

"Not afraid you're in bed with a demon?" Gabrielle's eyes teased as she smiled at the suggestion.

"If I am," Xena spoke with difficulty, "then how is that any different from what we already have?"

Gabrielle laughed delightedly. "Here, let me," the young woman rolled on top, scissored her legs between Xena's and rode against her. "I'll show you how good a demon lover can be. You'll never want it any other way." Her eyes seemed to blaze as Gabrielle stabbed her body hotly, repeatedly, vigorously against Xena's dripping sex. One leg over the side of the couch, touching the floor at times as she moved untiringly. And, for the moment, Xena really didn't care if her lover were truly possessed or merely mad with passion. This was bliss.

"Oh, yes, don't stop, it's so good."

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"Xena, about last night--"

"I know. It's alright. It was...interesting. It was...good. Don't worry about it."

"You...loved it."

"I loved it," the warrior admitted, none too sheepishly, and nodded.

"Well...perhaps you'd like to have her back...inside me then."

"Gabrielle, think of what you're saying... besides I was making love to 'you,' to your body-- You're just being jealous of yourself."

"Would you have done it?"

Remembering the incredibly agile, incisive tongue on her, in her, Xena spoke dreamily, "We did do it. Don't tell me you don't remember. You were in there too, weren't you?"

"That's not what I meant," Gabrielle's eyes glazed over, far away.

"Oh," Xena sighed. "That. I... I don't know how. I was hoping she'd be scared out of you if she thought I'd really strike with my sword. But...I could see you struggling...I knew you wanted me to--"

"Yes, I was trying to say it...kill me, please, I don't want to hurt you."

"Yes. I saw it in your eyes. And then...then I would've fallen on my sword and we'd--"

"Be on our way to the next incarnation."

"Oh, but I love this one. You're so... everything. Don't go anywhere. Not yet. Please. If we go, we'll go together."

"Just like in your vision."

"I didn't mean that... I wish I hadn't told you. You didn't need to know."

"I've...gotten used to it. Sort of. I know it haunts you. Still. I'd hoped we were safely past it but...Xena, whatever will be...that's just the way it will be. But I don't believe it's written in stone either. Whatever happens, I hope...no, I know I'll be by your side. Just where I want to be. And I'm not afraid. We'll face it together."

Xena had carried Gabrielle back to their room from the marketplace after their ordeal. She never thought she'd be in any situation where she was forced to use near-lethal pressure points on her best friend. Neither had Gabrielle as the recipient of the technique. She was still weak as a kitten, but getting her color and strength back. She took Xena's hand which she'd been holding to tightly all the time and brought it to her lips. "You know I love you. If there's one thing you can always be sure of. It's that."

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"Did you think I...he was cute?"

"Oh...yeah, I guess. If I'd been 20 years younger... Wouldn't that have been interesting?" Xena smiled at the concept.

"In some other life we've done it. Maybe...we even had children together."