once she was alone Gabrielle looked around her small, but comfortable, surroundings. "When did this become my home?" She pondered as she glanced at the stack of scrolls that filled one side of the room. "Why can't she be the woman I know that she is, the kind hearted, gentle soul who holds me at night? Why can't I be strong enough to leave her?" She pondered aloud her

voice echoing through the empty room.

"Am I boring you Xena?" The older woman inquired as she filled her mug with more wine.

"Of course not," Xena smiled politely at her old comrade. "But I do have business to tend to," she tried to explain.

"Too busy to share a meal with the one who helped you to your destiny?" Her companion challenged her as the Shamaness' eyes glimmered.

"Never Alti," Xena conceded. "You are the one who guided my hand. The one who promised that I would become the destroyer of nations, yet, you never warned me that there would be so much paperwork involved," she teased her old friend as Alti released a hearty cackle. *'For Zeus sake is she going to want to drink all night? I have to get Gabrielle out of the dungeon. What can I do, it isn't as if I can tell her that I need to go get my body slave because I miss her?'* The Conqueror's mind screamed as she tried to come up with a reasonable excuse to leave.

"I promised you the world, I never said the job would be easy," Alti teased. "I'm so glad that our paths crossed and we could become reacquainted. I'm bit surprised that you refused my gift, you usually seem to enjoy blondes."

"I did have a battle to focus on," Xena explained with a wry smile as she wondered just how much of a coincidence their reunion was.

"That never stopped you before," Alti pried.

"True," Xena laughed knowing that she couldn't tell Alti that there had only been one woman in her life ever since she had the babbling blonde cut down from the cross she had staked her too. No one would understand, and if anyone knew just how much the bard meant to her it would put Gabrielle's life in danger. "More wine?"

Several candle marks and a dozen wine skins later Xena was finally afforded her escape. "Why didn't she just say she wanted a job?" The ruler muttered as she made a hurried exit. She had suspected it was what Alti was seeking when the Shamaness suddenly appeared in her tent with a young blonde in tow during Xena's last campaign. Once the older woman finally suggested becoming one of Xena's advisors, the Conqueror readily agreed, giving her a position in her palace.

Once Alti's new position was secured she was more than willing to call it a night. Xena wished her a good evening and had her escorted to her new chambers, which would be on the opposite side of the palace from her own. She suspected Alti wanted closer accommodations but for now, she seemed pleased. "Malik?" Xena bellowed once Alti had made her departure.

"Yes Conqueror?" He greeted her respectfully after making a mad dash into the banquet hall. "See to it that my new advisor is made comfortable and keep her away from my side of the palace. Oh, whatever you do don't let her know about the Amazons in the dungeon. She used to be one and has a real attitude when it comes to them."

"Yes, Conqueror," he quickly agreed.

"I'm off to the dungeon, Gabrielle is going to be miffed," she added hastily.

"She's in her room," Malik shyly informed her.

"How did you ever convince her to go back to her room? Or by some miracle did she not try to runaway this time?" Xena beamed.

"No, she did," he stammered. "Returning to her room was her idea."

"That should please me," she muttered as she caught the cautious look in his eyes. "No one can ever know," she cautioned him. It was an unspoken understanding she shared with only him and Rafkin, her healer. She never told them how she felt about the young blonde, somehow they knew. Just as she knew that her bard was probably very angry and tonight was not going to be a fun reunion.

Gabrielle had spent a long night contemplating her life and her fate. She heard Xena entering her own quarters. She held her breath wondering if Xena was alone in her room or if she had decided to bring another to share her evening with. She expelled the breath she had been holding when Xena entered her room. Her relief ebbed quickly turning to anger. "Conqueror," she coldly addressed the warrior without looking at her. She simply shed her toga and knelt on the floor. She clasped her hands behind her back and stared at the floor. "I trust your mission was successful."

"What in Tartarus are you doing?" Xena squawked as she stood before the naked blonde.

"Performing my duties my lord," Gabrielle dutifully responded finally resigning herself to the fact that the Amazon's words were true. She was the Conqueror's whore and now she was prepared to act that way.

"Oh for the love of Zeus," Xena sputtered in exasperation. "Get up. I'm sorry I left you in the dungeon. I do rule the world, occasionally that is going to make me tardy. Now please get up off that cold floor; it is bad for your knees."

Gabrielle couldn't stop her smile upon hearing the sincerity in her lover's voice. "Okay," she conceded as she stood. She expelled a heavy sigh as she drank in the warrior's chiseled features. "Why is it that only I am allowed to see you this way?" She sighed with frustration. "And just

who was so important that you left me in that dungeon?" She demanded as Xena gaped at her.

"Alti, I knew her from before," came the warrior's befuddled response. "She was a Shamaness who helped me fulfill my destiny. I couldn't very well say nice seeing you again, but I have to go see Gabrielle. And, for the record, perhaps one of these times you could just stay in the palace when I'm gone. It doesn't look good that you run off all the time and never get punished."

"I am not walking with a limp just so you can look good," Gabrielle fussed. "Maybe if you stayed home instead of trying to conquer every dirt mound in the world I wouldn't run away? How much more of the world do you need to control?"

"All of it," Xena flared.

"You mean all of Rome," Gabrielle fumed in response.

"By the Gods," Xena groaned. "You're not still jealous over Caesar are you?"

"I'm not jealous, I'm worried about the way you are obsessed with him," Gabrielle tried to explain. "I'm worried that I no longer care that you are trying to take over the world. Instead I worry about who is keeping you warm at night."

"You are," Xena passionately asserted. "Even when we are apart, it is you and, memories of you that keep me warm at night. There have been no others. But no one can know that or your life would be in danger."

"My life isn't a life," Gabrielle argued. "You rule the world and I have no place in it."

"Your place is by my side," Xena argued as her face saddened.

"No, it is three steps behind you," Gabrielle corrected her as she allowed all of her fears to encompass her. She fell into Xena's arms sobbing. "We can't keep this up," she sniffed. "We can't keep loving one another and hating one another," she whispered as she finally calmed herself. She sniffed again grabbing Xena's cloak. "By the Gods woman, you stink."

"I'm sorry," Xena laughed. "I just wanted to get through dinner so I could see you. I didn't stop to bathe."

"Next time I will understand if you take a moment to freshen up first," Gabrielle snickered as she took the warrior by the hand and led her into her own chambers and into her bathing chamber.

Gabrielle reached up and removed Xena's cumbersome cloak. "Will you still be here the next time?" Xena softly asked as the bard continued to remove her clothing.

"I don't know," Gabrielle answered honestly as she dropped the last of the warrior's clothing to the floor before drawing the bath water. "I'm sorry I snapped at you earlier," she apologized as she lowered the warrior into the warm lavender scented water. "It wears on me," she explained as

she slipped into the warm water.

"I understand," Xena sighed as Gabrielle nestled behind her and began to wash her shoulders. "It wears on me as well," she absently confessed. "Sometimes I wish we could just run away and live out our days together far from the wars and the world."

"Where shall we go?" Gabrielle hopefully offered as she allowed her soapy hands to glide down the warrior's back. She smiled as Xena released a soft moan of pleasure. "I'll follow you anywhere," she promised as she placed a gentle kiss on the weary woman's shoulder.

"A place where my face isn't on every dinar or a wanted poster," Xena wistfully offered.

"Then we have nowhere to go," Gabrielle sadly concluded as she slipped her hands around Xena's waist and began to wash her firm abdomen. "Perhaps we should just barricade the door to your chambers and hide in your bed?"

"By the Gods," Xena gasped as Gabrielle's hands slipped up and brushed against her firm round breasts. "Shall I call for the palace workmen to begin construction?" She moaned as Gabrielle slowly washed her breasts teasing her nipples gently until they hardened against the bard's touch.

"You'd die of boredom," Gabrielle whispered in the warrior's ear forcing her hands to return to the task of cleansing Xena's long, lean body. "I missed you," she softly confessed as she washed the last traces of battle from the brunette's body. "I need to wash your hair."

"I missed you too," Xena murmured before slipping beneath the water.

Gabrielle's breathing hitched as she watched Xena emerging, water cascading down her long, raven tresses. Gabrielle became lost in her task, once again allowing her feelings for Xena to overshadow her fears.

She had finished her task, yet she was still running her fingers through Xena's long, dark hair as she pressed her aching nipples against the warrior's back. "Am I clean yet?" Xena chuckled softly.

"Mmm," Gabrielle sighed softly as Xena turned to face her. Gabrielle smiled for the first time in weeks as she felt Xena's arms wrapping around her body. Gabrielle willingly accepted the tender kiss Xena placed on her lips. The bard quickly reclaimed the warrior's lips, deepening the kiss as she wrapped her legs around Xena's body. She became lost in the smoldering kiss, as Xena's tongue teased her own. She felt her body moving in the water as she dug her blunt nails into the warrior's shoulders.

The cool tiles pressed against her back as Xena molded her body against the edge of the sunken tub. Gabrielle couldn't quell the fire as she rocked her aching need urgently against her lover's body. *'This is what I need, this is where I belong,'* her mind screamed as she thrust harder against the warrior's firm body. She plunged her tongue deeper inside the warmth of her lover's mouth as she felt Xena's strong hands massaging her backside as she guided the bard to grind harder

against her.

"Gabrielle," Xena pleaded as the bard tore her lips from the searing kiss and began feasting upon her lover's neck. Gabrielle whimpered as she felt Xena's fingers slipping between her slick folds. One kiss turned her into a mass of wanton desire and now all she needed was to feel Xena slipping inside of her, taking her long and hard until the bard was screaming out her name.

Gabrielle jerked her hips in an effort to impale herself on her lover's long fingers. She cried out as she felt Xena's touch gliding inside of her. The blonde's head fell back as she felt her lover's fingers wiggling inside of her as the softness of their breasts brushed together. The water splashed loudly as Xena's fingers plunged in and out of Gabrielle's center. The bard's body gyrated furiously as she rode against her lover's touch.

"Sweet Aphrodite!" She screamed out as her body released while Xena captured her nipple in her mouth. She clung tighter to the warrior's body as Xena continued to pleasure her claiming what was truly hers.

"My sweet bard," Xena whispered as Gabrielle collapsed in her embrace.

"Xena," Gabrielle whimpered helplessly as she felt her lover keeping her body afloat. She murmured softly as she felt Xena lifting them out of the tub. "How do you do that?" She whispered in amazement as the warrior carried her into the bedroom. Xena simply chuckled wryly as she set the bard down on her feet in front of the fire. Gabrielle's knees were still quivering as they took turns drying one another's body. "Take me to bed," Gabrielle huskily demanded as she tossed her towel aside.

"As you wish," Xena readily accepted as she swept the blonde up in her arms and carried her to the bed. "Now aren't I supposed to be punishing you for running off again?" Xena taunted the trembling blonde.

"I've already washed your stinky body," Gabrielle countered as she reached up and pulled the laughing warrior down on top of her. "For that alone I deserve a reward."

"And what is it you desire, my bard?" Xena encouraged her as Gabrielle caressed the warrior's face.

"Your taste," Gabrielle hotly responded before drawing Xena in for another lingering kiss. She could feel Xena's desire painting her skin as their bodies melded together. She rolled her lover onto her back and straddled Xena's body grinding her wetness against the warrior's firm flesh. As she ground against her quivering lover Gabrielle filled her hands with the warrior's breasts. She kneaded them tenderly as her lover wriggled beneath her. Xena's breathing became labored as Gabrielle lowered her body and began kissing the warrior's neck.

Xena released tiny gasps as Gabrielle mouth and lips tasted her flesh, her kisses drifting as she licked and tasted the warrior's broad shoulders. She felt Xena's fingers running through her long, golden hair as their bodies swayed against the other's. The room filled with the musky aroma of

their passion as Gabrielle's mouth glided down to the soft, supple swell of the warrior's breasts.

The taste of lavender mixed with the delightful taste of Xena's flesh excited the young bard as her tongue slowly circled the warrior's erect nipples. Gabrielle was filled with a sense of euphoria as the ruler of the world pleas echoed in the darkened room. Gabrielle had never understood or known true passion until she gave into Xena's touch, now she craved it every moment of the day. She murmured against the warrior's flesh as her lips captured one of the rose colored buds.

She suckled the bud greedily as her tiny fingers teased its twin. Xena wrapped her long legs around the bard's body as the blonde feasted upon her breasts. Gabrielle's gaze drifted up as her tongue flickered against her lover's nipples. She watched as Xena's eyes snapped shut and her head fell back.

Gabrielle's heart was racing as her lover ground her wetness against her body. She guided the warrior's legs away from her body before she began to kiss and taste her way down Xena's flesh. "Give yourself to me?" Gabrielle requested as she licked the passion from the inside of her lover's quivering thighs.

Xena released a haughty sigh as she parted her legs and her passion for her lover. Gabrielle moaned with pleasure as she spied her lover's glistening passion being offered to her eager gaze. Her tongue snaked out dipping into Xena's wetness. The brief tantalizing taste was not enough to sate her desires. Gabrielle lowered herself and buried her face in Xena's wetness.

Her lover's body thrashed violently as the bard feasted upon her. Gabrielle drank in her lover's passion like a starving animal driving her lover closer to pure bliss. She suckled the warrior's throbbing bundle as she slipped her fingers inside Xena's warm, wet center. Xena clasped the back of the bard's head pressing her deeper inside of her. Gabrielle happily gave into the warrior's silent request.

Gabrielle managed to lift her head and capture her lover in a fiery gaze. "I want to feel your release," she encouraged her lover. "I want to drown inside of you," she pleaded as Xena's eyes fluttered shut and her head fell back.

"I'm yours," Xena gasped as Gabrielle returned her attention to her lover's passion. Gabrielle felt her body humming with desire as Xena's passion spilled over her. She drank in every last drop as her own body exploded. She rested her head on her lover's stomach as she stilled her fingers allowing the last waves of passion to slip from the warrior's body.

Gabrielle nestled her body against the warrior's as Xena wrapped her up in a tender embrace. Nothing was solved; the world would still beckon and intrude on the bliss once the sun kissed the sky, for now all they had was the fire that neither could deny. "Don't let me fall asleep tonight?" Gabrielle pleaded as she felt the tips of Xena's fingers caressing her flesh. "Promise me?"

"I promise," Xena vowed as she drew her lover closer and kissed her tenderly.

Xena kept her promise neither of them found sleep that night. They loved and touched until the rooster's cry broke through their bliss. The world was calling and it was time for each of them to put on their masks and become what neither of them truly was. *'Where could we escape to?'* Xena silently questioned, pondering if there was a place for them to run off to leaving the world behind.

Just as she was trying to formulate a plan to leave her life behind her skin began to itch. She sneered as the familiar annoyance suddenly appeared. "What kind of nonsense is this?" Ares demanded.

"Piss off," Xena snarled as she brushed past him and headed towards the training field so she could review her troops.

"Nice talk," he gaped as he raced after her. "I told you that she was trouble. Remember? You've bedded her now either tie her up or kill her."

"Now tying her up might not be a bad idea," Xena gleamed as her mind drifted to the image.

"True but she's messing with your focus," Ares cautioned her. "Running off and living the quiet life, what kind of centaur dung is that?"

"It was just a thought," Xena hissed as she spun around and grabbed him by the throat. "Now stay out of my head, there's barely enough room in there for my delusions."

"Xena, I'm only looking out for you," he tried to placate her.

"If you don't, I'll pledge my allegiance to Aphrodite and spend the end of my days spreading love and kindness," she threatened as his eyes widened with fear.

"You wouldn't," he choked out.

"Try me," she growled as he backed away. "Now leave me alone, I have to try and rebuild the Amazon nation. That is if I can ever get those stubborn bitches to shut up and listen to me."

"Now why are you doing that?" He fussed.

"Doing what? Giving them back their land, making them a strong nation, gaining their allegiance," Xena smirked, deep down the truth was that she felt she owed the Amazons a debt.

"The Amazon land," Ares smiled. "A strong fighting force with a chip on their shoulder placed directly between here and Rome. If they should fall at least they will take down most of Caesar's army and it won't cost you any of your troops. Now that is what I like to hear. Still the blonde has to go."

"No, you do," Xena scowled. "Or I will start building temples for your sister."

"No need to be rash," he blurted out. "I'm leaving."

He vanished with a flash as Xena exhaled a sigh of relief. "Now why do I think the rest of this day is only going to get worse?" She sneered as she watched her troops. "Malik," she addressed her second in command. "Any luck with Melosa?"

"None," he grimly informed her.

"Perhaps if I spoke to all of them and not just her," she pondered. "I can understand her mistrust after what I did to the Northern Tribe. With Alti here I can't let them out of the dungeon as we had planned, she'll slaughter the lot of them. Tell me what has been going on during my absence? Besides Gabrielle's latest attempt to escape."

"Darfus has disappeared," he cautiously began.

"Good riddance," Xena sneered. "Any idea where he is?"

"Not yet," Malik sighed.

"Find him," Xena instructed. "I'm happy he's gone, but I'm not foolish enough not to keep an eye on that back stabbing Bacchae. Anything else?"

"Draco arrived this morning and wishes to speak to you," Malik informed her as her eyes lit up.

"Was he alone?" She eagerly inquired hoping that he had finally found Lila. She hoped that if she could reunite the bard with her sister it would encourage the blonde to stay.

"Just his troops," Malik mumbled. "He's waiting in the great hall for you."

"Watch the training," she instructed him. "I'll meet with Draco, and you keep an eye on Alti, if you can."

"Done," Malik respectfully replied.

"Draco," she greeted him warmly as she entered the hall. "Do you have news for me or is this just a social call?" The grim expression on his face dampened her hopes.

"No news about the girl," he informed her with a sullen expression. "I do have other news for you. It's about Callisto."

"Now what in Tartarus has that scrawny bitch done now?" Xena growled. "I know I murdered her family, but enough is enough."

"She murdered a farmer claiming that it was by your order," he cautiously began.

"So?" She shook her head in confusion. "She murdered a farmer and blamed it on me, what was she hoping to accomplish? Most everyone already hates me. Who was this farmer?"

"Perdicas of Potedia," he softly responded. "It seems that before I raided the village he was betrothed to your girl."

"Gabrielle's intended?" She fumed as the fear gripped her heart. Her worst fear was coming true. The one person she had left in this world was in danger. She thought she could keep it from prying eyes. She had failed.

"Is there anything I can do?" He offered sincerely. She glared at him knowing that he knew. *'Of course he knows, everyone knows,'* she silently screamed.

"No," she coldly responded keeping her icy façade in place. "I thank you and I won't forget," she promised as she handed him a small pouch filled with gold coins.

"This isn't why I came," he responded as he tucked the money in his belt. "I'll take it," he smiled. "But it wasn't my motive."

"I know," she smiled in response.

He bowed and left her alone with her troubling thoughts. She reclined in her oversized throne drumming her fingers as she tried to think what she should do. She lost her family, one in death and her remaining brother and her mother because of his death, then Borias because she was misguided and, finally, she lost her son. Krykus started a war between the Centaurs and the Amazons, he got the land that he wanted and Solan died, caught in the crossfire when Krykus swept down upon the Centaurs' unprotected village. She fought against the tears of never having known her only child. Gabrielle was the only one she had left, the one person who truly cared for her. "Where can I hide her?" She wondered aloud. "And how do I tell her that her childhood sweetheart is dead because of me?"

"Hide who?" A familiar voice called out.

She smiled as she looked up and spied Gabrielle dressed in a simple, white tunic entering the expansive room. "You," Xena grimly confessed as she watched the young blonde approaching her.

"Oh, so now you wish to hide me?" Gabrielle teased as she climbed up. Xena clasped the blonde's hips and guided her onto her lap. "Have I done something wrong?"

"No," Xena reassured her as she gently brushed the bard's cheek. "You are an angel, this is my doing. As it always is."

"You blame yourself for so much," Gabrielle whispered. "Not all of the evils in this world are your doing."

"Many of them are," Xena sadly corrected her. "A friend of yours was murdered in my name."

"I have no friends, not any longer," Gabrielle solemnly corrected her.

"Perdicas," Xena softly whispered. "The man you would have married."

"Perdicas?" Gabrielle choked out as tears filled her eyes. "Who?"

"Callisto," Xena supplied in a hushed tone. "She knows I care for you. She murdered him to hurt you and, by proxy, hurt me. I'm sorry."

"You didn't do this," Gabrielle flared as she clasped Xena's face in her hands.

"I did," Xena argued. "Did you love him?"

"Perdicas was a dear, sweet boy," Gabrielle sniffed. "I cared for him deeply, but no I was never in love with him, and I wasn't going to go through with the wedding. Where is Callisto?"

"No you don't," Xena flared. "You have enough blood on your hands. I'll find her and I'll make her pay. First I need to find a place to hide you. She knows. Many people know it's not safe for you here."

"Just last night you were trying to get me to stay?" Gabrielle muttered in disbelief. "Some one is coming," she whispered as her head jerked up.

"You're getting very good at that," Xena whispered her compliment. "It's Alti," she added her eyes narrowing with suspicion. She began to guide Gabrielle away from her when blonde latched onto her lips. Xena eagerly returned the blonde's advances before she remembered that Alti was entering the room.

"I'm your slave, remember?" Gabrielle whispered hotly in the warrior's ear as she slipped her hand beneath Xena's silk robe.

"Oh I remember," Xena whimpered as she felt a curious little hand slipping between her thighs.

"Now that is the Xena I remember," Alti purred as she approached the amorous duo. "A little blonde, I should have guessed. I've come to discuss my new role on your staff."

"Hmm," Xena murmured as she felt Gabrielle's touch dipping into her passion. "I'm sure my concubine won't mind or understand," she chuckled as Gabrielle bit her neck. She winced slightly knowing that her lover was more than displeased by her poor choice in wording. "I don't even know if this one can even speak Greek," she added just to spite her lover as Gabrielle grunted with displeasure. "Then again who needs her to talk," she continued as she swatted the bard firmly on her backside. She was surprised when the bard released a tiny gasp. *Interesting,* Xena mentally noted.

"True," Alti merrily agreed with the Conqueror. "Now there must be some way I could serve you?"

"Caesar," Xena hissed with delight. "There must be some way I can finally bring that bastard to his knees."

"Caesar," Alti gleamed with pleasure. "Such a powerful man," she purred. "Yes, Caesar."

"Can you help me?" Xena taunted the older woman.

"I can find a way," Alti purred as the thought of tapping into Caesar's power drew her in. Xena knew it would. Alti didn't desire material possessions; it was all about power.

"Do this for me, and I will be grateful," Xena promised as she silently hoped the old witch would end up getting herself killed. She inhaled sharply as she felt Gabrielle's fingers stroking her aching nub.

"Your gratitude is all I seek," Alti lied. *'Yeah right, I stopped believing that a very long time ago,'* Xena silently scowled. She opened her mouth to respond to Alti when Gabrielle slipped from her lap and climbed up under her robe. The Conqueror's eyes widened as she felt the bard nestling her body between her thighs. *'She isn't?'* She silently gasped as she felt Gabrielle's tongue gliding along her sex. "She is an eager one," Alti noted with appreciation. "I see that you've trained her well."

"Yeah, well," Xena stammered as the bard feasted upon her desire. Xena couldn't stop her hips from rising and pressing her wetness harder against the bard's touch. She gripped the armrest on her throne as she tried to wrap up her little chat with Alti. "She'll fetch a good price when I'm done with her."

"I'll leave you to your duties then," Alti smiled as she paused for a moment to watch. She released an appreciative sigh before making her exit. Xena's eyes rolled back as the bard guided her to the Elysian Fields. She took a moment to catch her bearings. She looked down at Gabrielle prepared to ask just why she had done that in front of Alti when she caught the sadness in the bard's eyes. Suddenly she understood Gabrielle needed to feel alive. News of Perdicas' murder had shaken her and touching and being touched reminded her that she was alive.

"Come here," Xena gently requested as she pulled her lover into her arms. "I promise I will make her pay."

"Love me?" Gabrielle pleaded helplessly as Xena clasped her face in her hands. The warrior captured the blonde in a fiery kiss never breaking the passionate embrace as she stood.

"I do," Xena confessed as she slipped her hand under the blonde's tunic. Gabrielle's eyes mirrored her emotions as the warrior slipped inside of her lover's warmth. Gabrielle clung to her as Xena glided in and out of the bard's passion. Xena placed her other hand on the small of the

blonde's back in an effort to steady the smaller woman. Gabrielle's hips pounded in a steady rhythm with Xena's touch. The bard's passionate cries echoed throughout the large room as they clung to one another.

Several candle marks later Gabrielle was nestled in Xena's lap as the Conqueror caressed her back. Each of them was contemplating the future as Gabrielle released a heavy sigh. "Xena?" Gabrielle began thoughtfully. "Why are there Amazons in the dungeon?" She asked she peered up at her lover. She smiled as Xena arched a single eyebrow.

"I almost forgot about them," Xena dryly responded. "Believe it or not I'm trying to help them."

"By locking them up in the dungeon?" Gabrielle questioned. "Odd way to offer them help."

"I do want to help them," Xena sighed. "Helping them will help me and I feel that I owe it to them. But it seems they'd rather kill me. So, for now, I'm keeping them in the dungeon."

"That's not going to work," Gabrielle argued. "I hated you when I first met you and you didn't lock me in the dungeon."

"No, you would have enjoyed that," Xena laughed.

"Why not try to woo them like you did with me?" Gabrielle suggested.

"You want me to seduce them?" Xena teased.

"Absolutely not," Gabrielle grumbled as she wagged her finger at the Conqueror. "I'm just suggesting that locking them up isn't going to make them like you."

"I don't care if they like me or not," Xena huffed. "I just want them to accept my offer."

"Which is?" Gabrielle encouraged.

"I'm offering them back a piece of their land, and to help them rebuild a strong Amazon nation," Xena explained. "Melosa won't listen to me. She thinks I'm up to something. The same stubborn attitude that cost her tribe is going to keep them locked up."

"You mean when Krykus tricked them into starting a war with Centaurs?" Gabrielle persisted.

"How did you know about that?" Xena curiously inquired.

"He boasted about it," Gabrielle timidly confessed. "They always talked freely, like I wasn't even in the room. To them I only existed when they needed something, like your friend Alti did earlier."

"I'm not certain that she is my friend or ally," Xena scowled. "And she's the other reason I can't let the Amazons run around the palace, and the reason why they hate me. Alti convinced me to murder a number of the Northern Amazon Queens so she could gain their inner power. I did it. Who am I kidding; they are never going to trust me? Maybe I should let you talk to them?"

"Oh I don't think they like me either," Gabrielle sighed as she recalled the hateful words one of the women spat out. "I think you should just let them go."

"Maybe," Xena yawned. "I'm tired. What would you say if I suggested we just go to bed early?"

"Yes," Gabrielle smiled as she nuzzled closer to Xena's body.

"Go upstairs," Xena suggested. "I'll join you soon. First I'm going to try to talk to Melosa one more time."

"Melosa," Xena greeted the smaller yet powerful woman. "I've called you here to give you one last chance to accept my offer."

"Again, why should I trust you?" Melosa stared her down.

"You shouldn't," Xena agreed. "I owe you a debt, one which I am trying to repay. You owe someone a debt, you must know by now that it wasn't Phantes who murdered your sister, Terreis," She watched as Melosa's body tensed. "Krykus didn't just murder your sister when he attacked the centaur village, my son was there hidden from my enemies. He was just a boy when he was slaughtered. Wouldn't you agree that we both owe a debt to the rebel slave who cut his throat?"

"For once I am inclined to agree with you," Melosa nodded.

"Then why, according to my second in command, did a member of your tribe call her a whore?" Xena bellowed.

"Hidden in plain sight," Melosa complemented the Conqueror. "As for the disparaging comment made by one of my warriors I've already punished her for that. I don't believe in making degrading comments towards other women unless they've earned them," she explained directing the last part towards the Conqueror.

"Oh I've earned them," Xena laughed. "Gabrielle has not. It was a fluke that she ended up in my service. Originally I tried executing her. Once I learned that she had taken the lives of my enemies I spared her life. I didn't count on caring for the girl."

"That is a dangerous admission," Melosa wisely noted.

"Escape tonight and take her with you," Xena requested as she handed the proud queen a scroll. "That is your escape plan. Take the land I promised you and I will not interfere with your lives unless you need my help."

"How do I know that you won't execute us for trying to escape?" Melosa questioned her in an uneasy tone.

"Because if I wanted to kill you, you'd be dead already," Xena smiled cruelly. "I won't say it will be easy. Everyone must think that Gabrielle and your tribe escaped on your own."

"And when you fail to retaliate everyone will assume that neither us nor Gabrielle means anything to you," Melosa nodded in understanding. "Have the girl ready on time. Oh, and Xena, we won't be needing your help, and the Romans are your problem."

"Pity," Xena sighed. "But if anything happens to Gabrielle I'll make you wish you had to fight a legion of harpies rather than face me."

"Understood," Melosa conceded.

Later that evening Gabrielle was lying naked next to her lover feeling content and sated. That was until the Conqueror revealed her plan. "Excuse me?" Gabrielle flared. "I'm supposed to run off with the Amazons and live with them? Where do you get off making these kinds of choices for me?"

"I rule the world Gabrielle," came Xena's flustered response.

"And just how did you manage to change Melosa's mind?" Gabrielle demanded as her anger grew.

"When you killed Krykus you avenged her sister's death," Xena carefully explained. "Terreis, the Amazon whose murder started the war, was her sister. You also avenged my son's death. I told her that and how I feel about you. She knew that this is dangerous information for me to confide in anyone so she believed me and accepted my offer."

"Your son?" Gabrielle gasped as her heart pounded wildly. "You had a son? You never told me."

"Solan," Xena choked out. "I gave him up, sent him to live with the Centaurs who were my enemies. No one would look for my child there. I thought he would be safe. And he was until Krykus' army swept through the village. All these years I pretended that I was thankful to you for killing Mezentius because he stood in my way. I couldn't admit the truth to anyone even myself. I can't lose you as well."

"Xena please don't send me away?" Gabrielle pleaded as she felt her heart shattering.

"I love you," Xena choked out. "And the people I love end up dead because of me. I won't let that happen again. If you run off with the Amazons, I can pretend not to care. I was going to free them anyway and if I don't go chasing after you, everyone will assume that you meant nothing to me."

She brushed back the tears as she picked up the baggy dark clothing Xena had given her to wear. "I'm going to look ridiculous in these," she tried to joke.

"True, but less conspicuous than in one of those togas or tunics I make you wear," Xena responded with a smile that didn't reach her eyes.

"I love you," Gabrielle whispered.

"And that shouldn't cost you your life," Xena asserted. "Now you have a chance to live a life and stand on your own. Isn't that what you wanted?"

"I can't have what I want," Gabrielle conceded.

"Neither of us can," Xena sniffed.

"Look after my scrolls," Gabrielle instructed the warrior as she silently vowed that one day they would be together again.

Gabrielle met up with the Amazons; each of them eyed her with suspicion as the band made their escape. Once they were safely on their way back towards the new Amazon territory Gabrielle had already grown tired of the glares and snide comments being whispered. "Oh yeah I'm going to fit in with this group," she grumbled as Melosa called them to a halt. "Velasca is there something you wanted to say to Gabrielle," the queen demanded. The tall Amazon sneered as she stepped in front of Gabrielle.

"I apologize for calling you a whore," Velasca offered half-heartedly.

"Thank you," Gabrielle sighed as Melosa instructed the wayward band to continue.

"Don't worry, Velasca is always like that," a curly haired blonde whispered to her. "I'm Ephiny by the way."

"Gabrielle," the bard introduced herself, thankful for the first friendly face she had seen since she left the palace.

"You know many of us think what you did was amazing," Ephiny forged on as they made their way through the woods.

"What is it that I have done?" Gabrielle groaned.

"A slave who rose up to start a rebellion against the Conqueror, that took a lot of courage,"

Ephiny praised her.

"I murdered two men in cold blood," Gabrielle spat out as she halted her movements. "That isn't rising up. I spoke out against the Conqueror because what she is doing is wrong. Then when I had a chance to change her, I allowed myself to change because I love her. Still want to praise me?"

"More so," Ephiny smiled as they started walking. "So much courage in such a small package."

"Hey." Gabrielle groused.

"And no sense of humor," Ephiny added with a cocky smirk. "I have to admit, despite the fact that she is a ruthless tyrant, the Conqueror is,"

"Is what?" Gabrielle flared.

"Tall, really tall," Ephiny covered quickly.

"Uh huh," Gabrielle snickered. "That she is."

Two turns of the moon later Gabrielle was still settling into her new life. The nation was growing stronger and she still felt like an outsider. She wasn't an Amazon and there were many who wouldn't let her forget it. Velasca was the worst. Gabrielle just shrugged it off wondering if she should stay or go. Early one morning she spied Velasca in the woods talking to a man.

Gabrielle's heart stopped when she recognized the man. "By the Gods," she gasped calling out for Ephiny and the others as she raced towards Velasca. "Velasca don't!" She screamed as she barreled into the duo as he drew a knife from behind his back. Her movements were too late and Darfus stabbed Velasca. Gabrielle unsheathed the fallen Amazon's sword from her back and confronted him.

"Xena's bitch," he gleamed. "I've been looking for you."

"You found me," Gabrielle calmly responded as he laughed at her. He raised his dagger not fearing that she would be able to cause him any harm. "Enjoy Tartarus," she snarled as she ran him through. He looked down at the gaping wound with shock before falling to the ground. Gabrielle threw the sword to the ground as she knelt beside Velasca. The others reached them as Gabrielle pressed down on the Amazon's wound in an effort to stop the bleeding.

"I betrayed you," Velasca confessed. "I led him here so he could kill you. I thought you weren't an Amazon."

"Ssh," Gabrielle tried to silence her. "Save your strength, the healer is on her way."

"Only a true Amazon would risk her life to save her sister," Velasca continued as Gabrielle felt her life force slipping away. "I want you to take my right of cast."

"What?" Gabrielle muttered in confusion as Ephiny and the others tried to help.

"Take my right of cast," Velasca repeated.

"Okay," Gabrielle agreed not understanding what was happening as Velasca crossed over.

Later Gabrielle was scrubbing her hands furiously in a basin as Melosa and Ephiny approached her. "I never thought I'd have blood on my hands again," she greeted them absently.

"Gabrielle, what you did today was very brave," Ephiny reassured her as she captured the bard's hands and began to dry them. "That is why Velasca gave you her right of cast, which couldn't have been easy for her since she betrayed you."

"What is a right of cast?" The bard questioned them. By the time they finished explaining her head was spinning. "So, I'm an Amazon now?"

"Some of us already thought of you as one, but yes you're an Amazon now," Ephiny explained with a reassuring smile.

"Gabrielle I don't think you grasp the situation," Melosa continued. "Velasca was my adoptive daughter and heir to throne. You're an Amazon Princess."

"Beg pardon?" The bard squeaked out.

"Now how did you get in here?" Melosa scowled at the Conqueror who was lounging in her hut.

"I have many skills," the Conqueror gloated.

"And troops," Melosa added with concern.

"No one knows I'm here," the Conqueror reassured her. "I was nearby hunting for a scrawny, twisted blonde and a Shamaness, both of whom I suspect are conspiring with the Romans. I heard a rumor a certain snake named Darfus was lurking about. Is it true?"

"He's dead," Melosa supplied as the Conqueror smirked.

"Good," she smiled even brighter. "Do you know what he was doing here?"

"Apparently he conspired with one of my own to give up Gabrielle," Melosa carefully explained. "Gabrielle is safe."

"Thank the Gods," Xena blew out. "And the one who conspired with Darfus? Where is she?"

"Dead," Melosa continued. "Once Darfus had what he needed he killed her. Strange turn of events, Gabrielle tried to stop him. Velasca gave her right of cast to Gabrielle."

"Now she is a true Amazon," Xena smiled knowing that the bard would truly be safe.

"She's a princess," Melosa added with mirth. "Velasca was my adoptive daughter."

"By the Gods," Xena's smile grew bolder. "You mean that Gabrielle is heir to the Amazon Nation."

"It's true," Melosa confirmed with a smile of her own. "I think when that day comes she will be a good leader, she's a kind and gentle soul. When I cross over I truly believe that she will lead the Amazon's to their destiny. I should thank you for that."

"Thank the fates, I just wanted her safe," Xena corrected her. "She killed him didn't she?"

"Yes," Melosa solemnly confirmed. "It troubles her."

"I never wanted any more blood on her hands," she softly whispered. "Is she alright?"

"Ask her," Melosa instructed her. "She's down by the lake. I'm certain you can sneak down there without anyone noticing."

"Why is it that every time the two of you have a couple of skins of wine all you want to know is what she's like in bed?" Gabrielle growled at Ephiny and Solaria as she snatched the wine skin from Ephiny's hands.

"Cause she's tall," Ephiny quipped. "Come you're one of us now, share?"

"I would but she's standing right behind you," Gabrielle snickered as she glanced up at the tall dark warrior.

"Very funny," Ephiny laughed. "Now out with it. Is she as hot as she looks?"

"Ask her," Gabrielle smirked as she wiggled her eyebrows. Ephiny rolled her eyes and brushed back her curly bangs before glancing over her shoulder.

"Hera's tits!" She yelped as she discovered the Destroyer of Nations glaring down at her. The warrior was frozen with fear as she stared up at the imposing figure.

"Stop staring or I'll scratch your eyes out," Xena barked.

"Xena?" Gabrielle chastised her.

"She is tall," Ephiny finally sputtered as she tore her eyes away and scrambled to her feet yanking Solaria up along with her.

"And I was never here," Xena cautioned the Amazon.

"She was never here," Gabrielle echoed the caution as the Amazons nodded in agreement before rushing off.

"Greetings Princess," Xena smiled warmly as she knelt down beside the Bard.

"You heard?" Gabrielle sighed as she leaned into Xena's touch.

"Are you alright?" Xena tenderly inquired as she wrapped her arms around the smaller woman.

"Now that you're here I am," Gabrielle sighed as she nuzzled the warrior's neck. She smiled as she drank in her warrior's scent.

"I must say I like the new look," Xena complimented her as she leaned back.

"Thank you," Gabrielle giggled. "Just something to go along with my new career. I must say I've had some interesting career changes, farm girl, slave and rebel, love slave and now Amazon Princess. Keeping my scrolls safe?"

"Yes," Xena confirmed with a shy smile as her thumb absently stroked the back of Gabrielle's hand. "Why did you leave them with me?"

"Because I know in my heart that someday we will be together," Gabrielle explained as she caressed the warrior's leather clad thigh.

"Keep believing," Xena urged as she leaned over and gently brushed her lips against Gabrielle's. "I can't stay long."

"Then shut up and kiss me," Gabrielle demanded as she drew her lover in for a passionate kiss. Gabrielle parted Xena's lips with her tongue as the warrior lowered her down onto the damp grass. The bard wrapped her legs around the warrior's body as she felt Xena's hand caressing her thigh.

"Really like the new look," Xena moaned as she slipped her hand under Gabrielle's leather skirt. She cupped the bard's mound and teased her through her breeches as Gabrielle rocked her body urgently against Xena's touch. Gabrielle growled in frustration, as her body demanded more.

Gently she undraped her legs from Xena's body and pushed her lover up. Xena hovered above her as Gabrielle untied her skirt and removed her undergarments. She rolled onto her stomach and lifted her body up. Balancing on her hands and knees she offered her bare backside up to her

lover. Xena's primal groans filled the night air as she caressed the bard's firm ass.

"Take me," Gabrielle pleaded as she felt her lover's mouth on her bare flesh. "Yes," she cried out as she felt Xena plunging inside of her. She thrust her hips backward meeting her lover's urgent touch. She could feel the leather grinding against her flesh as Xena's body covered her own. Their bodies ground together as Xena cupped the bard's breasts teasing them through the short leather top she was wearing.

She rode harder against Xena's touch as she felt the laces on her top being opened. Her nipples hardened as Xena pushed the top up and cupped her breasts. Gabrielle's body trembled as Xena pinched and teased her erect nipples. "Someday," Xena whispered hotly in her ear as the bard's body erupted.

They collapsed onto the grass as their bodies continued to sway together. Gabriel clawed at the ground beneath her as she felt her lover's body trembling along with her own. She sighed with regret as she felt Xena's touch leaving her body. She rolled over as Xena nestled beside her. "I have to go," Xena wearily explained.

"You rule the world," Gabrielle explained as she began to unlace the warrior's leather pants. "You can be late now and then." They kissed deeply as Gabrielle slipped her nimble fingers into the warrior's pants. Their tongues teasing the others as Gabrielle slowly stroked the warrior's throbbing nub. Gabrielle's body trembled as she teased her lover's passion until the ruler of the world released a deep scream into the warmth of her mouth.

They exchanged one last kiss before Xena disappeared into the darkness. "Someday," Gabrielle vowed as she glanced up at the full moon.

Gabrielle looked up from the rabbit she was cooking over the campfire. "Xena?" She squeaked in horror when she spied the warrior resting under a tree reading a scroll. She growled as she stormed over and snatched the scroll from Xena's grasp. "By the Gods are you reading that again? Joxer will be back any minute, what if he finds it?"

"It would serve him right," Xena reasoned. "Now give it back, I was just getting to the part where I spank you."

"For the love of Zeus," Gabrielle hissed. "Of all the scrolls I've written, why is this the only one you want to read? It was a dream."

"You're kidding me right?" Xena laughed as Joker approached. "Son of a Bacchae," she growled as Gabrielle laughed.

"Dinner is almost ready," Gabrielle gloated as she leaned over. "If you're good and slip something into Joxer's drink, we can sneak off later. I'll read it to you," she whispered huskily in the warrior's ear.

"Oh Joxer, feeling thirsty?" Xena anxiously called out.

The End

Send comments to findingmavis@comcast.net

For updates, previews & the Wednesday Afternoon Series join my egroup, yomavis-subscribe@yahoogleroups.com
