

mouth of the cave," her voice was dark and deep, wickedly insinuating as she stroked Gabrielle open with her fingers, "a trickle of moisture," the young woman moaned as Xena's fingers became part of her, as her words enflamed as well as her touch. "But if you enter...deep inside...to the back of the wall...a snug fit...a safe haven to hold you tight...hidden and secure...like the womb..."

Gabrielle's eyes shone like jade lit from within and she fixed them on that gushing fountain spurting madly cross the sky...spilling the seed of uncountable stars in such glorious ecstatic display.

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She opened the door, a funny looking kind of door, it moved smoothly on what must be well-oiled hinges, but the dark inside it was absolute.

She took a deep breath and stepped inside, into the darkness. Held the breath, until she sensed the warm presence of another. The hand that grasped hers seemed familiar somehow, small and gentle, but insistent now as it tugged her towards...what? 'Go with it,' she heard a soft voice echo in the back of her mind. The hand left hers empty as her knuckles brushed the cool metal fixture of what promised to be another door.

She opened it knowing she could not look back and would've been blinded by the bright sunlight beyond if she'd been using her own eyes. The other, the one who'd led her here-- not gone, but she knew, if she could turn her head that no one would be there and yet--it was as if they stepped across the threshold together into this meadow of light.

Cooling breezes tipped the tall grass towards her and slowly the scents and sounds filtered through. She hadn't felt the volition that allowed the action, but noticed her arm was raised, finger pointing--to the far hills in bold relief against an azure sky. She could smell and feel the heat of this eternal day. As she thought, 'But where--?'

A darkness rose from the horizon and brought the stars of summer. Long arms embraced her warmly from behind, her dark companion; not the one who had led her here, the one who shared her bed. They'd been together--how long now? Almost four... years...no, that's not right. What was she thinking? Less than that...they'd met while searching for...

"Xena," she murmured in her sleep.

"I'm here," a voice answered close by her ear, a soft caress, moist lips brushing the sensitive flesh. "You're dreaming."

Only half asleep now the younger woman shifted slightly, pressed closer into the welcome embrace. "She...showed me..." the images were still vibrant, fresh in her mind. Suddenly she threw back the covers and grabbed for a writing implement and paper by the bed. She sat up scribbling furiously.

"What is it?" Her dark haired lover wrapped her long limbs around her own and sat behind her, against her back, arms snaking around her middle.

"An answer?"

"What was the question?" The woman pushed the long blonde hair aside and nibbled at her nape.

An amused snort, "You have to ask?"

"Declarative sentence, please."

"Sweetart, I think someone very near and dear to my heart just told me something wonderful."

"In your dream?"

"In my dreams...yeah...she was trying to tell me--"

"Who?"

"Hmm?"

"Who was trying to tell you...what?"

The young woman rested against her friend and lover, sighed, "Did you ever, when you were a