

~ In Time ~

by Red Hope

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Subtext ~ Nothing but subtext as maintext.

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If anybody has comments about my story please let me know at:

redhope@redhope.net

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Gabrielle took a very deep breath that lifted her chest high. She gradually released it and walked around a tree in the darkness. The small warrior leaned back against that tree with a sigh and wrapped her arms against her stomach. Shutting her eyes she ran her right hand through her short hair. Her hand was back against her stomach as the cold bracelet warmed against her stomach.

Right now the woman had a small headache, a small headache that reminded her why she had it. The headache kept repeating into her head with each thud saying how she almost killed Eve. Almost killed Xena's daughter. Yet Eve and her still lived, thanks to Ares. Of all the people she had to be thanking it was him. The God of War she owed her life to. It made her huff in anger. It was too ironic for her, so ironic that it would be something she'd write in her scrolls.

Eve was alive and beginning to live again since her childhood. Eve was deprived of a perfect childhood she would have received from Xena and Gabrielle. But what Gabrielle couldn't help wonder was what saved Eve were the few days she did spend with her and Xena. Had those few days after birth helped retain the goodness in Eve? Maybe so. Maybe it never will really matter. Eve however was in the camp with her mother.

The small warrior on the other hand was standing against a lone tree while her eyes fixed on the seashore in front of her. The salt from the sea filled her sense while the quiet crashes on the shore spoke to her. Gabrielle listened but for only so long. Only so long because her thoughts yelled over the quietness of the sea's caress on the beach.

The small woman opened her eyes and slid down the tree to squat and stay leaning against the tree. Her arms propped up on her knees. She studied the sea with sad eyes.

To many things happened to her in the past year, to many things to figure out. Yet she needed to understand everything otherwise she would drown in the misunderstanding.

The misunderstanding, the mixed up emotions, and the distorted desires. How such things could kill a person inside and out.

Her biggest confusion of all was she and Xena. They had been close for the past three years but then a distance grew this year. The gap between was huge and deadly.

Gabrielle laughed sarcastically at her thoughts. They were never close those three years, there was a little more than closeness. Since the time she'd become the Amazon Queen she'd developed an interesting relationship with her friend. She'd come to find out Xena had a deep attraction for her and the desire would possess Xena at times.

At first the small bard had no clue how to react to it. Didn't know how to respond to Xena's looks and staring. Gabrielle was young in those days and cared little of herself and only for Xena. One night the warrior asked to take her and Gabrielle had been demanded to be taken.

It was nothing more than that. Just attractions to each other, no emotions, no deep love. It was utter attraction and desires for ravishing and it worked both ways for the women. Xena and Gabrielle by the end of the nights would both be satisfied, their needs snubbed for a certain time. Well until it bubbled up to the top again and it was always Xena taking Gabrielle. Never had it been Gabrielle taking Xena. At the time Gabrielle never dared ask.

Since the pregnancy Xena and Gabrielle never so much as look at each other in that way let alone sleep together. Xena's actions in turn had left Gabrielle bruised and battered inside. For the small warrior was deeply in-love with Xena. Somewhere in the process of those three years she'd fallen in-love with Xena and not just physically. Yet Gabrielle knew it could never be a romantic relationship between her and the warrior. And only because Xena did not have that same love for her. Oh Xena had love for Gabrielle but only sisterly or friendship. Once in awhile the older woman's needs would spur to life and she would seek out Gabrielle to hush them. Moreover it was the young woman that willingly handed herself over to calm the warrior's riptide of sexual need.

Gabrielle sighed, she lowered her right hand to pluck a few pieces of grass and tear them in her hands. How she'd paid so much for handing her body over because without knowing it she handed her love over. Her love that Xena would never respond to or take. These days brought distance between her and Xena along with a mountain of tension.

The woman dropped the remaining torn blades of grass. Her eyes locked with the sea. "At least she'll always have Eve." Lifting her hands she placed them over her mouth to hold back her emotions. If this distance grew Gabrielle would soon have to travel away from it. She could only endure so much pain each time she looked to Xena. Endure that shattering pain in her soul each time Xena touched her.

The warrior left Gabrielle shattered and disgraced. When she slept with Xena and willingly gave herself over she never felt violated. Today as she looks back on those nights she felt deeply violated and almost to the point she felt raped. That was only because Xena never handed over herself or her love.

Could her pieces ever be put together again and in time?

Once more the female ran her hand through her short hair. She heard the sound of footfall coming up behind her. In pure instinct, Gabrielle whirled around on her feet with her sais. She lowered her sais. "Could have said something."

"Sorry."

The small warrior straightened up. "What brings you out here Xena?"

Xena smiled sadly and slowly walked up to her friend. "I was wondering the same thing with you." She crossed her arms against her chest and stood in front of her partner. "How are you?"

"Besides the headache, great."

"Sorry about that." Xena lowered her eyes.

"How is Eve?" Gabrielle crossed her arms over her stomach with her sais still in hand.

"She's asleep now. Tired from the long day."

The smaller female's head bobbed up and down. "It was a long day."

"Yes it was." The warrior's blue eyes leveled back up. "I've been worried about you."

"What exactly about?"

Xena shook her head. "Gabrielle, don't play games. We both know what's happening between us."

"No I don't Xena!" The warrior bard narrowed her cold eyes. "I do not play games either Xena. And please tell me what *is* going on between us. Because I am sitting in the dark."

The warrior turned her back to her friend and took a few steps away. "Too much is going on." Turning around, she faced the smaller female.

"Tell me about it." Gabrielle bent down to slowly sheath her sais.

Xena's back straightened up as she saw Gabrielle's cleavage from bending down. Her pulse picked up because she hadn't looked at her friend like that in almost a year. For some time she thought she couldn't do that again to Gabrielle but here she was seeing Gabrielle in that old light.

Gabrielle stood back up and saw Xena avert her eyes away quickly. "Why Xena?"

"I can't tell you why Gabrielle. It just is." The warrior gazed back to the Amazon Queen. "It's complicated."

"What's so complicated about it Xena?" The small woman's words were in a growl. She took a menacing step towards Xena. "I'm playing games? You're the one to talk!"

The warrior closed her eyes a moment and gradually opened them again. "I can't Gabrielle." She couldn't because she didn't know the truth between them. Xena was deeply in-love with her best friend. She herself had become dependent on Gabrielle's

love a long time ago. However she never told Gabrielle this believing the smaller warrior didn't have the same emotions.

"Thanks Xena." The younger woman nodded with a bitter look. "I am so glad you care so much."

"Gabrielle?" Xena closed in the distance and quickly lifted her right hand to her friend's chin. Leaning in without asking, she kissed Gabrielle lovingly. She pulled back with her hands coming to her partner's side. "Please Gabrielle." She rested her forehead against the other woman's. "Please."

The Amazon Queen shut her eyes against the pleading voice and the swarming desires. Her anger came to life. "No... no." She backed away from the warrior. "Don't you dare do this to me again." She pointed a finger at the other woman. "I am not doing this again with... *you!*"

Xena narrowed her eyes a little. "You offered yourself over to me."

"Yes I did!" Gabrielle stopped and looked away, her following words in a whisper. "I did it because I loved you Xena." Her attention went back to Xena. "But see the thing is Xena, it would not matter right now whether you loved me back or not." She narrowed her eyes again and stepped up to the warrior. "And that is because you used me." Her anger said these words, "You... used... *me* Xena."

"We used each other. And you damn well know that Gabrielle." The warrior took a step closer. "I did fall in-love with you during those years. And now it's even stronger." She stopped feeling the tears come. "I'm sorry I hurt you in whatever way. But I can't live without you."

"And I am suppose to believe that?" The Amazon Queen shook her head with cold eyes. "I hardly trust you."

"I saved your life today Gabrielle. What else do I need to do to prove it?"

"Ares saved me life Xena. You almost killed me."

"Because you were going to kill my daughter!"

The warrior bard quickly stalked up to Xena with her anger more then evident. "And you killed my daughter along with my relationship with her."

"Hope was evil Gabrielle, you know that."

Gabrielle laughed loudly. "What you think Eve is Xena? A sparkling bundle of good? She's as good as her mother once was." She turned her back on Xena and walked away.

"Don't do that to me Gabrielle."

"Don't do that to you?" The warrior bard turned back around with her arms against her chest. "Don't you do this to me Xena. Don't you come to me asking for my love when I can not give it to you."

"Why... why Gabrielle?" The tall woman shook her head. "I am asking for a second

chance here."

"Well I am not." The Amazon Queen looked away then back to the other woman. "Look at me Xena. Am I same as I was three years ago? Am I still that young girl that called herself a bard and followed her partner blindly?" She watched to see blue eyes fall. "No I am not. I opened myself up to you during that time and look what has happened to me. I've never been filled with so much rage in my life. I wish I could go back and tell my younger self not to fall in-love with you." Her voice became low and angry. "Look at where it's gotten me?"

Xena ran her right hand through her bangs. "Let me help you heal Gabrielle. Please let me fix the damage I've done."

"No." Gabrielle was shaking her head back and forth. "No Xena. I don't trust you enough." She narrowed her eyes a little. "I want to take care of myself for once." She paused and took a mental step. "But someday... maybe someday I'll let you help me but not today or tomorrow or the next day." Her arms tightened around her chest. "Keep your distance Xena and if you dare cross that line again... you will be the one getting violated."

"I promise... I won't do anything unless you ask me to." The warrior lifted her burning eyes. With carefulness she came up to her friend. Xena bent forward and placed a gentle kiss to Gabrielle's forehead. "I'll wait." She took a deep breath. "If it matters, I am sorry, even though that won't cut it."

Gabrielle shut her eyes and turned her head away. "Leave me."

Xena closed her eyes and walked away from her friend, her own arms came against her chest in protection. "I won't leave you." Her words were barely a whisper yet they crashed through the world.

Gabrielle shifted her eyes to the sea. "Sorry... it will matter... in time."

In time, only in time. That's all she would need now, time.

The End
