

# ~ Walking Separately ~

by Red Hope

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**Disclaimers:** Violence ~ No violence, it can happen.

Subtext ~ That's the only thing I know how to write, hehe.

Copyright ~ Lets see, Universal and MCA both own Xena and Gabrielle. But don't take my character Mark or my story line, it would be a real bad scene otherwise.

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~\*Part 1\*~

The man lifted his head as he saw a young woman walk into the tavern. The young woman is short with long strawberry-blond hair, green halter top on with a brown skirt, boots, and a staff. She gazed around and then walked up to the bar beside the man.

"What's your name beautiful?"

The young woman turned her head to the man. "Gabrielle. Yours?"

He smiled. "Mark." He shifted a little against the bar. "Never seen you here before."

Gabrielle looked away. "No, just passing through the area."

"Really? For how long?"

The bard shrugged her shoulders. "Just for a candlemark or two."

Mark mumbled under his breath, "Pity." He then smiled warmly. "Where you headed to?"

"Um, east." Gabrielle turned around and leaned against the bar, her eyes fixed on the door to the tavern.

"Visiting family?"

The bard averted her eyes away from the door to the man. She noticed him to be older than her, bit taller with a large bone structure and brown eyes. She didn't like him one bit. "Sort of."

"What's sort of?" Mark had a grin and winked at her.

"Sort of is sort of." Gabrielle grinned back then quickly wiped the grin away feeling as if she revealed herself too much.

"Interesting." Mark was leaning against the bar on his right side to face the young woman. "Where you from?"

"Poteidaia."

Mark nodded a few times. "I've heard of the place. Big into shepherding right?"

The bard smiled. "Poteidaia is." She then sighed. "You from here?"

"Yup, born and bread here." Mark then took a deep breath. "So... you traveling alone?"

Gabrielle shook her head. "No." As soon as she said that, Gabrielle saw a tall, dark, and dangerous female warrior walk into the tavern. Her emerald eyes stayed pin on the woman watching her sit down at a table in the corner.

"Your friend?"

The bard looked to Mark. "Something like that." She then smiled. "I have to go."

The man sigh, his left arm came up to grasp Gabrielle's closes arm. "Stay here for a minute or two. Your... friend can wait."

"No, she can't." Gabrielle brought up her right hand leaving her staff to lean against the bar. With her right hand she lifted the man's hand off her arm. "She'll get angry to say the least." She dropped his arm.

Mark stood up from the bar's side. "And why is that? It's not like she's your woman or something."

The small woman also stood up from the bar with her staff in her right hand. "Actually we're..."

"You're what?"

"We're... well we're girlfriends." *Oh gods!* Gabrielle groaned inwardly at her answer. She just dug herself a hole.

Mark started to laugh. "Sure, sure. I bet she doesn't even know you."

Gabrielle's grip on her staff just tightened. "She does... all to well."

The man laughed again. "Uh huh. Come on I'll show you a good time." He reached up with both his hands to Gabrielle's shoulders.

The young woman stepped back. "Excuse me." She stalked off going through the tavern, she could sense the man's eyes on her. Gabrielle spotted her friend and smiled to her sheepishly.

Xena saw her best friend coming, she arched an eyebrow in question with the look she was receiving from Gabrielle. She watched as Gabrielle came up and dropped her staff to the table. Then well, the next thing that happened went quickly and surprisingly.

Gabrielle sat in Xena's lap, facing her while straddling in the warrior's lap. She'd then

brought her right hand up behind the older woman's head and quickly pulled her in for a long passionate kiss.

The Warrior Princess though, she went with it, not sure what else to do. Her eyes slowly opened back up as her friend pulled back from the kiss. Xena then narrowed her eyes and her voice came out low and angry. "Gabrielle, what in Hades do you think you're-"

"Xena wait, I can explain." Gabrielle smiled hoping it would calm the warrior.

Xena took a deep breath and let it out slowly. "Start explaining."

"Okay, see that man over there by the bar?"

"The one you were standing by earlier?"

Gabrielle tightened her hands around the other woman's back. "Yeah, that's Mark."

"And Mark has to do with *this* because?"

"Well..." The bard shifted uncomfortably for a moment. "He was hitting on me and then you came in. So I was about to come over here but he stopped me. Then he said I didn't know you and I said I did."

The older woman's eyes narrowed more. "Gabrielle you're still not telling me why you're in my lap and kissing me."

"Right." The small woman smiled sheepishly. "Well I kinda... well I told him we're girlfriends."

"Gabrielle." Xena's tone was angry filled and loud.

Gabrielle quickly ducked in to capture her friend's lips again. She tried to show she was sorry in the kiss, she just hoped it would help. Slowly she pulled back with her eyes slightly showing fear. "Xena, don't get angry. Please?"

The warrior closed her eyes and sighed. Between the two kisses and the fact it's just Gabrielle, she couldn't get angry with her. Her eyes opened again. "You owe me big."

The bard smiled. "Thank you."

"Uh huh." Xena then brought her hands to her friend's sides. "Come here."

The Amazon Queen followed the physical command and turned around and let her back rest into Xena's body. She felt the warrior's arms circle around her stomach and Gabrielle dropped her head against her friend's shoulder. Her eyes drifted over to the bar to see Mark staring at the pair, she closed her eyes. "Gods, he's still watching."

"He'll leave... one way or another."

"Xena?"

"Mmm?"

"Sorry." She slowly opened her eyes.

The warrior sighed again. "It's okay. Just relax till he leaves huh?"

"Yeah." Gabrielle had her hands resting over top of her friend's hands. "We should do this more often."

"Gabrielle." Warning.

The bard chuckled. "I was kidding." She took in a huge breath. "Next time we need to pick a better spot to meet."

Xena chuckled. "To say the least."

"Could have been worse Xena."

"Uh huh." She grinned. "I could have been kissed by a centaur."

"Xena, gods am I that bad of a kisser?" That's when the small female felt her friend stiffen up then relax again. She had to wonder about that one.

"I didn't say that Gabrielle." Xena looked to the bar to still see the man there.

"Well... it's good for you to get kissed by a woman once in a while."

The older woman closed her eyes. *If you only knew Gabrielle.* Xena slowly opened her eyes again and she responded. "Just end it right there Gabrielle."

The bard chuckled. "Oh boy, bad topic huh?"

For an answer the warrior tightened her arms really hard against the small woman's stomach.

Gabrielle coughed then grinned. "Guess that's my answer." She closed her eyes. "Tell me when he leaves."

"Trust me I will." Xena then looked over to Mark. He was already staring at her. She narrowed her eyes to slits. That seemed to do something since the man stood up from the bar and walked out of the tavern. "He's gone."

The small woman opened her eyes and looked over to the bar to see the man gone. "Great." She stood up as Xena released her. Gabrielle snatched her staff off the table and turned around to Xena. "You ready?"

The Warrior Princess slowly stood up. "Yup. Let's go."

Gabrielle nodded and turned around, she walked to the door of the tavern with her friend following behind.

As soon as they left the tavern and started walking away, Mark came around the corner of the tavern. He grinned at the two women walking together. "Good luck friend." He shook his head then walked off.

Xena and Gabrielle walked through the village together and then to the road. Neither said anything to each other feeling such an awkwardness.

The Amazon Queen gazed up to her friend beside her. "So how much do I owe you?"

The warrior turned her head to Gabrielle. "A lot." Her eyes then narrowed. "Even more since you played a trick on me."

Gabrielle stopped walking. "What?"

Xena had stopped walking, her arms going against her chest. "I saw you talking to that man, Mark, before you went into the tavern."

The bard averted her gaze away then looked back to her best friend. "I'm sorry." Her voice was a low whisper.

"Uh huh. Why?"

Gabrielle's left hand went up to her hip as her eyes harden. "Because I wanted to find out what your feelings are for me Xena, that's why. I can never figure it out myself." She started to walk again. But Xena's right hand came out to grab her and stop her.

"What's that supposed to mean Gabrielle?"

The small woman sighed. "It means you're so damn blunt with everything but your emotions. Hades if I can count on you to tell me."

"Why didn't you ask?"

"Xena, are you serious? Would you really tell me?"

The warrior stared at her friend. She couldn't answer.

The bard sighed and shook her head. "Exactly." She pulled her arm free. "Xena I'm so sick of you playing games with me."

"What?" Xena furrowed her eyebrows, she took a step closer to Gabrielle. "How in Tartarus do I play games?"

"Gods Xena, that's all you do with me." The bard sighed, she could feel her eyes burning. "First you die and then you kiss me in some dreamscape alternate world thing. Then a few days later you're flirting with me while we're trying to stop a giant and army."

"Oh like you weren't flirting right back Gabrielle?"

"Hades Xena, I did because I thought I could get you to make a move. Oh but you didn't. I'm so sick of it all Xena. I don't know whether you're coming or going. One day I feel close to you then the next I feel leagues away. But you know what I'm really sick of Xena? I'm sick of fighting life alone. I'm tired of walking down this path separately." She started to let a few tears come down her cheek. "Even more when the one person I want to spend my life is right beside me but yet so far out of reach." Gabrielle shook her head. "Just... ah." She turned forward and started walking off with her head hung low.

The warrior stood there completely stunned. She stared at her friend who kept walking down the road by herself. Xena didn't know what to think. But one thing she knew for sure, she's in-love with her best friend and her best friend with her. That's all that mattered. So that led Xena to break out into a fast sprint after the smaller woman.

"Gabrielle?"

The bard stopped and turned around with red eyes. "Yeah?"

Xena came up to her friend and grasped the small woman's shoulders. "Do I get a voice in this?"

Gabrielle nodded.

The warrior smiled. "Thank you." She then went serious. "Look, I'm sorry for everything. You're right, I have been jerking you around with our relationship. But it isn't easy for me and well... I'm scared."

"Scared of what Xena?"

The older woman dropped her hands from the other woman's shoulders. "Of you getting hurt."

Gabrielle sighed. "Xena, don't you think I've considered that? I'm already in a lot of trouble just being your friend." She chuckled then was serious. "And getting hurt by you, I'll take that anytime then being separate from you. I don't... I don't feel like all of me is here without you." Her left hand was over her chest. She then sighed and dropped her hand back down and lowered her head.

Xena nodded a few times. Her right hand came down to lift Gabrielle's head, she stared into her friend's eyes. "Gabrielle, what matters to you in the end?"

"You Xena, you."

The warrior smiled. "I know and you only matter to me. It's that simple."

Very slowly a warm smile formed on Gabrielle's lips. Her eyes softened to an incredible degree.

Xena's own eyes were warm and there were no walls in her eyes. There was nothing but love. Slowly she leaned down to capture her friend's lips again in a gentle kiss. After she pulled back she quietly whispered. "I love you Gabrielle."

The bard smiled. "I love you too." She paused. "Xena?"

"Yeah?"

"Are we..." Gabrielle was scared if she asked Xena might react badly.

"Soulmates?" The older woman grinned. "I know it."

The Amazon Queen chuckled. "Me too." She then reached up to pull her warrior's head back down for another kiss.

In the middle of the kiss, Xena brought her right hand to her chakram.

Slowly Gabrielle pulled back but with her forehead resting against Xena's. "How many?"

"Six, three to the right, two on the road, and one on the left."

The bard groaned as she closed her eyes then opened them again. "It would happen."

The Warrior Princess grinned. "Never a dull moment around you."

"Me? Try you Xena." She then grinned. "These six thugs are gonna regret this so much."

"Oh count on it."

Gabrielle turned around with her staff up in fighting stance. Xena stepped up beside her with her chakram up. The soulmates then were in action taking out three sorry thugs. We just watched two soulmates finally stopped walking so close to each other and saw them finally come together. They are one.

The End