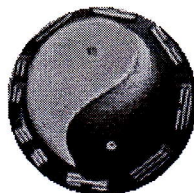


Soul-Mates



"Like anyone would be I am flattered
by your fascination with me
Like any hot-blooded woman
I have simply wanted an object to crave
but you, you're not allowed
you're uninvited...
must be strangely exciting...
must be somewhat hearttearing...
Like any uncharted territory
I must seem greatly intriguing
You speak of my love like you
have experienced love like mine before,
but this is not allowed
you're uninvited...
I don't think you unworthy
I need a moment to deliberate."
-----Alanis

"Don't cry. I'm sorry." Xena said it again and stroked Gabrielle's hair, pressed the beloved head against her breast. She knew Gabrielle could hear her heart beating. She could hear it herself. Resounding in her ears.

"Hold me," she said, sounding suddenly like a little girl. They stood there for a long moment until Gabrielle's sniffing lessened and the young pearl-bedecked woman slid down the warrior's leather-clad body to kneel at her feet. The tear-stained face, so appealing, gazed up at her. "Xena, take me to bed. Make love to me."

And the warrior lifted her to her feet and then into her strong arms and carried her to the sleeping couch. They'd slept separately the night before. Gabrielle had seemed to need the distance. But now... Her eyes were brimming over with desire and vulnerability and need... Xena removed the strange costume from her friend. The more precious jewels lay beneath, she well knew. Xena undressed hurriedly and lay atop Gabrielle, flesh hot and pliant and melding, their bodies always fitted so perfectly together like pieces of a puzzle, now complete.

"I love you," the warrior whispered in her ear with an aching passion to have, to share, to possess.