

# ~ Doctor Covington and Lady Croft ~

by Red Hope

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Violence: None.

Subtext: Any subtext becomes main text here. There is no sex however.

Feedback: I love good and bad feedback along with questions and they can be sent to me at [redhope@redhope.net](mailto:redhope@redhope.net)

Homepage: <http://www.redhope.net>

Note: This fanfiction is for a friend of mine. She has a thing for Angelina Jolie and the Tomb Raider thing along with X&G. She also challenged me to write a short fanfiction because I can't seem to do it. Well, I think this'll prove her wrong and make her regret teasing me about that. ;) enjoy, Koty! And let me know if you really wanted this story this short....?

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## Doctor Covington and Lady Croft

The Short Rendition

By Red Hope

### *Epilogue*

Gabrielle had been here for about an hour now and was already feeling worn out. The party though had been going on for much longer however, about four hours at least. Although she'd kept busy all evening talking to various friends or coworkers, she felt she hadn't accomplished in making any new associates in her trade. She was starting to feel rather frustrated actually. With a heavy sigh, she pushed her way through the

crowd towards an open balcony to get some fresh air.

She'd been in the large ballroom for too long tonight, and she felt rather cramped now. Once she made it out onto the balcony, she sensed her entire body coming to life again from the cool evening and refreshing night air. Slowly a breeze seemed to pick up and brush back her blond bangs, rustling her short blond hair and cooled her heated face. She sighed happily for the cool breeze and how it seemed to brush away her stifling body heat.

She continued though to shift through the tiny crowd of people on the large balcony. She came to the very ledge and rested her hands on the stone rail. She gazed over the flourishing gardens below. Before though she could actually begin to relax, she felt a warm hand clasp her shoulder.

"Evening, Gabrielle."

The young woman turned her head to the voice. A warm smile greeted her and she returned it. "How are yah, Guy?"

"I'm well this evening." Guy removed his hand and moved closer. "I saw you come in earlier but haven't had a chance to catch up with you. Are you enjoying the party?"

"No, I really ain't, Guy."

The young man was a little taller than Gabrielle but he had sandy brown hair that was rather short. He had a fairly small built and numerous freckles spotted his face. "Gabrielle, you can't tell me we came all this way for you not to enjoy it here?"

The young woman huffed and returned her gaze to the slightly lit gardens below. "Guy, I know I took on this job here with the museum but... it ain't been as great as I thought it'd be. I've been here just over uh bloody year... and I'm already talking like an English."

Guy stifled a small laugh at his friend's southern twang of bloody. "Don't worry; something interesting is bound to happen." He lifted his arms and pressed them down against the rail. "Besides, exactly how much entertainment were you expecting from translating huh?"

A half amused smile formed in Gabrielle's expression. "Yah got uh point, Guy." She lifted her right hand and pushed up her small, silver framed glasses. "Yah know, I still say I shoulda been an archeologist like my grandmother."

"Gabrielle, you weren't made for the field work."

The southern woman gave a drawn out sigh. "I guess you're right, Guy." She peered up into the man's soft brown eyes; she was prepared to add something else but faltered when she caught the sight of two people in the corner of her eye. She turned her head further to her right and saw a tall, dark haired woman walking beside one of her coworkers. She immediately straightened up from the railing and Guy found himself confused.

Guy turned around and now realized what or rather who Gabrielle was studying.

"Who is Gregory with?" softly whispered Gabrielle.

Guy almost didn't reply but shook his attention back to Gabrielle. "That's uh... well that's Lady Croft," he muttered.

"Lady?" The word rolled out off Gabrielle's mouth like glue. She could barely get it out without it sticking.

"Yes," uttered Guy, "Lara Croft... her father is Lord Henshingly Croft."

Gabrielle was tempted to ask yet another question but faltered when she saw Gregory and Lara Croft were actually headed to them. "She's coming to...", she fell short on her words.

"Us," finished Guy. He suddenly threw on a huge smile when Gregory and Lara Croft closed in on them. "Evening, Gregory."

"It's good to see you both here." Gregory held out his hand to Guy first, who briskly shook it. He then shifted his hand to Gabrielle. "Enjoying the night?"

"Quite," falsely replied the southerner. She released the large hand and she tried extremely hard not to look up at the tall beauty in front of her.

"Well, I'd like for you both to meet a new patron of the museum." Gregory directed to Lara Croft. "This is Lady Croft from Surrey."

Gregory looked first to Guy and introduced him. "Lady Croft, this is Guy Manning Higgins. He's from the New York museum."

"How do you do?" asked the Lady. She held out her hand and received a brisk shake from him. Her soft blue eyes then shifted over to the much smaller woman when Gregory began introducing her.

"And one of the most renowned translators, Doctor Gabrielle Pappas Covington the second."

Lady Croft's eyes slightly widened but quickly shifted normal again. She held out her hand.

Gabrielle was hesitant at first but quickly took the much larger hand. "Nice to meet yah, Lady Croft."

"The pleasure is all mine, Doctor Covington." Lara let a faint smile twitch at the corners of her lips.

The southerner returned a shy one back and realized she was still shaking hands. She quickly released the tall woman's hand.

"Doctor Covington is from the University of South Carolina."

Lady Croft had her attention on Gregory and nodded at his words. She then looked back to the younger woman. "Professor?"

Doctor Covington had a hidden grin in her expression. "Yes, for about two years." She reached up and instinctively pushed her glasses back up, it was in that instant that Lady Croft had a good view of Gabrielle's mist green eyes. "I decided to join the museum for something uh little more... different."

Lady Croft chuckled quietly to herself. "I'm sure it's much different."

Gabrielle's hidden grin suddenly broke out across her face.

## Part I

It'd been over two weeks since Lara Croft and Gabrielle had met at the dinner party. Lara had thought that would be the first and probably the last time she'd ever see Doctor Covington however she was rather wrong. Tonight she was already engaged in a long conversation with Doctor Covington over a basic meal of Italian foods. This was Lara's fourth meeting with Gabrielle well rather at this point; these meetings were feeling more like dates to Lara. This was her fourth date.

Lara folded her arms over her chest after finishing her meal. She sat back in her chair and continued to listen to Gabrielle's last comment. "I'm not so sure myself."

Gabrielle slightly narrowed her eyes at the other woman. "You think they should keep them?"

"Sure, why not?"

"They belong back in Cairo," complained the translator.

Lara had an amused smile while she reached for her stem wear of water. "But these British archeologists went through all that trouble to find these artifacts. I see no reason why they cannot keep the fruits of their labour." She took a quick sip of her water then lowered it back to the table.

"That's the history of Egypt... it belongs with their people."

"Alright....," drew out Lara. She sat up in her chair and locked her gaze on Gabrielle. "Pretend you're Howard Carter and you just found Tutankhamen's tomb. You've spent all this time, man hours, labour... you've dedicated your life to the cause. But suddenly you're not allowed to return home with your discoveries because it's not your history...? How would that make you feel as the archeologist?"

The southerner was about to protest but stopped when she truly considered it. She thought back to her grandmother's days and how she might have felt if Greece refused to relinquish their historic treasures. "Well...."

Lara gradually lifted an eyebrow in waiting answer.

"Well maybe they could at least return them after the archeologist kicks off," grumbled the translator.

Lady Croft let out a soft laugh as she rested back into her chair again. "I suppose that's... an idea." She then noted their server was returning and with the check. She held up her hand once the server approached.

"Thank you, ladies." The waiter handed Lara the bill. He then walked off after gathering a few dishes from the table.

"Lara, let me-"

"No," cut off Lara. "I'm taking care of this one tonight." Her steel blue eyes rested on the younger woman briefly then lowered back down to the bill after hearing no more complaints.

Doctor Covington sighed inwardly but kept quiet while her new friend took care of the bill. After she heard Lara closed the cover of the bill envelope, she looked up.

"Ready?" inquired the Lady. She started to stand up.

"Of course." The translator slipped out of her chair and waited for Lara to come closer. She then made her way towards the exit of the restaurant. "Thank you for dinner."

"My pleasure," replied the older woman.

"At least let me repay you with a cup of tea at my place," offered the southerner.

Lady Croft was shaking her head and saying, "Nothing to repay."

"Well then," considered Gabrielle, "A dessert then." She stopped at the two huge wood doors of the building. "Please."

Lara had her left hand on the door and tried to think of an excuse to refuse but none came to mind. She pushed open the door and stepped out. "Dessert then."

A happy smile formed on Gabrielle's face as she nodded to her right after coming out of the restaurant. "This way. My apartment ain't far from here."

Lara stole a quick glance at her navy BMW parked off to her left. She then returned her attention to her friend. "I thought you had walked here."

The southerner chuckled some and continued down the sidewalk through the small town. "I did," she confirmed. "My place ain't much further."

After about two block and rounding a corner, the pair turned into a small, paved driveway where there was a small golden Mercedes parked.

"Nice car," commented Lara.

Gabrielle stopped and faced her car. "Yeah, I brought it from the states." She grinned up at the taller woman. "I ain't one to go far without my car."

Lara came closer to the car and walked along side of it while running her left hand down the side. "What year?"

"1990... 190E."

Lady Croft had her left hand resting on the passenger side mirror, her back to the younger woman. She stopped there and turned around. "An antique." A huge smirk formed on her lips.

Doctor Covington half glared for the remark. "She's ain't worth much but I love her."

"Well... once she's worth nothing then she'll start to be worth a lot." Lara studied the inside now and noted how clean it was kept. "That's how antiques always work." She eyed the head unit it, which made her look at the rear speakers in the back. "New sound system?" she whispered.

"Fully redone." Gabrielle shifted closer to the white door that went into her apartment. "This way."

Lara tore her vision away from the car and followed her friend into the apartment. She remained in the apartment for about an hour with Doctor Covington. Lara inquired much about Gabrielle's current position at the museum and found it rather intriguing despite how dull it might have seemed to Gabrielle. After the second cup of tea was empty, Lara decided it was time to leave. Although tonight was the first time Lara offered her home number and cell phone number. Doctor Covington didn't hesitate to write both of them down on her notepad that clung to refrigerator.

After Lady Croft departed, she went straight to her car back in the restaurant parking lot. It wasn't long before she returned back to Surrey County and her mansion. As soon as she stepped out of her car, she was greeted by Hillary.

Hillary took the BMW keys from Lara and proceeded to drive it around to the garage.

Lara, however, went into the mansion. After shutting the door, she threw off her long, leather jacket and hung it on one of the hooks by the door. "Brice?" she called. She started for the computer room that Brice always used.

"In here, Lara," called back the computer technician.

When Lady Croft entered the room, she found him still at his helicopter flight game. "Did you find anything on Doctor Covington yet?"

Brice glanced up the Lady then turned back to monitor. "Yeah... a few things."

"Like what?" Lara shifted to the long leather sofa and sat down in it.

Brice had changed screens on the computer and was now looking over some file. "Well, her father is Herald J. Jones and he is currently still alive and still engineering. He seems to work for some large construction firm down in the south."

Lara half growled at Brice's drawn out biography on Gabrielle's father. She suddenly jumped up from the sofa and glared down at him. "Brice, I don't care about her father. Tell me about her mother's side." She folded her arms over her chest and kept her intense gaze locked on him.

Brice sighed as he looked back at the monitor. "Her mother is Gabrielle Pappas Covington the first."

"And she has quite an interesting past too, my Lady," cut in Hillary.

Lara glanced at Hillary when he entered then back at Brice. "I bet. Go on, Brice."

"Well, it seems that Doctor Covington's grandmother is the infamous Doctor Janice Covington." He stopped and peered up at Lara. "Guess who Janice's father is?"

Lara only responded with a raised eyebrow.

Brice broke out with a grin. "Doctor Harry Covington."

"No," whispered Lara, a huge grin spread over her lips.

"Yes." Brice's own grin grew wider and he hastily turned back to the computer screen.

"Tell her about Doctor Covington's... grandfather."

Lara stole a quick look at Hillary to see he had a quirky grin.

"This is the best part, Lara." Brice reread his information source on the screen and turned back to Lara. "It seems Doctor Covington has two grandmothers... no grandfather." He saw two eyebrows shoot up. "The middle name, Pappas... that's Doctor Covington's other grandmother's name."

"Pappas?" whispered Lara. Her eyebrows were knitted together. She rose up to her full height and walked away. "Mel Pappas," she whispered and looked up to see the confirmation in Brice's eyes.

"That's right; Doctor Mel Pappas was a translator and part time archeologist. Seems his daughter, Melinda Pappas, also followed in his footsteps."

Lara shook her head as her amused smile grew. She took a few steps back and leaned against a book case. "Tell me more about Janice Covington and Melinda Pappas."

"Well..." Brice drew in a deep breath and started to tell a quick biography. "Janice and Melinda were partners after some expedition in Macedonia. It seems that both Janice and her late father were in search of some interesting bit of history from Greece."

"What history is that?"



"Something to do with the history of two female warriors during Ancient Greece." Brice's eyes lowered to the floor then lifted back up. "Strange thing is I can't find much about who these female warriors were. There's nothing about Melinda and Janice's expeditions in Greece but there were plenty of them. It's like... everything faded away in the past fifty years." He spun in his seat again to face the computer. He moved his mouse around and clicked on something. "What I think may have to do with it is Doctor Covington's mother. It seems her mother refused anything of her past... almost like she didn't want it to exist."

"Maybe she didn't agree to the lifestyle Melinda and Janice held," interrupted Hillary.

"Most likely," agreed Lara. She lifted herself off the bookcase and added, "Sounds like I found myself an interesting piece of puzzle here."

"It does," agreed Brice. "But one thing is for sure, Doctor Covington is by no means stupid and rather wealthy."

Lara stopped in her mid stride and returned her focus to Brice. "Oh?"

"Over a fifteen hundred on her SAT's, graduated with a doctors in six years, and not to mention a full scholarship." Brice saw Lara's surprised look and he had a huge grin. "And she currently owns a nice large mansion in South Carolina. The university is paying her to be here as much as the museum." He shrugged and added, "Plus she seems to have a big piggy bank."

Lara huffed and folded her arms over her chest. "Not as big as mine."

"Nobody's is as big as yours," teased Hillary from the doorway.

Lara suddenly had a huge grin at the butler's words. "I'm glad you agree, Hillary." She then started for that same doorway that Hillary was residing. She came next to Hillary but stopped and looked at him. "Oh tomorrow could you ring Doctor Covington for me?"

"Yes, my lady. What's the occasion?"

"A tour and dinner." Lara then turned her head and walked off.

Brice and Hillary both exchanged suspicious looks.

Part II

Doctor Covington was looking at all of her surroundings from inside of the BMW car. She was surprised by how beautiful the Surrey area was away from the towns. In some ways, it reminded her of home. She sighed a bit sadly then looked over at the driver.

Lara saw the intense ivy eyes on her. She smiled over at the younger woman. "I'm glad you agreed."

"How could I refuse your offer?" teased the translator.

"You simply say no."

Gabrielle was grinning but softly chuckled when Lara showed her own grin. She looked away and took a quick glance out of the side mirror. She watched all the fall leaves rustle and flew up behind them. She raised her eyes back up and noted the end of the long driveway was coming. Ahead she could faintly make out the huge mansion at the end and a court that went around the front. "Big place," she commented.

Lady Croft bit back her grin because she knew Gabrielle should be use to the mansion idea. She slowed down some as they approached the court. When she came to the front, the BMW came to a stop and the two women got out.

At the bottom of the steps stood Hillary and he greeted them with, "Welcome home, my Lady."

"Glad to see you, Hillary." Lara came around the car and stood beside Doctor Covington. "I'd like you to meet our guest." She held her hand out. "Doctor Gabrielle Covington from the British Museum."

"Lovely to meet you, Doctor Covington." Hillary bowed his head. "I'm the simple butler around here."

The translator softly laughed and smiled at him when he straightened up again. "Nice tuh meet yah, Hillary."

Hillary smiled to her then took the keys from Lara. He proceeded to put away the car.

"This way," offered Lara. She climbed the steps.

Within a few seconds, Lara was introducing Gabrielle to Brice then she started the tour around Croft Mansion. It wasn't long though before the two ladies were sitting down to a quite meal in the main dining hall. Instead though of each person sitting at either end of the gigantic table, Lara and Gabrielle sat across from each other at one end.

Lara had noted how rather quiet Gabrielle had been for the night. It made her feel rather uneasy for some reason. She even felt worried that she'd pushed her friend too far with showing Gabrielle her lifestyle. It gave her plenty of suspicious of what made the translator tick.

The southerner finished the last bite of her dessert and sat back with her glass of white wine. "Hillary is a wonderful cook."

"Yes he is," agreed Lara. As if he knew they were talking about him, he reappeared out of the kitchen from the side door.

"Are we finished, ladies?" inquired the butler.

"Yes, it was excellent as always, Hillary."

"Thank you." Hillary had a faint grin but carefully lifted Lara's plate up. He then crossed over to Gabrielle's side and picked up her empty dessert plate. "I see you didn't wish to have dessert with your salt, Doctor Covington?"

Gabrielle peered up to see his tormenting grin twitching at his lips. "Very funny... Alfred."

Hillary's jaw dropped at the mention of Batman's famous butler. "Well then." He chuckled and walked off with the dessert plates.

After he was gone, Lara broke out laughing at what her friend had called him. "God... I've never seen him caught off guard." She shook her head as her smile grew more. "That was bloody witty, Gabrielle."

The translator grinned for a moment but lost it somewhat.

"You're pretty quiet tonight." Lara lifted both of her arms up and rested her elbows on the edge of the table. She lowered her chin onto her hands.

"Sorry," whispered the southerner.

"Nothing to apologize for. I'm more curious as to why." Lady Croft left it there, hoping it would push her friend to talk now.

Gabrielle sighed and fell back into her chair after putting her wine down. "I'm sorry its jus'... your mansion reminds me of home."

"How?"

Doctor Covington couldn't look away since she was held in place but Lara's soft blue eyes. "Yah see... when I was young my grandmother passed away." She paused and for once looked around the room for what seemed like the first time. Her gaze returned to Lara and she added, "I inherited her mansion." A heavy sigh came out of her. "My mother refused tuh live there... I think that's why my grandmother put me as the beneficiary for her estate." She paused and whispered, "And everything else."

Lara could tell it was a rather touchy subject. She tried to go another route to continue to look into this woman's interesting past. "Did you always know you wanted to be a translator?"

Gabrielle huffed and reached forward with her right hand. She sat up some but played with the wine glass. "I wanted tuh be an archeologist honestly." Her misty sea eyes lifted to Lara. "My mother refused it but my father was able tuh convince her to at least let me be uh translator." She shrugged. "I guess she figured it'd be safer." She shook her head and looked down at the wine glass. "Anyway, I've just never fell into the... aristocrat life to be honest." She wanted to look up to see Lara's reaction but then again, she didn't want to know either.

Lara sighed because she knew her friend expected her to be annoyed. She lowered her hands and reached out with her right hand. Her fingertips just slightly caressed Gabrielle's own. "I can understand." Slowly forest green eyes lifted to her. "I grew up on a cushion and a gold spoon in my mouth." A grin tweaked her lips then disappeared. "I had a... life changing experience when I was young. After that, I stopped hiding from the world. I love adventure and action," she half teased.

The translator chuckled at that and almost frowned when Lara's contact ended. "I wish I could jus'... do as I please but..." She licked her lips then finished her sentence. "I reckon I'm too damn worried about my folk's reaction... especially mom's."

Lara sat back in her seat. She suddenly realized just how this woman felt. They're lives were completely separate and different yet as she learned more and more, she knew they were very much alike. "What would you do if you took control?"

Gabrielle suddenly looked up, surprised by the question. It was like it was the first time anybody ever asked for her opinion on her own life. "I'd go back tuh school and get my doctors in archeology." Then slowly a sad smile shaped her lips. "Then I reckon I'd keep my promise tuh my grandmother."

Lady Croft was so tempted to ask about the promise but something in Gabrielle's eyes made it impossible. Instead though, she decided to change the subject. "How about I show you the upstairs? I forgot about that."

For a response, Doctor Covington stood up, which made Lara get up as well. The two

friends walked along either side of the lengthy table until they met at the door on the other side. Lara lead the way into the main hall then up the large flights of stairs to the balcony that wrapped around for the upstairs rooms.

"This room is Hillary's." Lady Croft touched the door that was slightly ajar. "The next one is Brice's although he has a tendency to sleep in his computer room or trailer." She flashed a grin to the translator.

Gabrielle returned it but quickly looked to her right to see a door much further from the rest. "That must be yours."

"Yes," confirmed Lady Croft. She pushed open the door once they reached it.

The southerner's eyes widened by the second as she took in the size of the room. "Wow... it's uh house in a house."

Lara quietly laughed at her friend but stepped past her. "It's quaint."

"Right," chided Doctor Covington. She kept scanning the room but then her eyes rested on one particular item. Her eyebrows instantly knitted together and became tighter as she approached the item on one of Lara's dressers.

Lady Croft silently came up behind her friend and rested her hands on Gabrielle's shoulders. "Interesting, isn't it?"

"Uh... it really is," agreed the younger woman. She reached up and carefully her fingertips ran down the length of the wood mask. Her fingertips then traveled back up and traced over the 'X' design in the crown of the mask. "Where did yah find it?"

"I was in Greece not long ago," quietly answered Lara, "and I was in market. I was looking through a sort of junk stand." She paused and dropped her head to one side while staring into the eyes of the mask. "The shop keeper basically gave me this mask and what was even stranger was he said it belonged to me."

"That is... strange." Gabrielle lowered her hands from the face of the mask. She then touched a few of the long ruffles that were a flow of colours. "I reckon its old... and its uh amazing its condition its still in."

"Mmmm," simply agreed the Lady. She squeezed her friend's shoulders tightly in hopes it'd take her out of the trance the mask had her.

Doctor Covington very faintly shook her head then turned around. "I reckon I should get home. I have early mornings."

"That's what I thought." Lara finally lowered her hands.

Gabrielle's mind told her to move yet she was stuck in another trance now by Lara's eyes and the nearness of her body.

Lady Croft rarely ever had the sensation of feeling lightheaded around a person but tonight, around Gabrielle, was the first time she did. She barely licked her lips and pushed her nerve up to whisper, "We should go."

Gabrielle blinked and lowered her head. With her right hand, she pushed her glasses up a little.

"Come on." Lara turned and forced herself to walk away.

Doctor Covington let out one nerves breath and followed behind. When they were downstairs, she made her way outside first, dying for the fall air to cool her body off.

Lara however was greeted by Hillary and Brice, they both had questioning looks.

"Everything okay?" inquired Brice.

"Fine thank you," stoically replied Lady Croft.

"Your keys, ma'am." Hillary held up the keys and he gave a very amused grin. "I know you didn't forget them."

Lara half growled and tore them out of Hillary's hands as she pulled her leather jacket off the hook. "No, I didn't... Alfred." She flung on her jacket and grinned when she saw Hillary's dirty look. She then grabbed the door handle, partially opened but stopped and looked back at the two men. "By the way, be nice to this one." She stopped as a grin creased her lips, she further added, "I like her... a lot." Without another word, she pushed open the door and left two stunned friends.

The two women were soon in the BMW and driving back to the inner city. The drive wasn't very long however for both of them it was rather drawn out by the silence.

Gabrielle realized they were finally coming close to her apartment. She glanced over at Lara and said, "Thank you for tonight."

"You're welcome." Lady Croft offered a warm smile and got one in mirrored back. "You're welcomed at Croft Mansion at anytime, Doctor Covington."

The translator slightly chuckled and spoke, "I thought we were past the formality."

"We are," agreed Lara. She came to an intersection and turned left and came up along side the apartment. She had enough room to run the one side of the BMW near the curb. After turning the car off, she got out when Gabrielle did. She silently walked her friend to the apartment door.

Doctor Covington fished around in her pockets and pulled out her apartment keys. She was standing on the top step and for once, she was looking down at Lara. "Thank you again," she whispered.

Lara briefly listened to Gabrielle's keys jingle. "Anytime." She felt another smile take her lips. She tried to take a step back and walk away but it wasn't happening.

Gabrielle was trying to make herself turn to the door but she was caught in her spot. What little light from the building was cascading over Lara and making her almost glow in the night, it caught her breath.

Instead of stepping away, Lara took one step closer. She didn't know what possessed her at that moment other than a dying urge. She rose up one step and came to be just slightly shorter than Gabrielle. She didn't hesitate now and simply leaned into Gabrielle.

Gabrielle sucked in her breath when Lara's face came close then a pause. She closed her eyes at that point then finally felt soft lips press into hers. She could barely breathe when her lips molded tighter against Lara's and their mouths opened. Lara's soft tongue pressed into her mouth and brushed against her own. She felt her body explode and her strength gone. Yet strong hands grasped her hips to hold her still.

Lara gave a soft growl as she brought her tongue back and pulled Gabrielle's into her own mouth. There was a brief moan again from Gabrielle then she pulled away from the kiss. When she pulled back far enough, she opened her eyes only to see Gabrielle still had hers shut.

Slowly, the translator opened her misty green eyes and her face was soon painted by a blush.

Lara couldn't help the silly grin forming on her face.

"Oh god," whimpered the southerner. She dropped her head and covered her face with her hand that held the keys.

Lady Croft chewed on her lower lip and decided at this time, it was best to give Gabrielle space. She let go of the younger woman's sides and stepped back down. "Well," she started in a quiet voice, "I think that wraps up tonight nicely." She hoped the joke would ease the southerner.

Gabrielle lowered her hand and her keys jangled back. Her face was still tinted pink but she was smiling. "I... reckon so." She bit her lower lip, honestly not sure what to say. "Uhhhh...."

"Its okay," cut off Lara. She gave a reassuring smile. "We'll talk about it... later. Its late and you need to rest."

"Tomorrow?" urged the younger woman.

"Tomorrow," promised Lara. She finally took one step away but backwards. "Goodnight."

Gabrielle urged herself to face the door. She fumbled with her keys but managed to get a key into the door, not the right one though.

Lara quietly laughed to herself as she watched then she spun around. She went to the driver's side and opened the door. She didn't get in right away and waited until she knew her friend was in her apartment.

"Found it," muttered Gabrielle under her breath. She jerked the door open and waved to her friend. "See yah, Lara."

"Goodnight." Lara watched her go into the apartment then did she finally get into her car. After a shiver rippled down her back, she started the car and drove off towards home. As she drove home, she never realized until now that a part of her felt at ease. A very happy smile suddenly glued to her lips. Once back at the mansion, she only got very curious and skeptical looks from both Brice and Hillary. All she did was shrug to them and disappeared upstairs to slip into her dreams about what her future would hold for her tomorrow and the rest of the days.

**The End**