

The warrior exhaled slowly. "If you're sure. I haven't wanted to...frighten you away....to rush you..."

"Then...you want me too?" Gabrielle's look of shocked surprise was so endearing that Xena had to laugh.

"You don't know? It's all I can do, especially at this time of the night, the firelight adding to the tempting glow of you, to keep my hands away. I've had to control myself ...for far too long...can I show you how I feel?"

Gabrielle's breast rose and fell, enticing, double-time, oh, she was light-headed, could swoon away, she mustn't. Not now. "Xena, if you don't kiss me soon I think I'll die."

And then the woman's lips were pressed on hers and she was lifted in the strong arms and carried to their bedding. Xena seemed to be trembling as much as she herself. And Gabrielle stilled the nervous fingers as they were removing her clothes. "I want you to know that I--"

"It's alright, Gabrielle. I know you've never been with anyone before...that you're still a virgin. I won't take that from you. I promise. And you don't have to say anything further about why we're doing this--it's understood. Alright? You don't have to give all of yourself--not all at once. Everything comes... in time."

Xena's hands stroked her everywhere, caressed and fondled, massaged and squeezed. As if she were familiarizing herself with unknown territory. Gabrielle had never felt so fortunate, so...loved. And now Xena's soft mouth re-explored the same terrain, lingering over a rise of pale gold breast, a stiff coral bud. Gabrielle watched in a fervid fascination as this woman she dearly loved made love to her.

Xena's tongue danced in joy over her body, every rise and valley. Gabrielle had never before in her life made some of the sounds she was making now. Xena's sweet mouth was concentrating its attention on one nipple, while she rhythmically gave gentle pressure to the other with her fingers, squeezing ever so lightly, then a bit more insistently, then rubbing the erect bud with the heated palm of her hand. And all the while Gabrielle felt the liquid flame growing in intensity between her legs.

Xena opened the young woman's limbs with her knee and moved against the wetness she found there. "Oh, Xena," the girl whispered, "I love it." This floating sensation Gabrielle was feeling now transported her somewhere outside herself and yet at the same time she had never been more in tune with her own body. Tangling her fingers in the lustrous dark hair, fevered eyes watching as Xena's head rose and fell with the staccato rhythm of her breathing. It was glorious.

Xena rose up and pierced her with those beautiful blue eyes, "Hi there, are you alright?"

"Oh, more than alright, Xena."

Her warrior grinned and her eyes gleamed, glistened. "Good." And the warm lips found hers again, parted them with a delicately questing tongue. Gabrielle had never been so excited in her life. And soon Xena was trailing fire down her body once again, kissing, licking the tender insides of her thighs, she paused inches from Gabrielle's sex and the girl could feel her hot, quickened breath stimulating the damp flesh between her legs.

"If you want me to stop...I will. Be sure, Gabrielle."

"I am sure. I want you. Now. Please, Xena. Don't stop. Make love to me."

The exquisite sensation that came with the touch of Xena's mouth, Xena's hot tongue on her, in her...oh, this is how it feels, oh, yes, it was beyond anything she'd hoped or fantasized, so this is ecstasy, Xena kissing her there in this ultimate intimacy, taking her with that incisive, demanding, giving, loving tongue, oh thank the gods for this, for her...

Gabrielle felt something happening, something new and unique to her experience, her entire body tingled and shimmered with it, her blood thrummed in her ears, a hot infusion of pure sensation travelled the length of her frame, inside and out, her heart seemed about to explode it beat so fast, and, involuntarily, her lower body, her hips thrust and gyrated spasmodically, she