

~ A God's Mortality ~

by Red Hope

Disclaimers: Violence ~ Might be a smidge violent but nothing intense.

Subtext ~ Up close and personal subtext which is really love.

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Thanks ~ My thanks goes to Renotta again for her wonderful help. You like to help me stay confident with these random stories, thanks girl! My other thanks is to Dena for also reading over part of my story and giving me feedback.

Started: July 10th 2000 on Monday

Finished: July 14th 2000 on Friday

Series: **Putting the Puzzle Together** Story: **Seven**

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Section 1

~*Part 1*~

Gabrielle ran her right hand through her short hair, her eyes closing. She tried hard to pull away from reality but no. Reality grabbed her by the waist and slammed her back to where she belonged. So this led her to open her red swelling eyes. She gazed down at the form on the wood floor. "Oh gods."

Carefully the small warrior leaned forward on her knees and kissed her best friend on the lips. She felt the lips so cold and almost held bitterness to them. Lifting her head back up, tears left her cheeks to fall. They fell down and landed in a pale cold hand.

The small warrior moved her shaky hand across the person's pale face. "Why'd you leave me... again Xena?" She shook her head while staring at the lifeless body of Xena. "Again... again." She shook her head with anger. "And you never fixed our relationship, never." She dropped her head back and closed her eyes. "I never did either." Her chest heaved in tension. "Oh gods." Lowering her eyes she stared at the lifeless warrior.

Xena was pale, her eyes shut, chest still. Her body was sprawled across the floor in seeming defeat. There was nothing left of the warrior, only a lifeless shell of her.

Gabrielle shifted to her feet but still kneeling. She was in a small room of a tavern. Slipping her right arm under Xena's back and the other under her head. She gave everything to lift the large woman up. The small warrior felt her muscles strain but she didn't let go. She only stood up with gritted teeth.

Walking over to the bed, the Amazon Queen lowered her best friend to the center of

the bed. After pulling her hands free she narrowed her eyes at the dead warrior. "Damn you Xena. You screwed us up!" Gabrielle growled knowing this was only torturing her. She stomped to the door with tears rolling down her cheeks.

The small warrior opened the door with her left hand while her right hand slammed hard into the wall. She slipped out of the room then the tavern to only stand-alone in the dark forest surrounding the village.

She desperately fought tears of sadness and of anger. All of them focused around the dead warrior. Her best friend she lost everything too. Oh gods, how it left her bitter to the core.

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During the duration Gabrielle was in the forest, Xena's body had a visitor.

"I can't believe this warrior babe." The goddess, as always, reappeared out of thin air. She stepped up to the Warrior Princess on the bed. "Not only do you get yourself killed but leave your bard in a whirl wind of turmoil." Her eyes lowered to the warrior.

Shaking her head Aphrodite's right hand caressed the cold cheek. "Babes, what are you gonna do now?" She sighed. "You fudged up my plans along with the little bard's."

Taking a deep breath the goddess face brightens up with glee. "Maybe... oh Dity you are good." She smiled down at the pale warrior. "Maybe there's some hope after all after a little help from your faithful goddess."

Slowly Aphrodite lowered her head down and gently pressed her lips against Xena's slightly open mouth. She seemed to breathe an energy into the warrior's body. For Xena's chest suddenly rose up right when Aphrodite disappeared in thin air leaving a tingle on Xena's lips.

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Gabrielle slowly stepped up the stairs with her worn mind. She was well spent from the night of thinking and crying. She came down the torch lit corridor and came to her room. Her fingers wrapped around the doorknob and she took a deep breath preparing to see the lifeless body of her best friend. She hated this part.

The doorknob gradually opened and Gabrielle stepped in with her head low. When she came in she heard a shifting of noise. Her eyes widen and she reached down to whirl her sais out. "Who's in here?" She rapidly noticed Xena's body wasn't on the bed any longer.

"It's alright... Gabrielle."

The small warrior took a stepped back with her sais up. Her eyes narrowed. "Who in Hades are you?" Gabrielle didn't get a verbal response but saw a tall dark form step into the light from the window. The tall figure raised their head up with gleaming eyes. "Xena?"

"Yeah." The warrior sadly smiled.

The warrior bard pointed sais at the warrior. "You're dead." She took a step back.

"Not any longer." The tall woman took a step towards her best friend.

"Stay back Xena." Gabrielle raised her sais. "I don't like these games!" She took a step back again.

"No games Gabrielle." The warrior held her hands up. "We need to talk."

"The hell we do!" The warrior bard took a menacing step towards the other woman. "You should have stayed dead Xena." Her eyes narrowed. "You've left me in so much anger."

"I know." Xena sigh sadly. "That's why I want to talk."

Gabrielle laughed sarcastically. "You came back just to... talk to me." She shook her head. "That's real rich."

"Gabrielle." The warrior held up her right hand. "This is the second time I've come back for you."

"And it's the second time you've died on me! And your point is?"

Without even seeing it, Gabrielle found the warrior right up against her with her hands on her shoulders tightly.

"Listen to me Gabrielle." The warrior took a deep breath. "I am so sorry for this past year." Her expression went into a plea. "Just let me try again." She shook her head. "Let me repair the damage."

"You can't." Gabrielle glared up and bent down to sheath her sais

"How do you know?" The warrior gave a sad smile. "I have many skills." She got a sad smile from her partner. "Please Gabrielle, second chance."

"That's all you had to do." Gabrielle started to let the tears come again. "That's all you had to do Xena. Ask for a second chance."

"Thank you Gabrielle." The older woman pulled her friend in for a strong hug, holding her tightly.

The small warrior shut her eyes and remembered the feeling of being in this warrior's arms. But she found one thing odd. She always knew Xena held such a powerful air to her but now it was ten times as strong. Gabrielle quickly lifted her head in confusion. "Xena... how'd you come back?"

"I don't know truthfully." The warrior peered down with a serious face. "I'll show you something." She let go of her partner and moved to the moon lit window, facing it. "Come here."

The warrior-bard ambled around to stand in front of Xena, her back to the window. Slowly her eyebrows furrowed as she realized Xena's eyes were no longer blue but a cloudy white. "W-what happened?"

Xena lifted her right hand up. She stared at her hand and watched as a flame developed in the palm of her hand.

Gabrielle stared with wide eyes and quickly looked up to Xena. "You're a god?"

"Yess." The flame disappeared and the warrior's milky eyes turned to Gabrielle again.

"No... no." Gabrielle started shaking her head and took a step back. "Xena... please no."

Xena took a stepped up to her partner, close "Gabrielle-"

"No!" Gabrielle pushed Xena back and narrowed her eyes. "Do you know what this means?"

"Yes I do." The warrior's eyes dropped. "I didn't want it this way."

"Damn it Xena!" Gabrielle whirled around to stare out the window. Her right hand went through her hair. "I've been trying for so long." Emerald closed and tears trickled out of the corner of her eyes. Her next words were in a whisper of pain. "Now it's hopeless."

Xena took a deep breath, it's not like she needed to breathe anyway. She stared at her partner's back. She'd known this woman for years and years. Here she was proclaimed dead and now a god. What was she doing here?

And one thing Gabrielle always remembered about a god was they harvested no emotions.

"Xena... just... just leave." The warrior-bard slowly turned back around with a pained expression.

The warrior stood there with no expression. Gabrielle may not be able to hurt her physically but mentally was another story. "Gabrielle..." Her voice held such depth and emotion in it. Her tone was so weak and quivering. "I maybe a god but... that does not mean I do not hold a soul." She shook her head and tears rolled down her cheeks. "Please don't forget that of me." Her face went into a shattering pain.

"Oh gods." Gabrielle quickly moved to pull her best friend into a strong hug. "I'm sorry... sorry." She held tightly.

The tall woman buried her head into the other woman's hair. Those same tears kept coming. Coming because of Gabrielle's words, apology, and her own personal past actions of the year. "I love you Gabrielle."

The small woman pulled back with a smile, she laughed low in happiness and to release stress. "Oh gods, I missed hearing that." Her right hand came up to her chest. "Thank you... thank you that means so much."

"I know." Xena kissed the top of the smaller warrior's forehead. "I haven't spoken those words in to long."

"Neither have I." Gabrielle's face was so loving. "I love you too Xena." The small female nuzzled her face against the other woman's neck.

The warrior took a deep breath feeling her emotions come back under control. "What do you want to do now Gabrielle?"

Gabrielle lifted her head, noticing she was holding Xena and Xena was holding her. It made her grin. "Go home Xena... go home."

"Me too." The older woman smiled and lowered her head close to Gabrielle's. Her lips only brushed against the other female's. "Are you sure Gabrielle?"

"Xena..." Gabrielle's eyes sparkled. "If you do not kiss me right here and right now after five years I will die."

"I am god though." Xena shut her eyes and lowered her head more.

"Oh, but you're the same Xena." Gabrielle placed her right hand on the warrior's chin, lifting her head. "Because I love you... I have for sso long. Don't leave us in the dust over a godhood." She shook her head. "I need you." A sad smile took her lips. "And right now anytime is better then no time with the person I've had a crush on for five years."

The tall warrior chuckled deeply. "Five years huh?"

"Well..." The small warrior smirked. "Maybe a week before I figured out I was madly in-love." She caressed the warrior's cheek. "You are my soulmate, I don't think I'd deal with some many things how I have for one person."

Xena quietly laughed. "We've been through a few things huh?"

"Oh gods, yes." Gabrielle shook her head and fell back into her old memories. "Loved every moment of it."

"Same here." Xena leaned in again. "Let's make some more."

The warrior-bard closed her eyes and felt her soulmate's lips brush over hers. "Xena."

The Warrior Princess grinned and finally took the small woman's lips into a strong kiss. "Hang on."

Gabrielle decided to add on that with a purr in Xena's ear. "Because it's going to be a wild ride."

Xena laughed and her eyes picked up a twinkle. She began to push the younger woman backward towards the bed. "A real wild ride."

The Amazon Queen devilishly grinned and felt the back of her legs hit the foot of the bed. "And with a god to boot." She sat backwards onto the bed, she stared into warm cloudy eyes. One thing she was sure of, Xena's eyes were picking up pigments of blue now.

That god had the evilest smile on her lips. "Oh that wouldn't matter." She crawled onto her soulmate's body while pushing her back into the bed. "I'd still drive you beyond the edge."

"Oh don't I know." Gabrielle was in the middle of the bed now with Xena's large body pressing over her.

Xena lowered her lips down to Gabrielle's neck and her knee hard on into the warrior-

bard's center. "Let me show you too."

The small woman groaned as her body arched against the warrior's. She felt her necklace around her throat went taut quickly. Her heart raced and the fire of passion swept over her. She was going to sour soon and she had big plans to take Xena with her.

Xena could feel the never-ending passion wash over her. This was going to be perfect as her lips trailed up to Gabrielle's mouth. She invaded her soulmate's mouth with her tongue in a controlling kiss.

Gabrielle soon found herself giving into the god's touch and demand. She needed it to survive as much as Xena did.

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Xena sighed deeply and turned her head to her partner curled up against her body. She smiled to herself in the dark room.

Gabrielle rolled onto her stomach and draped her arm over Xena's warm chest. "Can't sleep?"

The warrior brought her left hand up to run through the warrior-bard's short hair. "No, I don't need to."

The small woman lifted her head up with a huge grin. "But I do and I can't sleep without you."

Xena silently laughed and replied with a grin. "Really? Are there certain dreams you want?"

"Nope." Gabrielle lowered her head to press her lips against her soulmate's warm shoulder. "I have them all right here." The side of her head rested against Xena's broad shoulder.

A smile creased the warrior's lips and she shifted her hands to the small female's waist. She lifted Gabrielle up and onto her body.

"Wahoo." Gabrielle laughed and settled down onto her soulmate's body. "I keep forgetting about the god thing."

The warrior arched an eyebrow with a grin. "So you're saying I wasn't strong before?"

The Amazon Queen chuckled and closed her eyes while resting her head against the warrior's chest. "Not that, it's just I am bigger then I use to be."

"Not really."

"Hey!" The small warrior lifted her head with a playful glare. "I am a little bigger."

"Not really Gabrielle."

"Okay warrior, you're treading dangerous ground now." She lifted herself up some on the warm body. "My body is much different then what it was even a year ago."

"True." Xena thoughtfully smiled up. "You're a lot stronger now." Her expression was

now sadder. "A lot more of a warrior." Her right hand came up to caress the small warrior.

Gabrielle's eyes fell. "I'm just not idealistic any longer." She shook her head while her eyes came back to Xena. "I shouldn't be in this time."

"Why?" Xena sadly smile. "It was something I craved for."

"I know. I just wouldn't have made it this far if I stuck to being an idealistic. Definitely like last year, oh gods that was bad." Gabrielle shook her head. "I got a wake up call in Heaven."

"In Heaven or on the cross?"

The small warrior's eyes quickly locked with Xena. "Maybe both, either way Xena. I would have mentally been crushed this year if it wasn't for the realism coming to me."

"Sso..." Xena's hand fell to Gabrielle's hands on her chest. "Is all of that idealism really gone... or hidden in you?"

Gabrielle stared deeply into her soulmate's eyes. Her soulmate's eyes that were now back to their normal rich sky blue tone. "No, it's still inside of me... somewhere."

"And why?"

"Because right now I wouldn't be on top of you." The small woman grinned at her best friend. "My hopes are idealistic still."

"But this is real Gabrielle... us, it must fall under realism."

The bard chuckled and shook her head. "Are we going to get into a debate about this one?"

"We can... or we can sleep." The god gave a small smug look.

"Well then... let's be realistic and get some sleep." Gabrielle lowered herself back down on the warm body and closed her eyes.

"You sure that isn't idealistic? Because the reality of all this is having the debate about realism and idealism."

"Xena." Gabrielle growled out her words. "Go to sleep."

Xena laughed and wrapped her arms tightly around Gabrielle. "Idealistically I should get some sleep but realistically I can not."

"Xena?" The warrior-bard lifted her head again with dark eyes. "If you do not stop I'll... I'll..."

"Realistically you can't do anything to me... physically."

"Hades." Gabrielle gave a smug look. "No... that's idealism."

"Oh?" The warrior raised an eyebrow. "And what can you do to me physically?"

"Realistically?" Gabrielle lifted her own eyebrow. "This." She grinned and leaned into to passionately kiss her soulmate. She heard the warrior moan into the kiss. She pulled back from the kiss. "Realistically I can turn you on and drive you mad."

Xena laughed with a warm smile. "Realistically and idealistically you can with such perfection." She lowered her friend's head back to her chest. "Let's get some sleep."

"Yeah... let's get some real idealistic sleep."

"Gabrielle."

The warrior-bard snickered and closed her eyes. She soon found herself asleep in her soulmate's arms. Her chest rising and falling slowly as Xena's.

~*Part 2*~

Gabrielle buckled up the saddlebag and lifted it. She turned around to her partner. "Xena... this is crazy."

The warrior hooked her sword to her back. "Why?" She inserted her new chakram into it's home.

"We can't just keep traveling like none of this happened." The small woman strolled over to her soulmate. "Like you never died and never became a god."

"Sure we can." Xena grinned. "Idealistically we can."

Gabrielle groaned and sighed. "Realistically we can not." She hefted the saddlebag onto her shoulder.

"We need to figure who... or what, why, and how they made you a god."

Xena shrugged after tightening the brass armor around her chest. "Either way Gabrielle, they wanted me to be a god for a good reason." She took a deep breath while crossing her arms against her chest. "I agree, we need to figure that stuff out but I am not worried about that right now."

"Then what you worried about?" Gabrielle lifted an eyebrow intently.

"Us."

The small warrior smiled and reached out with her left hand. She grasped Xena's arm and went serious. "Xena but we do really need to figure this out."

"And we will." Xena grinned and took a step closer. "I am a god with many skills."

Gabrielle snickered. "Xena, the god of many skills."

Xena rolled her eyes and ambled over to the door. "Are you coming?"

"Hey, I was thinking about it." The small woman came up to her partner's side. "So, why don't you just... poof around like the rest of the gods?"

"Are you going to start teasing me about this?" Xena held the door open. "I like to feel a little mortal."

"Well then, getting teased will make you feel a little mortal."

The warrior narrowed her blue eyes with a grin. "You're starting trouble."

"Ohhh? I can't wait to see what you do to punish me."

Xena laughed and walked out of the room. She strolled along with Gabrielle behind her. She suddenly stopped and turned around to her soulmate. "Sso you want me to... poof around." She pressed her body against Gabrielle's.

The warrior-bard shifted her the saddle on her shoulder. "Definitely."

The god wrapped one arm around Gabrielle's waist. With her right hand she snapped her fingers and they found themselves in the stable outside of the inn.

"Well..." Gabrielle glanced around. "That was cool, do it again."

Xena laughed and took the saddle from her soulmate. She strolled into Argo's stable. "Liked that huh?"

"Oh yeah." Gabrielle watched her partner saddle up the young mare. "So could we just... poof over to paradise together for a time?"

The Warrior Princess sidelong gave a grin. "Maybe."

"Oh I am liking this." Gabrielle stepped back twice to lean against the stable's wall. "This poofing I could get to liking."

The warrior shook her head and turned around with Argo's reins in hand. She came out with a huge grin. "So I am noticing." She held her right arm back with the reins and leaned into her small warrior.

Gabrielle moaned as warm lips took hers. When Xena pulled back she gave a huge grin. "This is the most ideally realistic dream ever."

Xena groaned and straightened up. "You'll never let that go."

"Nnno!" The Amazon Queen stood up. "Not after last night." She gave a huge grin. "You did it to yourself warrior."

The warrior quietly laughed. "I guess I did." She ambled out of the stable.

Gabrielle walked along with her soulmate into the streets. "You know... I really want you mortal again." She paused. "Despite how great the poofing is."

A grin was on Xena's lips for a second but it disappeared as she went very serious. "I know... I want to be mortal again too." She lifted her eyes to gaze down the street of people.

"Yeah... I won't live forever." The warrior-bard sadly sighed and took a deep breath. "That's the not great part."

"It isn't." Xena listened to Argo's walk for a second but came back to the present. "We'll figure it out... but not right now." She turned her head to Gabrielle. "It's about us."

The Amazon Queen smiled warmly and saw them coming to the outskirts of the village. "Thank you." She took a deep breath. "The first time we didn't go head first into an adventure when something odd happened."

The Warrior Princess laughed. "True... that's one for your scrolls."

"Truly." Gabrielle shook her head. "Even more is the interesting days I have my soulmate as a god."

Xena grinned and kept walking. They came along a dirt road together.

~*~*~*~

They'd been walking this road for a good three candlemarks now. Closely walking together.

"How do you feel now?"

Gabrielle glanced up to her soulmate. "Better... I still feel a little angry I think."

Xena nodded with sadness. "I know... me too."

The smaller warrior stepped up close to her companion. She wrapped one arm around her soulmate's waist. "Hey, it'll disappear in time for us both."

The warrior smiled and draped an arm over Gabrielle's shoulders. "Not disappear... heal."

"Exactly."

The older woman ducked down to kiss her partner warmly.

Gabrielle melted into the kiss with desires shattering through her body.

Xena pulled back with a huge grin. She knew the affect she had on Gabrielle.

"I drive you crazy and you drive me crazy." Gabrielle shook her head and tried to washout the passion.

The warrior quietly laughed and gazed ahead, there was a fork in the road. "Feel like hitting a village for a few minutes?"

The warrior-bard peered up. "Do we need stuff?"

"Yeah." Xena glanced back to the right path. "We need to pick up some food."

"Xena... you're a god. You don't need food."

"You do." The warrior grinned. "Besides I like the feeling of eating."

Gabrielle laughed and started walking to the right road. "I know I know, you wanna feel mortal as possible." She kept walking and stared down at the dirt road. "So... why don't you just... poof up some food?"

"Because it wouldn't be cooked right."

The younger woman went into a roll of laughter. She hadn't felt this good in ages it

seemed.

And Xena, well she was laughing right along with her soulmate. It helped lift weight from her spirit in a quick release.

"Hey Xena, I got the perfect line now."

"Oh really?" Xena raised an eyebrow in question. "And that is..."

"Well... for now on I could say, what in the name of Xena do you think you're doing?" Gabrielle had the largest smug looked ever.

"Gabrielle." The warrior growled out and reached out but Gabrielle moved out of her clutches quickly.

"Ha!" The small warrior started jogging away. "Come on you big tough god." She grinned and suddenly smacked into a warm body. She peered up to the owner of this warm body. "Hi."

Xena smirked down to her soulmate. "Hi yourself. Going somewhere?"

Gabrielle stepped back and crossed her arms over her chest. "I just forgot about that poofy thing."

"So you did." The warrior grinned.

"What about Argo? Gonna leave her back there?"

"Nope." Xena snapped her fingers and Argo reappeared beside her, reins in hand.

"I like that trick." Gabrielle grinned, she brushed past Xena and kept walking. "It'll be nice to get my horse back." She was trying to sidetrack the entire conversation.

The warrior's grin slipped as she logged into her mind to get Gabrielle back but... later. "I'm sure Eve took good care of him."

"Yeah I know." The small woman slowed her pace letting Xena come back up to her side. "I hope the Amazons are treating her right."

"I am sure they are." The warrior smiled to her soulmate. "She's only her mother's princess."

Gabrielle huffed. "Hardly... she's only your daughter Xena... not mine. We both know that."

"She's as much as your daughter as my own Gabrielle." Xena stopped walking and placed her free hand on her friend's shoulder. "I never credited that to you." She sighed sadly. "You went through so many things to keep Eve safe when she was young. And also when she became older now." A shake of her head. "And I never thanked you for that."

Gabrielle laughed and looked away. "No, I just got a chakram in the back of my head."

"I'm sorry." Xena closed her eyes. "That was the worst thing to ever happen."

The Amazon Queen took a step away. "I deserved it after believing Eve to be like Hope."

"Hope?" The warrior shook her head. "What you mean?"

Gabrielle sighed at that. "When I was getting ready to try and kill Eve, Hope reappeared. She kept saying I needed to kill Eve because you weren't strong enough to. That Eve would be like her." Her right hand came up to run through her hair. "That truly broke me." Her eyes lifted up. "I have to wonder sometimes if I tried to kill Eve because I was seeking revenge on you for Hope."

The warrior took a step up to her partner, her hands going to Gabrielle's sides. "Gabrielle, that was the Furies, not you."

"But Xena that doesn't mean I had to listen to the Furies."

"How couldn't you?" Xena sadly shook her head. "I couldn't even resist the Furies Gabrielle."

The warrior-bard laughed sarcastically. "Yeah well, you saved yourself from them."

"With your help."

"Barely Xena." The small woman glanced up. "I was stupid, that's all there is to it." She shook her head. "Maybe you should have chopped my head off." She moved out of Xena's arms and started walking again with her arms against her chest.

"No Gabrielle." Xena reappeared in front of her soulmate with her finger pointed at Gabrielle. "You were not the stupid one." She lowered her hand. "I was, I have since we left Heaven."

Gabrielle shook her head. "How you figure?"

"Because I've been ignoring you since Heaven."

The warrior-bard laughed and wrapped her arm across her stomach. "I don't blame you!" She shook her head and threw up her other arm. "I mean damn, I picked Heaven over you Xena." Both her arms were over her stomach. "Heaven over my soulmate." Tears came from her eyes. "I don't blame you for ignoring me after Heaven. I deserved it."

"Gabrielle." The warrior stepped up to her partner and put her hands to Gabrielle's waist. "You did nothing wrong."

"Yes I did Xena, you can't tell me I didn't." Gabrielle's taint red eyes lifted to the warrior's soft glowing blue eyes. "You saved me from Hell but I didn't save you from Hell, I fought you." She shook her head. "I didn't save you." She began to cry again. "And you started to pull away from me after that because I chose the greater good over you." She laughed low. "That chakram in the back of the head sure made me realize everything." Her eyes lifted back up. "Even the part that says I hurt you so badly in Heaven that it drove you to the ability to even consider killing me... let alone doing it." A sad sigh escaped her lips. "I really did it to you that time huh?"

"That's not fair Gabrielle." Xena lowered her head a little. "It's not fair because you

could easily blame that you did that because I got us up on those crosses. And we could keep going at this whole fault process." Now a grin was on her lips. "But realistically I don't want to nor do you."

A lopsided grin came from Gabrielle. "Yeah."

"Look, we have a lot of time left ahead of us." Xena smiled warmly. "Let's not mess it up with our past." She placed a kiss to Gabrielle's forehead. "We're hitting reset here."

Gabrielle wrapped her arms around her soulmate and tightly hugged her.

The warrior encircled her partner and kissed her lightly before pushing her head against her chest. Xena didn't move.

Gabrielle didn't move until after a few minutes. "Thank you." She smiled up at her warrior.

Xena mirrored the smile back. "No problem." She lifted her eyes to see Argo standing back and waiting.

The smaller warrior glanced back. "Poor Argo, she's not feeling the love today."

The tall woman laughed. "She'll live." She whistled and saw her mare come trotting up with an upset look. "Sorry girl."

The horse stopped and nudged her owner with a whine.

"I think she wants a kiss too." Gabrielle then gave a giggle at her partner's look.

Xena sighed and faced her new horse. "You are a lot like Argo girl."

The horse threw her head up and down.

"Yup." The warrior carefully released her soulmate. "Like mother like daughter." Xena kissed her horse's forehead.

"Ain't that the truth." The warrior-bard started walking with a smirk.

"Is she trying to say something?" Xena patted her mare and started walking briskly to catch up.

"Not a thing Xena... not a thing."

"Right!" The warrior easily caught up and stayed beside her partner. "Are you referring to Eve and I?" Innocent looked came from the Warrior Princess.

"Me?" The younger woman gave a huge innocent look. "Oh no, just the Argos."

"Uh huh."

~*~*~*~

Xena encircled her soulmate with her arms. "Mmm, I love you."

The two women stood in a stall in a village.

"I love you too." Gabrielle sunk into the feeling of her warrior. Even her god. She felt

herself slowly begin to revert a little to her younger self. The side of her that would crave so deeply to be protected by the powerful warrior. She liked that submission.

Xena, however, picked up on this. She took every chance she could to protect her smaller warrior. Although she knew perfectly well Gabrielle could easily handle herself these days. Maybe too good. She released her best friend with a smile. "So, you'll be fine alone?"

The small warrior raised an eyebrow. "You're kidding? You're talking to a warrior here." She gave a huge smirk. "Will you be fine alone?"

The tall woman cross her arms against her chest. "You're talk to a god here... no I won't be fine." She laughed.

Gabrielle laughed with her soulmate and pushed open the stall. "Okay so what do I need to pick up again?"

"The dried meats and stuff for the trail mixes."

The younger warrior nodded. "Right." She peaked up to Xena. "And you're getting?"

"Spices, salt, and fruit."

"Perfect." Gabrielle came out of the stable with Xena. She went to the right while Xena went left.

"Gabrielle!" Xena stopped and turned around towards Gabrielle's direction.

The Amazon Queen turned around and walked backwards.

"Call me if you need me." The god winked to her soulmate.

"Right, right." Gabrielle grinned. "The same to you."

The warrior laughed and walked off again.

The warrior-bard chuckled and continued walking backwards. She spun around and headed off in her direction. Soon she found herself in the market of the village. Searching she tried to find the meat section of the market. Deciding it was on the opposite side of the market she took a short cut through an alleyway of two tall inns.

A sword being unsheathed was heard.

Gabrielle stopped in the middle of her walk. She'd heard the sound from behind and she slowly reached down to extract her sais. Turning around she narrowed her eyes.

It was a large man. "You have to pay a price for coming through here."

The warrior smirked at the man. "Sorry, I didn't see a sign anywhere saying it cost something."

"Well it does." The man glanced back to see five other men come up behind him. They were huge themselves.

Gabrielle was now really feeling vertically challenged but didn't let it show. "Look, I

am not in the mood for this."

The leader grinned. "But we sure are... right fellas?"

The other men nodded together and unsheathed their swords.

Ah wonderful. Gabrielle removed the thought from her mind and spun her sais. "Well if you're in the mood to get your ass kicked, let's go!" She held her hands out with her sais, she grinned and laughed.

The six men all came at Gabrielle at once.

The warrior went in high defense to stop her attackers. This wasn't going to be all that easy. And soon she found herself losing strength in this, she'd manage to get one down. But he was rising back up with shakes of his head.

Gabrielle frantically worked to keep herself alive in this fight. She was worn down by the attacks coming from her left, right, front, and from behind. She quickly dropped to her knees and rolled out of the circle of men. Bouncing back up she spun her sais. "Gods..." She breathed under her breath. "Not gods." She ducked as a sword slashed over her head. "Xena."

One man lunged forward to get the small woman, he clearly missed ramming into a tavern wall.

The young warrior had jumped out of the way with the six men all glaring at her for keeping on her toes. She smirked and then noticed behind them all Xena. She also noticed Xena was heavily breathing and her eyes were white with anger. Gabrielle jumped back to reality and flipped her sai out to stop a sword coming at her stomach. "Xena." Her eyes lifted to see her soulmate disappear and suddenly she felt something invade her body. Gabrielle gave in and let go of control over her body with a low laugh and evil smirk.

The six men didn't know what happened. Nor would they ever be able to figure it out. For this small warrior soon was doing back-flips, hard kicks, and cutting them down to nothing. The end of it left them on the ground asleep and in pain.

Gabrielle stumbled back and closed her eyes. "Well that was intense." Her left hand came up with her sai to press down on her head.

"Wasn't it?"

The warrior-bard opened her eyes and furrowed her eyebrows. "Xena?"

"Yup, I never get that far from you huh?"

Gabrielle quietly laughed. "No only in me." She began to completely blush as she realized what she said. "Oh Hades." She bent down to her knees and sheathed her sais.

"At least you speak the truth."

"To much." Gabrielle stared down at the six men. Gabrielle grinned as a thought came to mind like her grin. *These guys never knew what hit them.*

"No they didn't."

The warrior laughed and shook her head. "Now don't start getting into my thoughts too." She grinned. "Because they'll be real evil." She took a deep breath. "Is this what Autoclycus had to deal with when you took over his body?"

"Pretty much."

"The poor man, now I know what he had to deal with." Gabrielle could hear a chuckle come from Xena.

"Wasn't all that bad... he and I worked out a compromise. But I'll just... poof out of your body."

Without another word Xena suddenly reappeared from thin air beside Gabrielle.

The small warrior shut her eyes and dropped her head forward at feeling the rapid change in her body.

The warrior put her hands to Gabrielle's shoulders. "You okay?"

The younger warrior took a deep breath and let it go slowly. "Yeah... just intense."

"Yeah I know." Xena's lips shaped into a small grin. "Feel like still getting those supplies?"

Gabrielle smirked up to her soulmate. "As long as we do it together."

A chuckled response came from the warrior. "Deal."

~*~*~*~

By early that night the soulmates made camp about two candlemarks away from that village.

Gabrielle found herself sitting length wise along a log. Her legs propped up, her quill's tip in her mouth, and her scroll resting in her lap. She was waiting for her partner to return from hunting for a dinner. The small warrior couldn't help but chuckle when her soulmate said she wanted to hunt for dinner despite her godhood. The Amazon Queen only answered it all with, "I know, you just want to feel mortal as possible." The warrior gave a grin response and disappeared into the woods. So here was the bard by herself writing beside the fire.

But within a quarter of a candlemark from Xena's departure Gabrielle felt a presence in the camp. She didn't see nor hear a person or creature. It tensed every fiber in her body while she pretended to continue to write. The presence seemed to almost shift closer to the small warrior. Gabrielle's breathing picked up as she tried to understand it. But only her instincts told her to take her right sai with her hand curling around the cool handle.

However the woman gently closed her eyes for her heart told her too. And a deep grin slipped across her lips, she released the sai. "Why don't you try the... mortal approach?" Gabrielle sucked in a deep breath as she felt warm lips pressed against her throat. Her emerald eyes opened in a daze and she turned her head in the direction the lips came from. There was nothing there but thin air. "Now that's creepy." There was a very quiet laugh. So Gabrielle reached out forward but she felt nothing. "Xena,

where'd you go?"

Very smooth hands slid down Gabrielle's arms and the Amazon Queen looked to her right arm to see no hands. However she could still feel the warm hands glide down her muscular arms. She quickly shivered in reaction to this oddness. Now Gabrielle knew how Xena must have felt around Ares. That thought wasn't in for much musing as a warm breath caressed her ear.

"Use your other sight."

Gabrielle's eyes shut at the hypnotic voice of her soulmate. And those warm hands began to graze across the warrior-bard's chest. She quickly reached to those invisible hands and grasped them and they were certainly Xena's hands. Standing up, the small woman followed Xena's invisible arms up to her shoulders. While keeping her eyes shut Gabrielle leaned in and claimed her soulmate's lips. And within a heartbeat she made that kiss wild. Pulling back, Gabrielle found her partner no longer invisible.

Xena opened her eyes and grinned. "You broke my concentration."

The smaller woman snickered at her friend. "Good." She went in for a second strong kiss from her visible god.

~*~*~*~

The Amazon Queen tucked her head underneath her warrior's chin. Tightening her arm she felt all too happy in her soulmate's arms.

A large grin creased the warrior's lips and she tugged the fur more over their nude bodies. "How you feel?"

"Very tired now."

Xena let a quiet laugh go. "And we haven't eaten."

"Too tired for that." The younger warrior closed her eyes. "Xena?"

"Mmm." The older woman's arms tightened around Gabrielle's body that rested on top of her.

"Who do you think made you a god?" Gabrielle lifted her head up. "I only have one guess."

That god sighed sadly. "Aphrodite."

"That's my guess too." The bard's eyes drifted off with her thoughts.

Xena brought her hand across her partner's cheek. "What you thinking?"

"That we should confront Aphrodite tomorrow." Emerald eyes focused on the warrior. "We've had enough time, let's get this straighten out."

The Warrior Princess studied her soulmate, considering all the angles. "And you're sure about this?"

Gabrielle's eyebrows quickly furrowed. "Xena, there is no way I want to see you not grow old with me." She shook her head. "No matter the powers." Her expression was

very emotional. "And I only want a warrior... not a god."

"Not even for your own safety?"

The small warrior gave a low laugh. "You couldn't even keep me safe as a god Xena." An amused look was playing on her face. "You saw that today."

"True." Xena returned a grin to the look she was receiving but gradually lost it. "And if I can not rid this godhood, what then?"

"Then we'll spend the time we can." Gabrielle took a deep breath. "But we will fix this, we always fix our problems."

The tall warrior had a warm smile as she bent her head up to press a kiss to Gabrielle's forehead. "Still not hungry?"

"Nah."

"When did you last eat?"

The small woman tried to recall but it wasn't happening.

"Okay, that's bad enough." The older warrior began to sit up despite her soulmate on top of her. "I don't care if I have to... poof the food."

"Hold on." Gabrielle's lips creased with a smirk. "Let me cook us something." She crawled off her warrior's body in the fire lit camp. "Did you catch anything anyway?"

"Yesss... rabbit." The warrior now stood in the air around that encased her warm nude body.

The Amazon Queen glanced back to her best friend while dressing. "I'll cook it if you get it."

The god laughed and suddenly she disappeared.

Gabrielle arched an eyebrow after putting her skirt back on. "Not again." She slipped on her leather top and quickly saw her soulmate reappear by the edge of the camp.

Xena was now dressed fully in her warrior attire.

The warrior-bard shook her head at seeing Xena dressed. "I want to feel mortal as possible...right," was mumbled out while she walked to the campfire.

The god laughed, winked, and walked into the forest to find her rabbit from earlier.

~*Part 3*~

"Ready to go?" The warrior turned around after unsaddling Argo in the morning sun.

Gabrielle spun around on her heels. "Yup." She just finished hiding her scroll satchel with the furs.

"Good." Xena disappeared without a trace for a few seconds.

"That's so weird." The small woman quietly laughed to herself and strolled up to the

mare. "Hey girl, how are you?"

Argo nickered and lifted her head and she nudged the woman lightly.

Gabrielle smiled towards the horse and rubbed the mare's head. "Your mom and I use to not to get along."

The young war-horse whined and shook her head in a seeming laugh.

The small warrior grinned. "She musta told you." Her hand fell but her eyes still studied the untacked horse.

"The stuff is hidden."

"Good." Gabrielle turned her head to her soulmate whom materialized beside her.

"Will Argo be fine alone?"

"Definitely." Xena's sights shifted to her mare. "She'll stay around here."

The young warrior nodded and gazed back to her partner. "I hope this will work out."

The warrior moved her head in agreement. "Let's go."

Gabrielle stepped up to her best friend and felt strong arms pull her in close. She herself wrapped her strong arms around Xena while dropping her head down against Xena's chest.

Xena kissed the top of her soulmate's head and closed her eyes.

The younger warrior could feel her body shift through the world with energy. The world was in a blur, as she seemed to almost fly. Everything went still and Gabrielle saw they were in an area that was in ruins.

The warrior lifted her head with open eyes. "Ah, looks about the same."

Gabrielle snickered. "You really left Olympus in ruins huh?"

"Yup." Xena carefully let go of Gabrielle. "Now we need to find Aphrodite."

"My guess would be right over there." The young warrior pointed towards the pink palace.

A huge grin masked the warrior's lips. "Good guess."

The two women started walking towards the palace and easily entered inside.

Gabrielle glanced all around at the huge size of the palace made just for the goddess of love. "Not a bad lay out."

Xena didn't respond because she was shifting into warrior mode. She wanted to take care of this quickly. She walked into the middle of the palace and saw nobody, her eyes narrowed. "Aphrodite!"

The sounds of boot steps could be heard, it was definitely not the goddess of love. For a large dark man in leathers reappeared into the room with the women.

The Warrior Princess gloated. "Ares... so good to see you."

Ares arched an eyebrow. "So what brings the goddess Xena here?"

"I need to have a talk with your sister."

"Weren't... satisfied with the godhood?" The former god of war had a huge smug look.

"No." Xena narrowed her eyes but a smile came to her lips. "How is life in the ruins of Olympus?"

"Wonderful." Ares slowly walked up to the tall dark woman. "Miss me Xena?"

The warrior crossed her arms against her chest. "Definitely." She had a sarcastic smile on her lips.

Gabrielle quickly stepped up in front of Xena between the two. "Ares, we need to talk to Aphrodite."

Ares shrugged his shoulders. "By all means." He then gave a small smile to the short woman. "How's life?"

"Better then what it was." The young warrior crossed her arms against her chest. "How's yours?"

"Very interesting." The former god of war took a deep breath. "I am considering to be brave and live with the mortals."

Xena laughed. "Really?" She ambled up to her partner's side while keeping her eyes locked on Ares. "You'd like it."

"I'll remember that." Ares eyes flickered between the two women seeing a new air between them. "Well... I'll let you find the goddess of love." He stepped off to the side.

Gabrielle glanced to him but started walking ahead.

The warrior gave a warm smile to Ares for a quick second but kept walking. She couldn't let it be known she'd given the former god of war a smile such as that.

The Amazon Queen went into a small room that seemed to be a bathhouse and there she found the goddess of love. "You never make it far from those tubs."

Aphrodite laughed and smiled to her bard. "How are you sweetie?" She leaned back against the stone of the tub. "You look well?"

"I am." Gabrielle gave a huge smile. "Thank you for your help."

"Oh no problem." The goddess of love winked and quickly looked up at seeing the dark warrior enter into the room. "Xena."

Xena flashed a quick smile but came up to the edge of the tub. Her hands rested on the edge while she bent forward. "Aphrodite, I want my mortality back."

"No can do." Aphrodite's face went serious because she knew what was about to happen.

"What do you mean you can't?" The new god narrowed her blue eyes. "Aphrodite, if you can give me a godhood then you can rid it." Xena's eyes were starting to pick up hints of white.

"I can't warrior babe." The goddess of love disappeared out of the tub and onto the floor fully dressed and dry.

Both soulmates turned around to the goddess.

"Xena, if I take your godhood away you'll be dead again." The goddess shook her head. "And that's if I could."

Xena took a menacing step towards the other god. "Aphrodite, if you do not fix this then you're not going to have a palace."

"Do not threaten the person that made you Xena." The goddess of love stepped towards the warrior. "The both of you." Her eyes flickered over to Gabrielle. "I may only be the goddess of love but I control the strongest emotion... power in the known world." Aphrodite's eyes held anger because she had a backbone.

"Xena..." Gabrielle came up to her partner's side grasping Xena's arm. "Let's not get anybody killed over this huh? We're all on the same side."

The warrior sighed with sadness and took a step back, her eyes were still white however. "There has to be a way Aphrodite."

The goddess shook her head and dropped her head. "There is non." Her eyes lifted. "I figured you were better off being a god then losing Gabrielle's love."

"What?" The warrior looked to her soulmate then back to Aphrodite. "I would have not lost Gabrielle."

"Yes you would have Xena." The goddess of love sigh sadly. "Anger is a powerful emotion babes. You of all should know." She took a deep breath. "Besides, when Gabrielle dies you can kick the bucket yourself. You still hold the power to kill gods so as long as Eve is alive."

"Dity." Gabrielle shook her head while releasing Xena's arm. "I think the point here is, that Xena wouldn't mind growing gray hair with me." She grinned a little.

The goddess of love quietly laughed. "I hear you bard." She sighed herself now. "But there is no way. But no worries Gabrielle, I could make you a god as well."

"Nnno." The bard laughed with frustration. "I just want Xena a mortal again Aphrodite. Please." She ran her hand through her short hair. "Thank you for making Xena alive again but I want her mortal. You can't leave Xena like this Aphrodite."

The goddess of love brushed back a piece of curly hair. "I am sorry Gabrielle, there's no way."

The warrior-bard growled and stalked off, she quickly spun around. "Then kill us both

Aphrodite!"

Aphrodite dropped her head very low, her arms tightening close around her chest. "I am sorry Gabrielle." She lifted her head again. "I thought I was helping."

Gabrielle dropped her eyes and took a calming breath. "I'm sorry." She gradually walked up to her godly friend. "It's just I want Xena mortal again Dity. It shouldn't be this way."

"I know." The goddess of love shook her head.

"There is no way to get rid of the godhood?" Xena raised an eyebrow in hopes.

Aphrodite took a deep breath. "There is one other option Xena."

"And that is?" Xena's hands went to her hips.

The goddess of love took a deep breath preparing to reveal the information before the eruption that would come in response. "Give Ares your godhood."

~*~*~*~

"I am not giving Ares my godhood!" Xena spun around on her heels as her voice boomed through the forest. "I will not bring the god of war back into this world!"

Gabrielle sighed and shook her head. "Xena it makes sense. Aphrodite has a good idea."

"No!" The god stalked up to her soulmate with pure white eyes. "I will not make him a god again."

The small warrior dropped her eye contact, she hated those white eyes. For the cloudy eyes meant the god was in control.

The two women had left the goddess of love's temple after hearing her answer and explanation. Xena had said not a word and but her eyes said everything. So Gabrielle suggested they return to the forest and... discuss the idea further. Now here the soulmates were fighting over the godhood.

"Xena, Ares needs his godhood." The small woman's eyes lifted open.

"No he does not!" Xena narrowed her eyes and bent closer to her partner. "Give me one good reason."

"Because the world needs a god of war."

The warrior growled and stomped off with her right hand going through her hair. "Why?" She slowly turned back around. "Why does the world need a god of war?" Her voice was in a rasp.

Gabrielle lowered her eyes thinking for a moment. "I hate the idea." Her eyes came back up. "The world does need a goddess of love and of death... and the Fates." She slowly took steps towards Xena. "But we also need a god of war..." She shook her head as she stood a few steps away from her soulmate. "Idealistically this world doesn't need one Xena but realistically the world does." She took a deep breath. "Think about it. Consider peace as light or goodness and war as darkness or evil."

Light and darkness they must balance each other, one can not survive without the other." Cool air filled her lungs in the afternoon. "Xena there has to be a balance of war and peace just like good and evil."

Xena turned her head away and tried to consider it.

"You know it's true Xena."

"Gabrielle..." The warrior gazed back to her best friend. "I've seen so much death from war. I know what it brings."

"And you know what peace brings, the opposite. There must be a balance of the two." The young woman shook her head. "What happens with times bring a tyrant in a Nation? They must take up arms Xena. Take up arms because sometimes it's the only way to stop an evil. To take up arms only means they'll need the god of war."

"No they won't Gabrielle. They do not need Ares the god of war who brings only death on their side."

"No not maybe Ares himself."

"Then what?" The warrior lowered her arms from her chest, her eyes began to pick up pigments of blue finally.

The realistic Gabrielle lifted her eyes to the idealistic Xena. "The world will only need the essence of Ares."

Xena quickly arched an eyebrow. "Entomb him."

"Exactly." The younger warrior let a grin come. "Maybe that's the answer. Give back Ares part of his godhood, trap the rest along with him. Then we'll never have to worry about the world containing too much of Ares."

"That's a wonderful idea bard."

Both soulmates looked to the right to see the goddess of love reappear in a glitter of pink dust.

Gabrielle smiled warmly to the goddess. "Can it be done?"

"I do believe so sweetie." Aphrodite slowly strutted up to the women. "There's a tomb in northern Greece that was made by my honey before he was... killed."

Xena glanced away knowing she'd killed Haesphastus.

"It's alright Xena." The goddess sadly smiled. "He's waiting." Her eyes shifted to Gabrielle. "In the tomb if I remember right... there's some thingamabob that will like trap a person and their powers inside." Aphrodite brightened up. "And I bet you two a godhood that we can keep Ares locked in the tomb for all of eternity."

"Nothing can open it?" Xena arched an eyebrow.

"Welllll..." The goddess gave a sheepish smile. "Your old chakram would sort of open it."

"How is that?" The god took a step closer to the goddess. "My chakram is gone."

"Not really... you see Xena my honey pie took the remains of your broken chakram because he was so excited about the metal it was made of. He'd made this eye thingy that will keep the person locked in the casket. And he told me the only way to open it would be to throw your old chakram at the eye."

"Why my chakram?"

"I don't know really babes." Aphrodite shrugged her shoulders. "He just liked the metal your chakram was made of, said it was rare or something." She gave a small smile. "And he setup your chakram to come together again when it's held by the right person." Her smile brightened extremely. "So who's up to this little scheme on Ares?"

The two soulmates quietly laughed while evil grins warped across their lips. Their eyes lifted to each other in complete understanding.

~*Part 4*~

Ares crossed his arms against and gazed around in the room. "So explain this to me again?" When Ares became a mortal, he wasn't quite as... well smart as he was when he was a god. It seemed his godhood made him a brighter light bulb.

Xena strolled up to the man. "You rest down inside of the coffin while I give you the godhood. Nothing complicated."

The former god of war nodded, his eyes pinned on that coffin in front of him. His eyes lifted up to the eye over the tomb. "And the eye?"

Gabrielle lifted her eyes to that eye. "It's to help transfer the powers over..." Her attention went to Ares. "Since Xena's godhood isn't a true one."

The man nodded a few times. "And you expect me to believe this?" His eyes flickered up to the Warrior Princess.

"No." Xena put her hands to her hips. "I personally don't care. I just expect you to take the godhood."

Ares attention went to the tomb again and the stared at it. His brother-in-law, the god of metal and forge, told him about this tomb and what it did. Right down to the smallest details. So he knew what would happen to him once he was inside of the coffin, trapped forever. However he also knew the destiny of the gods to fade away and he could only hope this coffin would save him. "Alright, let's do this." He strolled over to the tomb past the women.

Gabrielle quickly looked up to her soulmate in question and confusion.

Xena shrugged her shoulders. "Let's go." She had a small grin.

The small warrior sighed. *This is too easy.* Gabrielle stopped the thought and came up to the back of the lid to the coffin.

The warrior watched Ares climb into the tomb and rest there. "Ready?"

"Yesss." The former god of war's eyes gleamed up with excitement.

Gabrielle's hands went to the lid, tense and ready to shut the lid any second.

Xena lowered her head close to the man's.

Ares grinned and whispered up. "I know what you've planned."

"Then why are you letting us do it?"

Ares lost his grin. "Because I want to be a god again and I know the world needs me."

"Then why let us entomb you?" The warrior was so serious.

"Because after being mortal I've realized the world doesn't need all of me around to destroy the world."

"But you'll think different when you're a god."

"I will." Ares grinned up to the woman. "But I am not a god now so you can get away with this."

That grin reflected from Xena and she closed in the distance to lightly kiss Ares. She felt the power slip through her lips as she open her mouth and it shifted into Ares open mouth.

The god of war moaned into the kiss and pulled Xena in for a strong kiss.

Xena quickly broke it knowing what was happening. She stepped back and grabbed the lid.

Together the soulmates slammed the lid shut after hearing a loud 'no' ring through the air.

Gabrielle's sea green eyes lifted to Xena. "What'd he say?" She slowly began to walk around the tomb.

"That he knew what we were up to." Xena shifted her hands to Gabrielle's sides.

"Then..."

"Because he knows the world only needs the essence of the god of war." The warrior grinned and lowered her lips close to Gabrielle's. "Miss me?"

"You were with me the entire time." Gabrielle pulled her soulmate's head down and sealed her words with a kiss.

Xena moaned in the kiss as a deep fire sparked in her soul that was part of Gabrielle's soul. She was proclaimed dead, god, and now mortal again.

Aphrodite reappeared but invisible to the soulmates, she came to take them home. And she watched them with a huge warm smile feeling satisfied with her work. She giggled and voiced her thoughts with a happy sigh. "Isn't love grand?"

The End

