

A to Xena

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Teaser: This is an XWP tale of no particular timeframe. Our two heroines are off on a mission to deliver an important and precious document to Athens. A sort of fore runner to Fed-X (maybe the 'X' really stands for Xena!) Anywho... Our girls get into a playful spat and have a few laughs and a little adventure along the way.

Maintext: Some obligatory campfire goings on here and make out scenes twixt our two best girls (nothing too blue though).

Violence: Usual XWP stuff.

Disclaimer: The English language was harmed during the writing of this scroll.

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BURP!

"Charming." Gabrielle rolled her green eyes in mock disgust.

"What?" Xena proffered her most innocent expression.

"Oh, I see, you meant it to be a compliment." The young bard said sardonically.

"It's customary in some parts of the known world, it expresses ones satedness." Xena tried to wax lyrical.

"Hah! Now you're making up words."

"*Satedness*." Repeated the tall warrior. "That is so a word. It means to be satisfied and full, from the verb to be sated or satiated." She smugly gave her own definition as she took another large bite from the succulent leg of lamb Gabrielle had slow roasted over their camp fire.

"We'll see about that." Gabrielle set her plate of chops and vegetables aside, got up and strode purposefully over to their saddle bags rummaging and muttering to herself as she went.

Xena looked on shaking her head in exasperation. They had taken on the job of delivering the first draft of Philapous' so called 'dictionary' to Athens. It was to be the star attraction at the grand opening of the cities first public library. Gabrielle had been obsessed with picking up on every utterance from her travelling companion, looking up the word and dissecting its meaning; though there were not that many to choose from this being Xena and all.

"See, it's not in here." She waved the priceless parchment in front of Xena as proof no such word existed. "Do you honestly think Philapous could possibly be wrong?" It was Xena's turn to roll her eyes now as Gabrielle continued her tirade. "And that perhaps he has wasted a lifetime studying languages and dialects from Britannia to Jappa when he should have just hired you to write this for him?" The diminutive blond bard was almost indignant to her warrior.

"Gabrielle," Xena countered trying not to let her little joke out of the bag. "All I'm saying is there are

hundreds of thousands of words and it stands to reason he can't possibly have listed them all. Just because it isn't in that damn rag doesn't mean it's not a word." She added feigning her annoyance to good effect.

Xena it has to be said was trying to provoke the young woman into a frenzy and it was working a treat. All day she had purposefully used words she knew to either be completely bogus or so obscure as to be contentious. And Gabrielle took the bait every time.

The ex-warlord picked the last of the meat off the bone and tossed it into the fire. "That was *splendiferous*."

Gabrielle's jaw tightened. "I see what you're doing. You're just trying to annoy me. Well you know what, I'm on to you Warrior Princess. And from now on I'm simply going to ignore your silly made up words."

She carefully placed the 'Sa' section of the document back in its rightful place and sat back down to finish her meal. They ate in relative silence after that, each casting knowing sideways glances at the other. This wasn't over, not by a long chalk.

Xena removed her bracers and placed them with her armour before snuggling under the thick furs next to Gabrielle. She spooned her long lithe frame against her soul mate. Her soft warm lips feathered the smaller woman's ear as her hot breath caressed the tantalizing flesh sending waves of desire coursing through them both. Xena then whispered deeply into the delicate shell "You know, I bet he's missed out a few *dirty* words as well."

Gabrielle suddenly sat bolt upright. "This is really going to be a long and painful mission isn't it?"

"Oh yeah" the dark warrior suggestively wiggled her eyebrows, and the pair sank back down together in the soft fur and made slow and passionate love to each other.

Afterwards... "Zeus's left nut! - Just take my word for it 'come' and 'cum' are not spelled the same! I'm the Bard remember, and I should know." Gabrielle flung the bedroll back and stalked off into the bushes for a pee.

"Don't you *dare* get that damn dictionary out!" Xena yelled as Gabrielle disappeared beyond the line of trees.

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They broke camp at dawn and started out on the week long journey to Athens. Argo laden with their gear plodded obediently as the two women walked along side in comparative silence. Gabrielle was not a morning person, Xena usually used this quiet time to organise her thoughts and review their mission plans. The sun was beginning its ascent as the dawn chorus began bursting into life all around them.

They had travelled just a few leagues along the Carthage road when, Xena, ever vigilant, could sense they were not entirely alone. Gabrielle caught the warriors signal for a suspected ambush and they moved casually to ready their weapons.

As if on cue 12 burley thugs leapt out from the thick bushes at the side of the road and surrounded them.

"Hello boys, out for some early morning shenanigans?" Drawled the tall warrior with well practiced indifference to the peril.

Had Xena swallowed that damn dictionary or something?! Gabrielle shot her a puzzled look at her strange turn of phrase.

"Just give us what we want and we'll spare your miserable lives." Growled their grimy leader.

"I'm sorry but you'll have to be a little more specific?" Xena was in full warrior mode but maintained her

apathetic stance and attitude.

"Don't play games Xena, we know about your mission." Spat the ugly brute.

"Well then, say *please* and I'll think about it." She cocked her head to one side and donned a feral grin.

"Arrrgggghhh" The leader lunged at Xena with all his might; the warrior casually drew her sword and swiftly despatched the big oaf with ease as the rest of the gang joined in. Gabrielle drew her sais and instantly joined in the mêlée. Bodies flew in all directions. As quickly as it had started the fight had ceased leaving 2 dead and the rest injured or running for their lives.

Xena pinched one of the henchmen as he was trying to recover his footing. He dropped like a stone to his knees gagging for his sorry life.

"Alright, would you mind telling me what in Tarterus you morons want with a dictionary?" Threatened the ex Destroyer of Nations.

"P-P-Plagero..." The man choked.

"Who's Plagero?" Xena jabbed him painfully in the neck.

"He wants... to destroy it." The man cried out in agony his arms flailing uselessly against the deadly pressure.

"And where exactly is this Plagero?"

"Ag-Agador." He gagged.

Xena released the pinch and gave him a swift hard blow on the jaw which knocked him out cold.

"I guess this means a slight detour to Agador then?" Gabrielle added ruefully.

"You bet ya." Xena examined the bodies of the fallen thugs to see if there were any other clues to this attack. They were dressed in similar garb which meant they were probably all part of the same organised gang and not a bunch of rag tag mercenaries. One of the men wore a token around his neck with a scroll etched in the silver metal. She snatched the piece from around the dead mans throat and tucked it between her breasts for *very* safe keeping (tee, he). They cleared up the mess and were soon on the road again heading towards Agador.

"I think I've heard of this Plagero." Gabrielle thought hard for a moment as to where she had come across the name. "That's it! The Academy, I remember seeing some of his scrolls there. They were mainly factual about people, places and things of great historical importance."

"So he's some sort of Bard?"

"Yes, but I don't see why a man of such great intellect would want to destroy something like Philapouses dictionary."

"Well, I guess we're going to find out."

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It was almost nightfall when the two agents reached the outskirts of the town of Agador. They found a secluded spot to stash their gear and the precious dictionary. Xena changed into a less conspicuous outfit of flannel shirt and buck skin trousers so as not to draw attention to her presence. The pair then headed off into town to see what they could find out.

The local tavern was pretty much your run of the mill dank flea pit, and the women's first port of call. Gabrielle's stomach was making its usual presence heard above the din so the pair took a seat in the corner of the large open room and ordered some food and ale.

Agador was a large market town and one of the major trade centres outside of Athens and Thessaly. It played host to all sorts of visitors and Xena was no stranger to this place in her former warlord days. They sat and watched from their discrete vantage point all sorts of people coming and going.

Gabrielle polished off a whole chicken to herself as Xena looked on in amusement at her partners ability to consume vast quantities of food. "You know," she chewed and then swallowed a mouthful of ale "these sort of places really do serve the best food."

Xena simply smirked and scanned round the room as she took a large draught from her mug. Just then one of the thugs from the morning ambush walked in and made his way up to the bar. Xena eyed the goon as he ordered a drink, soon after two other men she had not seen before joined him. They greeted the thug and talked conspiratorially. Even with Xena's acute hearing it was impossible to make out what they were saying above the noise of the busy tavern. Then suddenly the three of them left together.

"That's our cue." Xena quickly rose from her seat to follow the men.

Gabrielle sighed out loud to herself "You know, just once I'd like to stay for desert." She threw a few dinars on the table and moved to catch up.

Xena caught sight of the men as they disappeared down an alleyway and followed stealthily in the shadows of the empty market stalls. She silently watched and listened from around the corner. Once in the relative cover of the dark passageway, the two strangers suddenly turned and murdered the gang member and then hurriedly walked back toward where Xena and Gabrielle were spying.

There was no time to hide so Xena did the next best thing and roughly pushed Gabrielle up against the wall and proceeded to kiss her passionately. The bard normally would not have complained but the surprise move made her struggle slightly giving the appearance of a young maiden being ravaged against her will. In this town that sort of thing passed for normal so they were largely ignored as the two men passed.

"Gods!" Gabrielle took a deep breath as Xena released her lips to kiss and lick her tender neck.

"Where are they going." Xena whispered urgently into the smaller woman's ear.

"Wh-What?" Gabrielle could barely comprehend the question her wits were completely addled.

"For gods sake Gabrielle look at where they're going!" She whispered more loudly to bring the bard back to her senses.

"Oh, erm they're getting on horses and... aaah." The bard was trying hard to focus.

"And?"

"Ah they're riding out of town, t-to the north." Gabrielle stammered.

Xena broke the clinch "C'mon we have to get Argo."

"Yes, get Argo, right." *Breathe bard, breathe!*

The tracks were hard to follow in the half moonlight but it wasn't long before the two women caught up with their quarry.

Eventually they were led to a walled compound inside which stood a large stone built house. They dismounted silently and watched as the two men were let in through very grand iron gates.

"This must be where Plagero lives, look there's the same scroll design on the gates as on the token you've got." Gabrielle observed as they sneaked through the scrub to get a closer look.

"Yeah, he must be some hot shot to live in a place like this." Xena was weighing up the situation. "For a bard he sure has a lot of protection." She noted several guards roaming the compound and gods knows how many more inside. Xena quickly changed back into her leather battledress and armour.

"Maybe he's made a few enemies with his scrolls." Gabrielle supposed.

"Well he's just earned two more with that attempt his goons made on us this morning."

They scoped all around the compound and eventually decided the rear of the property was the least risky. Xena swiftly climbed the wall with Gabrielle close at heel, they quietly plopped over the other side straight into a melon patch.

"Hades balls." Cursed Xena under her breath as she landed on and burst a particularly large watermelon.

"Ssshhh." Giggled Gabrielle as they both crept semi-noiselessly (save Xena's squelching boots) up to the house past a dozing guard.

Xena pried open a downstairs window and the pair slipped in thus far un-detected. Once inside it was dark cool and quiet. They waited a few moments until their eyes adjusted to the darkness. The room appeared to be a bedroom, adorned lavishly with fine art and furniture.

Just then they heard voices and footsteps outside the door. The pair quickly hid under the large four poster bed. The heavy wooden bedroom door creaked open and bright torchlight streamed in from the aperture. There was movement as someone walked around the room and then left again. The women waited a few moments and Xena was about to get up when suddenly the door burst open and a stream of footsteps flooded into the room.

"This doesn't sound too good." Xena murmured ominously.

"All right, come out!" Called a gruff voice from somewhere close by.

"Better do as the man says Gabrielle." She sighed resignedly.

The two intruders were hauled out from under the bed at knife point to be confronted by at least a dozen more guards and a funny looking man dressed in a silk night robe.

"Xena, how good of you to leave your wet footprints all over my bedroom floor." The funny little man leered at his captives. "And of course your faithful companion Gabrielle, The Battling Bard Of Potedeia no less. It's a great honour to finally meet the legendary duo."

"Alright Plagero enough of the getting to know ya chit chat, let's cut to the chase. What the Hades do you want with the dictionary?"

"Straight to the point, how refreshing." He smirked and motioned for one of his henchmen to disarm the two warriors.

Xena eyed the guard as he picked her Chakram from the hook on her hip. He gulped as the ice blue glare burned into him. "I'll be collecting that back from you later." She snarled.

"Xena, Xena, Xena you're in no position to threaten anyone." He snapped his fingers and four men grabbed

hold of Gabrielle and bundled her out of the room kicking and yelling all sorts of obscenities as she went. *Good girl*, thought Xena as she could hear Gabrielle clearly as to get a fix on her location.

"Now, let me discuss the whereabouts of the dictionary with you, I'm sure you are keen to know my interest in such an item, but that is of little significance to me." He stepped forward to make his point. "But what is of major significance is you telling me where it is, I'm sure you wouldn't want your *girlfriend* to suffer more than absolutely necessary."

"Alright, I'll let you have it." In a lightning manoeuvre Xena snatched the blade out of the guards hands standing next to her; at the same time she grabbed Plagero around his scrawny neck and pressed the blade firmly against the sorry little mans pounding jugular.

"Now, you fella's back off or I'll slice this pigs throat." She pressed the blade even further until a trickle of blood began to appear.

"D-Do as she says." Plagero was suddenly being very co-operative.

"Good, now one of you monkeys can go get my friend." Xena ordered and Plagero again nodded to one of his men to do as he was told.

"Now, whilst I'm waiting why don't you give me a nice long monologue detailing your evil plan." Sneered the Warrior Princess.

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"So the two men were bitter rivals and Philapous finished his dictionary before Plagero had even got up to the letter T. But that still doesn't explain why he needed a bunch of hired goons to protect him." The bard slipped her hands around the warrior's waist as they rode away from Agador.

"It would seem Plagero had taken cash advances from certain unscrupulous sources in exchange for a share in the profits from his dictionaries publication. Philapous beat him to it though and essentially his work was worthless unless he could get his published first. He couldn't risk word getting out to his investors that he was beaten to it."

"Hey Gabrielle." Xena spoke after a few moments.

"Hmm?" The bard was busy contemplating this latest escapade.

"Did I ever tell you your eyes were a fabulous shade of opudilidoc green?"

"No, I don't believe you did. Have I ever told you your eyes are a beautiful tone of azulitron blue?"

And the two lovers disappeared over the horizon chuckling as they embarked on another adventure together.

The End