

~ Bountiful Eyes ~

by D S Bauden

Disclaimers: Xena and Gabrielle belong to MCA/Universal, this story is to pay tribute to the Warrior and her Bard. If you aren't old enough please don't read this, if it is illegal in your area for two women to love each other, then don't read this, if you are offended, wake up its the '90's.

Sex: Yes of course, nothing too graphic, but yummy just the same.

Violence: This is Xena, there is a tad bit of violence, but nothing worse than a usual episode.

There was a woman holding her left eye as she was being tortured by a barbarian. They were surrounded by torchlight in a temple and stood on an altar. The woman was crying and begged for her life which seemed to have no affect on this madman. The temple was cluttered with mindless men following the words that their mentor was shouting.

Laughing loudly. "You will be my example!!! NO woman will ever fill my heart with fear. Every woman with the eyes of Xena that crosses my path, will lose those eyes to me!!!! I will be the one to instill fear. This is my destiny. The eyes of Xena will be mine!!! Then no one will be able to stop me from conquering the world! This land will be all mine! Everything will be mine!!" Exclaimed Trenton as he glared down to the woman in agony.

"Spare my life and I will find her for you!" She was sobbing. "Please I am begging you!! You have one of my eyes, let me use the other to seek out Xena!! I will find her for you I swear to you!!! I will not go back on my word I promise!! Just let me go, PLEASE!" Savannah begged.

Trenton's interests had now been sparked. He could use this woman to do his scouting for him. She was much too afraid to betray him. He grinned at the hysterical woman.

"You go then, and find Xena for me. I will send one of my scouts after you. If you betray me, I will take your other eye and cut you up piece by piece. You tell Xena I want her eyes. No woman will stare fear into me EVER AGAIN! She killed my brother when I was a boy, then she stared at me and smiled. My brother was afraid, but I am not! I will show her the meaning of fear!!!" Trenton said with evil spewing from his lips.

Savannah was sobbing uncontrollably, but was relieved to know that she would not be killed, for now.

"I won't fail you I swear. I will tell Xena you are coming for her. Thank you for sparing my life. I will do right by you!!!" Savannah replied to him as she held her left eye socket.

"GET OUT OF HERE BEFORE I CHANGE MY MIND!!!"

With that Savannah ran out of there never to look back at him. She hopped onto a horse that was waiting for her outside. She kicked the horse and started on her quest to find Xena. Hoping that she would be able to help her stay clear of Trenton.

Trenton still laughing in the temple was now holding a necklace that he had made from the eyeballs of his victims. He fondled it longing for the day when Xena's eyes would be a part of his trophy. He held up the necklace above his head and proclaimed to his people.

"My victory is near, and soon I will have the eyes of Xena! Once my quest is finished, I will own the world. Nothing can stop me!!

Gabrielle and Xena were on a grassy field together. Today was the day that Xena was going to teach her how to use the whip. Gabrielle had been pleading with her to show her and finally Xena gave in and began the lesson. Xena cracked the whip and cut a tree branch in two. She smiled in victory as Gabrielle looked on.

"Pretty good I must say, didn't even take two tries. See how easy the whip can be Gabrielle? Its all in the wrist, here you try now." Giving her the whip.

"I can use this, just you watch."

Xena looked on in amusement. "Careful not to hurt yourself"

Gabrielle played with the whip to get a feel for this foreign weapon. She didn't dare show Xena that she had doubts of her expertise.

"C'Mon Gabrielle its easy. What are you waiting for?"

"Calm down, give me a second!" Whispering to herself "I know I can do this." "What was that? I couldn't hear you?"

"Nothing!" She exclaimed.

Gabrielle with one hand hurled the whip around and cracked it. The whip stayed hurled around the tree branch. She shook her head with defeat.

"I guess I'll have to keep trying. I got a hold of the branch though." She smiled innocently at Xena, and she nodded at Gabrielle and patted her shoulders.

"It just takes practice, you'll get the hang of it. Grabbing a hold of something is hard to do as well, but you managed to do that well enough, right?" Giving her a reassuring smile. "Don't give up, you'll see how easy it is. Then this will all seem like water under the trestle.

Savannah had been traveling for days. She managed to get to a doctor in one of the villages that she had passed. The doctor couldn't believe that someone had been so cruel as to cut out the eye of another human being. He cleaned out her eye as well as he could and gave her a patch to wear. He told her not to worry, she might start a new fashion trend among the ladies. Her clothes were filthy, but she didn't care she needed to find Xena. One villager had told her that he had seen Xena in a town just over the mountainside that she was traveling on. Exhausted and starving Savannah reached the top of the mountainside and looked down to see a small resemblance of a town. Hopefully she thought this would be her last stop. As she moved closer she could see a clearing with two people standing by a tree. Her body gave out and she slumped over in her saddle hanging on for dear life.

Xena looked up from her lesson and noticed the woman coming down from the hillside. She motioned to Gabrielle and moved to the aide of the woman. Savannah was pulled by Xena down from the horse, she was sobbing.

"Help me please. Please help me."

Xena was staring inquisitively at Gabrielle. "What has happened to this woman?"

Savannah could barely stand so Xena and Gabrielle lead her to the ground. "Are you okay? Gabrielle asked sympathetically.

"I am looking for a woman named Xena. Can you please help me find her. I don't think that I can make it another day on my own."

"I am Xena."

"My name is Savannah. I have been sent on a mission by a barbarian named Trenton to find you."

Gabrielle asked. "Who is Trenton?"

Xena replied. "I am not sure. Why has he sent you to me?"

"I am here because I told him I would find you and bring you to him. He has been searching you out ever since you killed his brother."

"Who was his brother?" Xena asked.

"He was a man named Tyarson. You invaded his village when Trenton was just a boy. He watched as you killed his brother. He saw the look in your eyes as you stared him down, you frightened him greatly. So now every woman that has your eyes, blue mainly, he takes them so no woman can stare fear into him again. He has put a bounty on your eyes." Savannah explained.

"Her eyes?!?!" Gabrielle and Xena exchange a look of concern.

"I told him I would find you so I could escape that madman. He has a scout coming after me to make sure I don't betray him. He took out my eye as a warning that bastard!!!"

"Well, we'll have to make sure that he doesn't find you. Where is he now?" Xena inquired.

"He is in a village called Cern. I can show you how to get there."

"Who said I was going to him? When he gets word that I have you, he will come to me."

"Xena, this man sounds crazy!!! Are you sure you want him coming here to you? Shouldn't we sneak up on him, or something?" Gabrielle asked.

"Not this time. We'll hide Savannah, but after Trenton's scout sees her with us."

"When will that be?"

Xena tipped her head to view the hillside and noticed the scout on horseback glaring at them.

"Right about now." Xena smiled and waved at the scout as he turned around and sped off to tell his leader what he had witnessed.

"Now what?" Gabrielle wondered.

"Joxer is in the village, we can bring Savannah to him, he can tend to her wounds." Xena replied.

"Thank you Xena." Turning to Gabrielle. "Thank you...?"

"Gabrielle." She smiled.

Savannah wiped her tears. "Gabrielle." and smiled back.

"C'Mon lets get her to Joxer." Xena insisted.

They walked into town and Gabrielle couldn't shake the thought of someone taking her best friend's eyes. Those eyes have carried her through many battles, hardships, and many dreams.

"What a sick man!" Gabrielle thought. "I can't believe there is someone in this world like him."

Gabrielle had visions of her and her best friend together in a relationship that was far more than a friendship. She could never understand why with every touch or any glance she got from Xena would send her mind spinning. This is something she would never tell Xena in fear that it would ruin everything they shared. The walk to town had been a quiet one, Gabrielle had her thoughts, and so did Xena.

"This man is nuts! He needs to be stopped." Xena thought. "and I'm just the one that must do it too! He'll pay for wanting these eyes. Other men have died for much less." She chuckled to herself.

She noticed the concern of her friend. "Gabrielle is everything all right?"

"Yeah, sorry, I am just in awe of this man Trenton. What a sick one."

"I know, we'll get him though, don't worry." She put her arm around Gabrielle's shoulder, and she could feel it shudder.

"Hey look there is Joxer. Hey Joxer! Come over here!"

"Hi Xena, Gab. Who is your friend?"

"She is in need of your attention. She needs to be hidden away, and her wounds need tending to."

"Hidden away? Is she, um, are you in trouble miss?" Looking into her eye, Joxer saw Xena's point. His heart sank.

"I am Savannah. Thanks for your help. Um is there some place that I can get something to eat? I truly can't remember the last time I ate."

"Oh sure over there. Joxer? You think you can handle it?" Gabrielle asked.

"You know it. She will be in safe hands. After all, I am Joxer the Mighty!"

Savannah looked at Xena with her eyebrow raised.

"Its a long story." Xena growled. "Thanks Joxer."

"Sure thing. Shall we?" Motioning to Savannah they walked into a pub to get her something to eat.

"You think she'll be all right with him?" Gabrielle asked.

"Right, like there is anything to worry about with Joxer."

"I see your point."

They both nodded and went to some shops to get supplies for their visit from Trenton. Which was absolutely going to happen, sooner than later.

BACK AT TRENTON'S TEMPLE

Trenton's scout traveled without stopping to make sure he got news to his leader. Trenton was pacing on his altar waiting for some news about Xena or Savannah or his scout for that matter. He wasn't a patient man, this was evident. His scout came bounding in which startled Trenton, who grabbed him and threw him down on the altar.

"Trenton it is me!!! I have returned with news!! Take it easy!"

"Don't ever enter my temple like that again, understand me?"

"Yes, sir, I do."

"What is your news? Did she find Xena?"

"Um...well..."

"Speak before I cut out your tongue!!"

"Well it looks like Xena has her."

"What do you mean Xena has her?" He grabbed his scout by the neck.

"I mean from what I saw, it looked as if Xena had her in her custody."

"That lying bitch!!! She will pay dearly for her betrayal!"

"What shall we do sir? Make a plan for her to come here?"

"No dammit, that was the plan before remember?? We must go to her. She probably thinks that we won't bother her, now that she has that girl safe. Well I have news for you warrior princess that is exactly what I am going to do. Saddle up the team, we are gonna get the girl back and that bitch Xena. Nothing is gonna foil my plans!!!!" He yelled out at the scout running to align the army.

Trenton's army was saddled and ready for war. On his mark they started off to the village where Xena had stashed Savannah.

IN TOWN'S PUB

Joxer and Savannah are seated at a table, and Savannah was eating everything in site. Joxer was reminded of Gab's appetite, but this girl could really eat.

"So Savannah, where are you coming from?"

"A town called Cern."

"I am familiar with Cern actually. Are you feeling any better?"

"Mmm hmm, much better thank you. The food here is pretty good I must say, but I guess anything would've tasted good after not eating for so long."

"I bet. Um did you leave any family in Cern?"

"No unfortunately, I have no family. What disease didn't kill, Trenton did. I hate him, he was gonna take both of my eyes and then kill me. Now I'm left looking like this, just call me Patch."

"Ok Patch." He smiled at her. He realized that even with one eye, she was a very pretty woman. The one eye that she did have, was absolutely the finest color he had ever seen. She caught him staring at her and looked at him with a little anger.

"What are you looking at?"

"I'm sorry. I um, didn't mean to make you uncomfortable, I just really like the color of your eye. It's a beautiful blue, like a marble."

"Yeah well you should've seen me when I had two!" Now just realizing that she had just joked about her condition for the first time. It felt pretty good.

Joxer giggled with her knowing that he had made her feel better about herself, whether she knew it or not.

"Um, you can tell me to shut up if you want, it happens to me a lot, but...I think that you have more in your favor than not. I mean just talking with you for the last hour or so, I feel like I have known you a long time."

"You know its funny, you remind me of a boy I used to know. One that I loved at one point actually."

"Dare I ask what happened to him?"

"Sure, nothing bad that I know of, he just moved on with his life, and I guess his future didn't include me."

"Oh I am sorry. It was definitely his loss."

"I'd like to think so too."

"It was." Joxer smiled at her. This was actually a woman that hadn't told him to buzz off, and he liked that tremendously. Savannah and Joxer finished their meal and he took her out to an old barn that had been abandoned. It was just on the outside of the village border.

"This place will be safe for you until Xena can get this guy."

"This Xena, will she do what she says? About getting Trenton I mean."

"Oh I have never seen Xena not make good on her promises. I'll go get her and let her know where I have hidden you."

"Ok, but please hurry back."

"You can count on it Patch!" He smiled at her hoping she didn't mind his new nickname for her.

"Very funny, I kind of like that though. Patch hmmm."

"See you soon."

"Bye Joxer, and thank you again."

"No problem."

IN TOWN

Xena and Gabrielle had loaded up Argo's saddle bags with supplies, it was just a matter of time until Trenton would show and Xena knew it.

"We've got to get as many people out of here as we can. I do not want a blood bath on our hands. This guy sounds like he will stop at nothing to achieve this goal of his."

"Xena, we have been through a lot together right? Xena nodded. "But this guy sounds demented. Your eyes? I mean C'Mon." She swallowed hard.

"Gabrielle, don't worry. I have handled warlords much worse than this guy, please relax, we need to focus on our defense."

"Ok. I'll play with this to try and calm my nerves." She grabbed Xena's whip and began to crack it over and over and almost snapped Xena in the head.

"Watch it Gabrielle. If you're not careful you'll take my eye out."

"Ha ha very funny" Realizing the unintentional pun, Xena laughed out loud, and Gabrielle just rolled her eyes and continued to play with the whip. She didn't think the thought of her friend losing her eyes was funny at all. It made her wince actually.

"Gods, to not have her look at me ever again would kill me." She thought. Xena had been watching Gabrielle since the announcement of Trenton and his plot to kill her. She was concerned for her heartfelt friend that this was more serious in her mind. He was on a personal

mission, to deface her, to conquer the world. "Not likely." She thought. She also thought about Gabrielle's sudden fears.

"What is so different about this guy? I mean we have faced worse people in our travels. Does it bother her that much to know someone is out for my eyes?" Thinking about someone doing that to Gabrielle made her change her tune a bit. "I would hate not being able to see those green sleepy eyes in the morning after I wake her up. Maybe I can understand her thoughts. Gods forbid anyone that would do that to her. They would die faster than they could breathe." She knew her feelings for Gabrielle went deeper than friendship. She wasn't able to share these feelings because her friend would never understand. She just stood and admired her friend as she battled with the whip that was becoming more friendly to her. She was getting the hang of it, and that made Xena smile, because she knew that whip wouldn't control her for long. "I knew she'd get it. She's a quick study." Xena smiled at the lessons she would like to give her personally.

Joxer came into town searching for Xena and Gabrielle. He heard snapping of the whip and knew which direction to go.

"There you guys are. I have Patch, er, uh, Savannah in an old barn right outside the town line."

"Patch?" Xena questioned and looked at Gabrielle in amusement.

"Private joke." Joxer explained.

"How is she doing? Did eating help?" Gab asked.

"Yeah she had a healthy appetite. She seems to be doing much better. A little sleep couldn't hurt her either."

"Healthy appetite eh?" Xena looking at Gabrielle.

"Hey, I never said I didn't like to eat! I fully admit I like to eat. What in Tartarus is wrong with that?" Gabrielle said a little miffed and turned away.

"Oh nothing, I like a girl with a healthy appetite." Xena retorted.

Gab's head whirled around. "Oh do you?" Her look at Xena made Xena turn away before anyone could see her blush.

"Um, hello? Guys? Savannah?" Joxer interrupted.

"Yeah, Joxer we will be right behind you." Xena said.

"Um, Ok I'll show you guys the way." Joxer bent down and drew a map in the ground sand to show them Savannah's hiding place. Xena nodded to him in understanding and they started their walk towards the barn. Xena and Gabrielle kept staring at each other while the other was looking away. They were both in full awareness of what was happening here. It made them both happy

and they could tell that they shared the same feelings. The question was, who was gonna break that ice first? Neither admitted to themselves that they would be the one to do it. It would have to be the other one, they both agreed to themselves. Xena's mind returned to thoughts of Trenton, and Gabrielle picked up on this instantly.

"How many men do you think he will bring with him Xena?"

"Knowing the kind of warlord he thinks he is, he'll probably bring his whole entire army."

"His whole army? We can't win against an entire army Xena!!"

"Don't get cynical on me now Gabrielle. " She laughed.

"Xena I just don't find this amusing at all. This man wants to take out your eyes. He has put out a bounty on them Xena. Any greedy bastard could try and collect that bounty."

"You know me well enough Gabrielle to know that I won't let that happen."

"By the gods I hope you are right."

It wasn't like Gabrielle at all to be feeling like this. She knew Xena had picked up on this, she was always doing that. This time it didn't bother her for Xena to know her thoughts. The barn was near and Gabrielle needed to tell Xena how this was bugging her.

Tugging on her arm, "Xena?" she said quietly.

"Yeah?" She whispered.

"I just want you to know...um, well remember when I wanted to kill Callisto and you prayed in the forest about the light in my face going out? Well I guess I am having those feelings too. The thought of someone taking your eyes is absolutely killing me. If I could never look into your eyes again, I would die myself." She looked squarely into Xena's eyes and stroked her arm.

"Not on my time you won't. Nothing will ever take these eyes off of you. You are the reason that I see the good in life. Everything that is positive in my life I have because of you. You are my rock, Gabrielle my reason for being, you are my family, my best friend, and I love you." Xena pulled her close and kissed the top of her head. Gabrielle squeezed her as hard as she could and buried her head into Xena's chest. "I love you too."

"OK? Does that make you feel any better? Xena stroked Gabrielle's face.

"Yes it does, thank you Xena."

"I need you to be confident that we will overcome this madman. I promise I will get us out of this. It's because of my past that he's coming back for me."

"I know, I just have to remember that we have been in worse messes, and we will come out of here alive."

"All right, let's go see about Savannah."

They walked into the barn and were completely taken aback. Joxer had Savannah's head in his lap and was stroking her head while she slept. Gabrielle shot Xena a look of total surprise and then returned the stare at Joxer.

"Sshhh, she's finally fallen asleep." Joxer whispered.

"Did you drug her? What are you doing?" Xena asked.

"For your information Xena, she asked me to rub her head. She said it would help her rest." Joxer answered.

"Well obviously it worked, or she is delusional." Xena said.

"Xena, not every woman can't stand the thought of me touching them, just you guys."

"Yeah well, just be nice to her, she's had it rough."

"Oh I know we talked a lot about it, and her life with that maniacal warlord Trenton."

"Ah, so you have been getting to know each other eh?" Gabrielle nudged Xena who giggled.

"Yes we have as a matter of fact. She seems to like me. She told me I reminded her of someone in her past that she loved once. I guess that is a good quality, right? Besides she is special. She has a good heart. Do you know that she used to read stories to children? She felt that children needed to hear stories, and some of them she taught how to read and write."

"No I had no idea, that is wonderful!" Gabrielle chimed. "That is a great quality in a person if I say so myself."

"Sounds like you in a way huh Gabrielle?" Joxer suggested.

"Yeah, kind of I guess, but I never taught to children."

"But you could, you have a huge heart." Xena said.

"Yeah I guess."

"All right you guys enough of the mushy stuff we gotta get ready for this guy! Gabrielle make sure that the people have left town who haven't refused to leave. Joxer? Well just keep Savannah well, and I'll take care of the traps."

"OK Xena I'll be back shortly." Gabrielle said. "Be careful."

"I will, you too, he'll be here shortly I can feel it."

Gabrielle turned to leave the barn when she could feel Xena staring at her. She turned around and their eyes locked. Both of their stomachs tingled. Gabrielle smiled and waved and left for the town. Xena waved back then got down to business. She had gotten some arrows and clubs from the townspeople. She knew it wasn't much, but it should be enough for this guy. He wanted a quick victory, and he wasn't gonna get that as far as she was concerned. Nightfall would be here soon and Gabrielle still hadn't returned. Xena was beginning to worry. It had been awhile since they saw the scout so time wasn't on her side.

"Where is Gabrielle, she has been gone way too long? If she isn't back in the next half an hour I am going after her!" Xena exclaimed.

"Do you think she'll like that Xena? Maybe she'll feel like you don't trust her instincts."

"I know her instincts are good, she has just been gone too long, its not like her that's all."

Xena could feel the trembling of horses and that could only mean one thing.

"Trenton." She proclaimed.

"Xeenaa! I have something that belongs to you!! Come and get it!" Trenton roared.

"He's got Gabrielle! I can feel it." Xena growled.

The doors of the barn flew open and Trenton and his army were there. Trenton was holding Gabrielle with a knife at her throat. She tried to wriggle out of his strong-arm, but it was no use.

"I found a friend of yours Xena. Perhaps we can barter for her. Say for you?" Trenton laughed.

"Let her go Trenton, it's me you want. She's done nothing wrong." Xena protested.

"All in good time, you give yourself to me, and the girl goes free."

"Xena NO!! Don't do it!!" Gabrielle screamed as Trenton pulled the knife closer to her throat.

"I am yours, come and get me!" Xena playfully exclaimed.

Trenton's men jumped at Xena, but with her lightening fast reflexes she was able to dodge most of them. The sword in her scabbard was released and the fun began. Two men jumped Xena from either side, and with one leap she kicked them both with her straddle kick. Two more jumped at her this time with swords, she battled them down, one by one as they came at her, but the numbers kept increasing. Xena was tiring and could no longer hold off the attackers. They had her pinned to the ground and a sword pointed at her heart.

"Don't you dare kill her!!! She is mine and mine alone!!!" Trenton shouted.

Trenton gave Gabrielle to one of his other men and grabbed Xena by her hair. Holding some rope he led Xena to a wooden pillar that stood in the barn. She was tied to the pole and Trenton paced around her laughing over and over. He pulled from his belt a knife that had a spoon-like blade and a very pointed edge. Xena looked at it and swallowed hard.

"I have waited ten years for this day. You are finally going to pay for the death of my brother Tyarson. Do you see this knife? I made it especially for this day. I can use this knife to remove those damn eyes of yours that have given me nothing but angst since I saw them. They will be a nice addition to my collection. Today my brother will finally rest in peace." Trenton announced.

Trenton's men had now found Joxer and Savannah and held them prisoners with Gabrielle.

"Hey Trenton look at what we found!!" One of his men gestured.

"Well what do we have here?" Trenton asked as he approached Savannah and slapped her across the face. "I'll deal with you later traitor. But first, Xena." He growled.

Xena had kept some slack in her ropes, but they were still incredibly tight. Savannah began to kick and scream and managed to get away from her captor. One of the men drew his bow and attempted to shoot an arrow in her direction. Joxer screamed and broke free in time to take the arrow that was intended for his new friend. Joxer fell with the arrow sticking out of his arm, bleeding, and unconscious.

"Joxer!!!!!" Savannah screamed.

"Joxer!! Gabrielle screamed.

With all of the commotion Trenton was growing very angry and very impatient.

"Get her!!" Trenton shouted at his men to get Savannah before she escaped. Half of the army took off to find the runaway prisoner. Gabrielle had ducked under the army in the midst of the excitement and crawled closer to where Xena was being held by her attacker.

"I will not be interrupted again!! I have waited too long for this, and today sweetheart will be the last day that I will ever have to look into your eyes again." Trenton positioned his knife at Xena's face and with no hesitation raised his arm for the kill.

Gabrielle sprung into view, grabbed the whip tied around her waist and cracked it, twirling the knife out of Trenton's hand and onto the ground. Xena finally broke loose from the ropes and tossed her chakram at a trip wire launching the arrows she had placed from the ceiling at her attackers. Gabrielle found a rake and began to pummel the rest of the army that remained in the barn. Trenton lunged at Xena as she somersaulted over him screaming her war cry. She pulled her sword off of the ground and challenged her enemy to the death. This was no match for Xena he was definitely not all the warlord he made himself out to be. She parried and lunged faster

than he could imagine, he had definitely met his match. He took one final swing at her, she dodged and sunk her blade into his chest. He dropped to his knees and she glared at him smiling slightly at her victory. She put her foot on his chest and pulled out her sword, he slumped to the ground in defeat. Gabrielle fought off her attackers one by one and as they acknowledged the death of their leader, ran off in retreat as fast as they could. Xena walked over to Gabrielle and embraced her.

"Are you okay?" Xena asked.

"Yes, I'm fine. Oh my gods, Joxer." The two ran to the bumbling hero on the ground now regaining consciousness.

"Joxer, can you hear me?" Xena asked.

"Hmm? Umm yeah. Where is Savannah? Did she get away?" Joxer grumbled.

"I don't know, I'll go see if I can find her..." Gabrielle was cut off by the person walking through the doors, it was Savannah.

"You got away!!" Joxer exclaimed.

"Not exactly. They caught up with me but when the others came rushing by on their horses screaming that Trenton was killed, they let me go and took off with the others. Pretty lucky I guess.

"Very, how is that cut on your leg?" Xena inquired.

"I'm fine." Looking at her hero. "You are an incredible man Joxer. How can I thank you for saving my life?"

"Aw shucks, the fact that you are still alive is payment enough." Joxer grimaced at the pain from the arrow sticking out of his shoulder.

"Joxer we have to get that arrow out of your shoulder. It is gonna be a painful experience. I have to get some rags from town and some thread and a needle, I'll be back in a minute." Xena reassured him.

"Joxer that was very brave, and I am incredibly proud of you." Gabrielle said while holding his hand.

"That's just what friends do. You would do it for Xena, right?"

"That goes without question. You barely met Savannah, that is just bravery. Xena is my best friend, its a little different for us."

"I guess so, I'm just glad everything went all right in the end and no one was killed except for that maniac over there." Pointing at Trenton's dead body.

"Joxer, you saved my life and for that I will be forever grateful." She held Joxer's hand and Gabrielle walked over to the door where Xena was coming through.

"They are really cute together don't you think?" Gab asked.

"Yes they are actually. Maybe now he will leave you alone!" She laughed.

"You're gonna break the arrowhead and push the arrow through aren't you?"

"Yep, its the only way we can get it out , without ripping Joxer's arm off. Hmm, that's an idea too." She giggled.

"Xena! He just did something I never would've imagined him capable of." "I know I was only kidding. Let's go"

Xena knelt down to Joxer and Savannah and explained to them what she had to do to save Joxer's arm. They both winced and looked at each other with pained expressions.

"Ready Joxer?" Xena asked.

"Ready as I'll ever be." He replied.

"Here goes."

Xena broke the arrowhead off of the arrow and Joxer let out a scream and squeezed Savannah's hand. She then put her palm on the shaft of the arrow and pushed the rest of the arrow through his arm. Joxer squirmed around in anguish but wanted to act bravely for his new friend. Blood squirted briefly until Xena met it with rags and began to stitch both sides of Joxer's arm.

"How are you feeling Joxer? Are you woozy at all?" Xena asked.

"I hurt greatly, but I am not feeling woozy. Can I get up now?" He asked.

"If you think you can."

"Of course, I am Joxer the Migh..." Joxer passed out after his attempt to stand on his own.

"He'll be fine." Xena smiled. "I'll get some water and fruit from town. Do you want to come with us?" She motioned to Savannah.

"No, I think I'll wait here to make sure that Joxer is Ok when he wakes up. Um.. Xena?"

"Yes?"

"Thank you for all of your help with Trenton. I can't thank you enough. I might not have much left, but at least I won't have to live in fear anymore."

"You are welcome. I am glad we can all put this behind us."

"Me too. See you all soon."

"OK then."

Xena and Gabrielle walked into town and noticed the townspeople were returning to their homes after the word let out that Trenton was killed. They walked into the pub and purchased some fruits and water for Joxer. Nightfall was in full moon now and they needed to get back to Joxer.

"That was a very brave thing you did Gabrielle."

"Nothing that you wouldn't have done for me."

"True, but you managed to do it with the whip, that was impressive."

"I impressed the warrior princess?"

"Gabrielle you impress me everyday that you survive with me." She chuckled.

"Yeah well, I last with you because I want to be with you." She paused. "Did I say that out loud?"

"You sure did. What do you mean you want to be with me? In what sense?"

"Umm, can we talk about this later?"

"Oh no, we are gonna talk about this now."

"All right, let me make a deal with you."

"I'm listening."

"Let's bring this stuff to Joxer and I'll confess everything to you when we camp for the night. OK?"

"OK then, but you promise, everything?"

"Yes, I promise."

The two made their journey back to the barn and noticed that the door had been closed. They looked puzzled at each other and slowly opened the door. With their surprise Joxer and Savannah were embraced in a tender kiss.

"Ahem." Xena cleared her throat.

"Oh sorry guys, didn't see you there." Joxer said excitedly.

"That's OK, um...here are some fruits and some water for you. We'll just leave them here for you."

"That's OK we are gonna go into town and stay at the inn for the night. The man who runs it offered a room to us in exchange for what we did tonight. Besides it's a little crowded in here." Pointing at Trenton.

"Oh yeah I guess we'll have to get someone in here to dispose of his body. The gods know I have had way too much contact with it already." Xena said.

"All right then, we are gonna make camp and get some sleep."

"Um Xena the innkeeper said that you could have a room as well." Savannah added.

"Oh great a bed tonight!!" Gabrielle exclaimed. "Gods a bath would be great too."

"Uh huh, I agree." Her friend said. "Let's go I'm bushed."

"You guys coming?" Gabrielle asked.

"We'll be there in a minute." They smiled at each other in agreement.

"OK then. See you in the morning." Xena said.

"Goodnight. Thanks again for everything Xena." Savannah replied.

"No problem, glad I could help. Good night."

Xena and Gabrielle left them in the barn and made their way to the inn. Gabrielle hadn't said a word since their talk earlier in town. She was trying to think of a way out her mess that she alone created.

"Me and my big mouth." She thought, this time to herself.

The innkeeper noticed the two girls and realized who they were.

"Xena we can't thank you enough. When we heard that Trenton and his army were coming this way, we all feared for our lives."

"Don't thank me, thank this little one for her skills with a whip. If it wasn't for her, I never would have been freed." Xena said convincing Gabrielle that she saved the day. She never told her about the slack she kept in her ropes. Gabrielle thought it was odd though that she was freed with

no assistance from the whip itself. She figured Xena had figured a way out, that's just what she does. Anyway, it was nice to be noticed for the work that she had accomplished.

"Thanks Xena, if you hadn't shone me how to use the whip, I never would've been able to help."

"No you don't, take the credit Gabrielle, you deserve it."

"OK then, I will." She smiled victoriously.

"Joxer mentioned that you had rooms for us?" Xena asked the innkeeper.

"I only have one to give you two, is that OK?"

"Perfect, thank you." Xena smiled devilishly at Gabrielle who now knew she was in big trouble.

"Here is your key, its the last one on the left after you go up those stairs."

"Thank you." They both said together.

Xena led the way up the stairs and Gabrielle nervously followed. How would she talk her way out of this one. They approached the room and Xena unlocked the door with the key. Gabrielle swallowed hard and entered after Xena's gesture.

"Cozy. Don't you think Gabrielle?"

"Mmm hmm."

"What's wrong?"

"Nothing, I guess I'm a little shaken after that battle."

"I know just the thing. Take off your clothes.."

"Xena!"

"There's a bath in here, it'll make you feel better."

Gabrielle's face flushed with embarrassment. "Oh, sorry. You are right, that will feel better."

"Then you can tell me this big secret of yours."

"Umm, sure okay."

Gabrielle made a dash for the bath and closed the door. Xena giggled like a little girl eating her first piece of candy.

"I know that she feels for me the same way I do her. I'm just gonna make her sweat it." She laughed to herself.

Gabrielle removed her clothes and climbed into the tub. It felt great on her sore body. Her back was to the door and she didn't hear Xena enter. She sneaked into the bath already naked right behind a startled Gabrielle.

"Don't do that, you scared me to death."

Laughing, "I'm sorry I, I didn't mean to scare you. I just wanted it to be a surprise."

Gabrielle hadn't even turned around because of the shock instilled in her.

"Surprise me how..?" She was cut off by the feel of Xena's naked breasts against her back. She involuntarily let out a sigh of pleasure.

"Well now, what was that secret that you were hiding from me? Can I guess?"

"Um, sure if you want." Barely getting out the words to answer her friend.

"Gabrielle, can you at least look at me?" Gabrielle turned slowly around to face the sexy voice behind her. "That's better." Xena began to gently pour water scooped from her hands down Gabrielle's arms. "I think that you have waited for this moment a long time."

"Oh? What gives you that idea?"

"The fact that I can touch you and I can feel your skin tingling below mine... The fact that if I kissed you right now, you would probably never kiss anyone like that in your lifetime again....." Xena moved closer to Gabrielle's face and started caressing her shoulders and arms. "The fact that if I placed my hand beneath this water..." She leaned into Gabrielle and kissed her very passionately and very deeply. She could feel her body tingling from head to toe and held Gabrielle tightly. Both of them didn't want that feeling to end ever. Gabrielle was the one to break off the kiss.

"Why didn't you do that before if that's how you felt?"

"Because I didn't know that you felt the same way about me. Apparently I was wrong."

"You mean you have never caught me staring at you, never understood why I touch you whenever I can just to feel your soft skin on mine?"

"Well I guess when it is spelled out in front of me, I feel kind of stupid that I didn't pick up that sooner. It would've saved me a lot of cold baths that's for sure."

Xena leaned in for another kiss, this time she inserted her tongue into Gabrielle's wanting mouth. She tasted incredibly. The moment their tongues met both of them wriggled in ecstasy. Xena

caressed Gabrielle's breasts lightly with her fingers and started to play with her nipples. Gabrielle's moans became louder, and Xena's passion rose tremendously. Gabrielle was straddling Xena underneath the water and began to move her body against Xena in a passionate rhythm. Xena brought her hand under the water so she could feel Gabrielle's desire for her. She was unimaginably wet with excitement.

Xena began to move her fingers around Gabrielle's center and started to play in synch with Gabrielle's moans and motions. Gabrielle dug her nails into Xena's back which created a growl from Xena's mouth. It didn't hurt her, just made her that much more hungry for her lover. Gabrielle was reaching her peak when Xena stopped.

"Oh Xena, please don't stop."

"Oh I'm not stopping, I just want to come with you. Give me your hand."

Xena grabbed Gabrielle's hand and led it down to her own passion which was in need of attention. Gabrielle moaned as she felt the desire that her lover had for her. She moved her hands in a motion that mirrored Xena's and apparently was doing it well because Xena began to moan in her ear. Their bodies were moving in each other's rhythm. Faster and faster the two moved their fingers until they released each other in a tandem of utter ecstasy. They clung to each other until their breathing could calm down to a normal pattern.

"I love you Gabrielle, I always have."

"I love you too, Xena. I am so glad that I will be able to look into your eyes whenever I want. They are so beautiful. They make my heart stop sometimes."

"Oh Gabrielle, you are the greatest thing that has ever walked into my life. Please know that I speak the truth when I tell you that."

"I know you would never lie to me Xena."

"You are correct my little one."

"Let's finish with this bath so I can take you and hold you all night."

"You got a deal."

The new lovers bathed each other, and then dried off and got into bed. Gabrielle curled onto Xena's open arms and chest.

"Mmm I like the way this feels a lot."

"Me too Gabrielle, I never thought that this would ever happen for real."

"So it wasn't just me? You felt it too?"

"Of course I did, I just wasn't gonna be the one to admit it first."

"Why you..."

Xena cut her off by kissing her lips and soon the two were making love all over again. Exploring new territories, new smells and tastes, beginning a brand new life together. After hours of lovemaking the two passed out in each others arms completely exhausted.

The next morning they awoke and looked at each other as to make sure that it wasn't a dream, and it wasn't. They got dressed and went downstairs to make sure they didn't wear out their welcome. They saw Joxer and Savannah seated at a table eating breakfast together and holding hands. Xena and Gabrielle looked at each other and smiled.

"This is gonna be a good day." Xena smiled.

"I think you are right my friend."

"Friend?" Xena questioned.

Gabrielle just smiled at her partner and the two sat down with Joxer and Savannah. They ordered breakfast and ate with their new couple, wondering what their new lives would have in store for them. They didn't care, they had everything they needed right where they were, with each other.

The End

Please ket me know what you think. Feedback is the ruler of all Bards!!!

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