

Knowing her dark side as she did she feared she would savage the girl if she allowed herself to touch her. Oh, but she wanted to touch her. What was it Lao-Ma had said about desire? She couldn't think straight. Her heart was pounding, tearing in two, her savage, dark heart. She grabbed hold of the top of Gabrielle's nightdress and tore it right down the middle. They were both breathing hard now, waiting for Xena's next move. "Are you afraid of me, Gabrielle?"

"Should I be?" There was an undeniable tremor in her voice. And Xena could see the rapid pulsebeat ticking at her throat.

"What do you want me to do? Do you want me to stop? Because if I don't stop I'll...I think I might...hurt you. And I don't want to do that."

"Xena," Gabrielle swallowed, stared into her blazing eyes, met and held that gaze fearlessly as she could. "If you need to hurt me...then do it." Xena felt a tear, wet on her cheek, taking her by surprise. "For you, I can bear anything. You know that."

Xena closed her eyes, saw herself slapping Gabrielle, throwing her down on the bed, driving her hand hard between the young limbs, forcing her fist into the tight wetness, hurting her so deep, thrusting, angry, beyond reason, her teeth leaving bite marks on neck and breasts, belly and thighs--"What I'd like to do...to you...what I'd like..." and then she was weeping like a child suckled at Gabrielle's breast and the younger woman was holding her, rocking her, comforting. Gabrielle undressed her, pulled her into bed beside her. "You're so beautiful here. Even moreso than you usually are. If that's possible. I've wanted you so. But I didn't dare touch you. You must've thought... In the bath, that lovely steamy hot water...and your hands on my shoulders, kneading me--"

"Needing you," Gabrielle purringly punned and Xena smiled through her tears. "I wondered why you weren't in the mood-- It was so... I was so... Don't ever be afraid to touch me. No matter what. I couldn't live without your touch." She took Xena's hand and placed it on her breast, kissing the warrior's mouth tenderly, stroking with her tongue.

Xena sobbed in her throat and still weeping, slid down the lovely firm young body to make love to Gabrielle there with every bit of tenderness she had ever felt for the young woman in her arms. To drown in her own desire.

"My hands are small I know..."

--Jewel

"Do I really have hands like a sailor?"

Xena smiled. "Here, let me see." Gabrielle turned and when Xena took her hands the fur fell from her bare shoulders. "I stand corrected." She brought the small hand to her cheek. "Soft and warm. Like you. The way you are. All over. Here," Xena's hands cupped the charming little breasts, "and here."

Gabrielle's mouth opened and she began to breathe rapidly as Xena's fingers delved into her growing wetness. "Mmm." Gabrielle bent back, supple like a willow, trusting Xena's hand to keep her from falling. "Those yoga positions just may come in handy afterall."

(More to Come...)