

"THE RETURNED"

Written by
Katherine Fugate

CAST

Lucy Lawless...Xena
Renee O'Connor...Gabrielle

Victoria Pratt...Cyane
Alexandra Tydings...Aphrodite
Adrienne Wilkinson...Eve/Livia

Katherine Fugate...Herself
Steven Sears...Henry Langston

GUEST STARS

Crystal Chappell...Herself
Kim Delaney...Claudia Joy Holden
Frances Fisher...Lucille Langston
Jason George...Agent Martin Bellamy
Sally Pressman...Roxy LeBlanc

Performed at:

Xena Convention 20th Anniversary:
"The Final Journey"
Burbank, California

February 21, 2015

THE RETURNED : PRESET LIST

STAGE:

Empty set. Remove as much as possible for stage.

IN HOUSE: Add/Reserve empty seat in aisle for Katherine.

SOUND:

Note: Sound Board can only run 8 total mics at a time.

PRESET: DSL, DSR, DSC mic stands with mics. (3).

MIC'd or HEADSETS: Lucy, Renee, Frances, Jason. (4)

HAND HELD MIC: Katherine. (1)

PROPS:

1 CUE CARD: Mary D. Note: Side 1 Arcadia/Side 2 Ancient Greece.

COP BADGE IN CLIP ON: Jason George.

MUSIC:

Ipod Playlist: "XENA2015." Cued in Order.

NOTE TO SOUND OPERATOR: FIRST and LAST SOUND CUE is the Xena Theme Song used by Creation. Then goes into Playlist per script.

NOTE TO ACTORS: All actors in script by REAL NAME not CHARACTER NAME. HOLD for APPLAUSE: Many unexpected insider jokes and lines.

Tone is comedy one moment, drama the next. Please play it straight. Give the audience their catharsis, their emotional moment.

THIS IS OUR LAST PLAY.

THANK YOU FOR GIVING YOUR HEART AND TALENT TO THOSE

WHO HAVE GIVEN US SO MUCH.

"THE RETURNED"

STAGE DIMS.

CREATION MUSIC CUE: XENA THEME SONG FROM CREATION starts as it does for every Guest intro at the convention.

Waiting for the Guest Star to enter Center Stage.

CREATION MUSIC CUE: XENA THEME ABRUPTLY STOPS PLAYING.

BEAT. As audience wonders what is up.

PLAYLIST MUSIC CUE: SONG 1 RESURRECTION THEME "Believe In Me" by Blake Neely.

BEAT. LET SONG BUILD. LOUD. EERIE.

SCENE ONE: ARCADIA

ENTER CENTER STAGE: FRANCES FISHER as LUCILLE LANGSTON.

Frances takes a few steps forward, then stands dead center stage. STAND STILL AND HOLD.

ENTER DSR: MARY D walks across stage from DSR to DSL carrying CUE CARD showing Side 1 to AUDIENCE:

SIDE 1: ARCADIA, MISSOURI. PRESENT DAY.

EXIT DSL: MARY D exits.

PLAYLIST MUSIC CUE: ON MARY D EXITS, FADE OUT RESURRECTION THEME SONG.

LIGHTS UP TO PERFORMANCE LEVEL. LIVE ACTION.

ENTER DSR: JASON GEORGE as AGENT MARTIN BELLAMY.

Excited, Jason rushes up to Frances.

JASON GEORGE

Lucille! I just came back from the dead!

FRANCES FISHER

Really? How many times has that been now, Agent Bellamy? Five? Six? This dying and coming back to life is becoming a bit of a habit.

JASON GEORGE

I met someone there. She can save Arcadia. I have asked her to be one of the Returned.

FRANCES FISHER

Surely you watched our season finale? Every dead person in the world just came back to life again.

(play direct to audience)

Who could possibly be left to Return from the dead?

JASON GEORGE

She's some sort of -- princess. In leather.

FRANCES FISHER

...I think I see where this is going now.

JASON GEORGE

It's as if she came from another time. Of ancient gods, warlords and kings. The power. The passion. The danger. We are a land in turmoil and her courage will change the world!

FRANCES FISHER

Good lord. What are you on?

JASON GEORGE

Listen to me! You die and come back enough times, you realize death is only a door. And when one door closes, another one opens. If I were to imagine heaven, I would imagine a door opening and all those we are meant to be reunited with, would be waiting for us there... And somehow I believe she is the key to all of it.

Jason looks MEANINGFULLY AT CENTER STAGE.

BEAT. As we expect Xena to walk through the doors.

ENTER CENTER STAGE: STEVEN SEARS as HENRY LANGSTON!

Bounds up the stage!

STEVEN SEARS
 Darling it's ME! Your loving
 husband has come back!

Frances stares at dopey Steven, then looks back at Jason:

FRANCES FISHER
 (to JASON)
 Does the Returned have a return
 policy?

STEVEN SEARS
 Oh honey, don't be that way. We've
 been married over 30 years! Who
 else will take care of me?

FRANCES FISHER
 (to Steven)
 If I want something to take care
 of, I'll get a house plant.
 (to Jason)
 Who is this Returned you speak of?
 Because it's surely not *Julian*
 here.

STEVEN SEARS
 Steven! I mean Henry, my name is
 Henry Langston, dammit! Your
 HUSBAND.

But Jason is still staring at the empty center stage door.

JASON GEORGE
 I don't understand. Why is she
 hesitant to Return?

END SCENE

**JASON, STEVEN AND FRANCES GO UPSTAGE, HOLD IN PLACE, DO NOT
 BLOCK CENTER ENTRANCE.**

PLAYLIST MUSIC CUE: SONG #2 HALLELUJAH by k.d. lang.

Beat. Let song build.

ENTER CENTER STAGE: RENEE O'CONNOR as GABRIELLE.

Renee takes several steps forward, then stops DEAD CENTER and
 HOLDS IN PLACE. (Just as Frances did.)

ENTER DSL: MARY D WALKS ACROSS STAGE DSL to DSR showing SIDE 2 OF CUE CARD TO AUDIENCE.

SIDE 2: ANCIENT GREECE. NOT PRESENT DAY.

EXIT: Mary D exits DSR.

PLAYLIST MUSIC CUE: On Mary D exit, FADE OUT HALLELUJAH.

SCENE TWO: ANCIENT GREECE

Renee keeps standing dead center but comes alive.

ENTER DSL: ALEXANDRA TYDINGS, ADRIENNE WILKINSON, VICTORIA PRATT. Join Renee on stage.

ALEXANDRA TYDINGS

(as Aphrodite)

Oh, Gabrielle. Enough with the melancholy. I brought you something to cheer you up!

She pushes Victoria toward Renee:.

ALEXANDRA TYDINGS (CONT'D)

Let me introduce you to Cyane, the Queen of the Amazons. I'm sure you two will have a great deal in common.

RENEE O'CONNOR

(to Adrienne)

You put her up to this, didn't you?

ADRIENNE WILKINSON

Xena would hate it if she thought you were in such pain. You were the light in the darkness for her. Oh, Gabrielle. Place your hand over your heart. Feel it beating? There's a reason you were left behind. The world needs your light.

Victoria is staring at Adrienne as she speaks.

RENEE O'CONNOR

(to Adrienne)

Well, thank you, Eve. That's very moving.

(MORE)

RENEE O'CONNOR (CONT'D)

(turns to Victoria)

And Cyane, I'm sure you're a lovely girl, but I don't want to be fixed up. No offense.

VICTORIA PRATT

No offense taken. In fact, my heart has been captured by...

She slowly turns her head to Adrienne, smiles.

VICTORIA PRATT (CONT'D)

(to Adrienne)

Another.

ADRIENNE WILKINSON

(nervous)

Oh, my.

Adrienne takes a step back, as if she's going to run.

VICTORIA PRATT

Yes, please, run. It's more fun that way...

So Adrienne does. Victoria after her.

EXIT UPSTAGE: ADRIENNE AND VICTORIA HOLD.

Leaving Alex with Renee.

RENEE O'CONNOR

I know you were trying to be kind, Aphrodite. But my heart will always belong to Xena.

ALEXANDRA TYDINGS

(sighs, then)

I suppose I understand.

(suddenly serious)

Power, time, gravity, love. The forces that really kick ass are all invisible, not really logical. If you really believe there is another world waiting for you and Xena. A better world, then finish what you came here to do, learn what you need to learn, so that in the next world, you will be ready to meet her again...

END SCENE

PLAYLIST MUSIC CUE: SONG #3 "WE'LL MEET AGAIN" by She & Him.

EXIT: ALEX GOES UPSTAGE AND HOLDS WITH THE REST.

ONLY RENEE EXITS CENTER STAGE: RENEE STAYS BACKSTAGE OUT OF SIGHT.

LUCY: READY TO ENTER FROM BACK OF HOUSE ENTRANCE MID SCENE.

KATHERINE: READY TO GET IN AISLE SEAT OF HOUSE. LUCY NOTE WHERE KATHERINE IS SITTING.

ENTER DSR: MARY D HOLDS SIDE #1: *Arcadia, Missouri* crosses DSR to DSL.

MUSIC CUE: ON MARY D EXIT, FADE OUT Song #3 "We'll Meet Again."

SCENE THREE: ARCADIA

Jason, Frances, Steven go back downstage.

JASON GEORGE

I don't understand. Why hasn't she
Returned?!

FRANCES FISHER

Because only those souls who are
desperate, emptied and broken,
return to Arcadia.

STEVEN SEARS

Oh. You mean screenwriters.

When Jason, Frances and Steven STOP THEIR SCENE TO NOTICE:

ENTER SCENE: Alex is playing tour guide to a shocked Adrienne and Victoria who walk downstage into scene.

ALEXANDRA TYDINGS

Over here...

ADRIENNE

Where are we?!

ALEXANDRA TYDINGS

Now, Eve-Livia, Livia-Eve - these
hyphenated names!

(MORE)

ALEXANDRA TYDINGS (CONT'D)

- I know you said you wanted to visit "Arcadia" - that mythological place in Ancient Greece where Pan plays his flute and hangs out with naked nymphs and everyone lives in perfect harmony - but I think you'll like this Arcadia even more.

VICTORIA PRATT

I don't know. I like the sound of flutes, naked ladies and living in perfect harmony.

ALEXANDRA TYDINGS

I bet you do. But this is modern-day Arcadia, where they have running water, cell phones and Tampons.

Jason, Frances and Steven confront the three.

JASON GEORGE

Are you Returned?

VICTORIA PRATT

No, we're Amazons.

ALEXANDRA TYDINGS

And a Goddess of Love.

FRANCES FISHER

And he's (to Jason) looking for a princess. This is all getting very strange.

ENTER DSL: CRYSTAL CHAPPELL bounds up to the stage.

Frances looks her up and down.

FRANCES FISHER (CONT'D)

Are you a Returned?

CRYSTAL CHAPPELL

No.

JASON GEORGE

Are you a Amazon?

CRYSTAL CHAPPELL

No.

STEVEN SEARS

Are you available for dinner later?

CRYSTAL CHAPPELL
 NO! But I've been buried alive. A
 drug addict. A Nun who opens a
 circus school. Jugglin' Little Baby
 Jesus was her thing. Oh and I
 Kissed A Girl. Many girls. Way
 more than Katy Perry.

JASON GEORGE
 (to Crystal, mesmerized)
 I'm going off to die now. You
 wanna come with me?

CRYSTAL CHAPPELL
 Sure.

JASON AND CRYSTAL GO BACK UPSTAGE, TURN AROUND, COME RIGHT
 BACK.

JASON GEORGE
 We did it!

CRYSTAL CHAPPELL
 They're both coming back...!

JASON AND CRYSTAL LOOK MEANINGFULLY TO CENTER STAGE. BEAT.

ENTER FROM CENTER STAGE: KIM DELANEY and SALLY PRESSMAN.

Kim and Sally walk down center, join Frances, Jason, Steven
 and Crystal, Adrienne, Alex and Victoria.

JASON GEORGE
 Who are you two?

KIM DELANEY
 I'm Kim Delaney. I played Claudia
 Joy Holden on Army Wives. I died.

SALLY PRESSMAN
 I'm Sally Pressman. I played Roxy
 LeBlanc on Army Wives. I didn't
 die, so I'm not quite sure why I'm
 here.

FRANCES FISHER
 I think there's been a mistake. We
 were expecting someone in leather.

CRYSTAL CHAPPELL
 You said tall, dark and gorgeous!

Crystal gestures up and down at Kim.

PROMPTING KIM, OUT OF NOWHERE, TO TAKE A STEP FORWARD AND LAUNCH INTO A SPEECH AS CLAUDIA JOY:

KIM DELANEY

(as Claudia Joy Holden)

Here we are again at Fort Marshall at a picnic on the 4th of July, Independence Day. As Army Wives, we also serve. And we too are fighting a battle. Not a political one, not a religious one, not a battle of race or gender. But the greatest battle of all...

(Then she breaks Claudia Joy and becomes stronger, different)

The battle for our own soul. I have lived many lives before I was Claudia Joy and if you travel far enough, you will eventually meet yourself again. Before Claudia Joy, I was the warrior. And now I am the warrior again. And I've come to join Xena. You see, I do know who you are looking for.

SALLY PRESSMAN

I am looking for her, too. We all are. Deep down, under the surface, where our real truth lives, we always know. We know who we really are, what we are capable of, the power we've always had. I knew Claudia Joy was a warrior and I know that I am one, too. Xena doesn't have to be alive. She doesn't have to be in this room, to be present. We just have to look within. She is the warrior inside all of us.

PLAYLIST MUSIC CUE: SONG #4: "THE BITCH IS BACK" by ELTON JOHN. CRANK UP LOUD.

Everyone on stage is looking around - confused. Why is that music playing? WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON?

ENTER FROM THE BACK OF THE AUDITORIUM: LUCY LAWLESS.

ALL HEADS TURN AS DOORS BURST OPEN OR SOME REVEAL OF LUCY AS SHE MARCHES DOWN THE MAIN AISLE THROUGH THE AUDIENCE TO THE STAGE. THE GRAND ENTRANCE OF XENA.

NOTE TO LUCY: "THE BITCH IS BACK" MAIN LYRIC is at 55 sec. Try to hit stage and milk chorus. You have 1:10 to 1:15 for entire entrance.

MUSIC CUE: Fade out "Bitch is Back" when Lucy is on stage and in her place.

Lucy stalks the actors on stage, back still to audience.

LUCY TO JASON GEORGE:

LUCY LAWLESS
I told you I wasn't coming back!

LUCY TO FRANCES FISHER:

LUCY LAWLESS (CONT'D)
I liked you in Titanic.

FRANCES FISHER
Really?

LUCY LAWLESS
Yeah. It was okay. Could've used a few more fight scenes.

LUCY TO KIM DELANEY AND SALLY PRESSMAN:

LUCY LAWLESS (CONT'D)
Cheap imitations! I've seen better Xenas and Gabrielles at drag shows.

SMELLING AROUND THE REST:

LUCY LAWLESS (CONT'D)
I know who's behind this! She's around here somewhere. The air is thick with metaphor and potential crucifixion.

Lucy then turns, faces the audience, her first direct reveal.

LUCY LAWLESS (CONT'D)
(faces the audience, asks)
Has anyone seen her? Short, can't be more than about 3 feet tall. Gnome like. Blonde.

LUCY SEES KATHERINE FUGATE IN THE AUDIENCE IN AISLE SEAT.

LUCY LAWLESS (CONT'D)
There you are! GET UP HERE AND TELL ME WHY YOU BROUGHT ME BACK!

Katherine stands with a HANDHELD MIC. SHAKES HER HEAD.

KATHERINE FUGATE
NO!

LUCY LAWLESS
GET UP HERE! NOW!

KATHERINE FUGATE
NO!

LUCY LAWLESS
Fine, stay there! I never liked you, anyway. Why? Because you get one episode in the entire six seasons and you crucify me. If I wasn't in a hurry, I'd do the same to you. Now tell me: Where is Gabrielle?!

KATHERINE FUGATE
(quietly)
She's been waiting for you...

LUCY LOOKS UP AND OUT...LOOKING FOR GABRIELLE.

END SCENE

PLAYLIST MUSIC CUE: SONG #5: "STAY WITH ME" by Sam Smith with Mary J. Blige.

LUCY HOLDS IN PLACE DSC LOOKING OUT TOWARD THE AUDIENCE FOR GABRIELLE.

EXIT EVERYBODY ELSE DRIFTS DELICATELY DSL and DSR OFF STAGE TO THE SIDE, LEAVING LUCY ALONE ON STAGE.

ENTER DSL: MARY D CROSSES, HOLDS SIDE #2: *Ancient Greece*.

RENEE ENTERS FROM BACKSTAGE CENTER. HOLD.

MUSIC CUE: ON MARY D EXIT, FADE OUT Song #5 "STAY WITH ME."

SCENE FOUR - ANCIENT GREECE

Renee steps forward to Lucy, looking at her back. LUCY DOES NOT TURN.

RENEE O'CONNOR
I knew you would come back.

Lucy stays still, but is aware of Renee.

Renee reaches Lucy. They turn to each other.

RENEE O'CONNOR (CONT'D)
What took you so long?

LUCY LAWLESS
I was in the wrong line. I forgot Xena was spelled with an X.

RENEE O'CONNOR
And do we find each other in each lifetime?

LUCY LAWLESS
As many as I could see.

RENEE O'CONNOR
But I've missed you in this one.
Can you stay with me now?

LUCY LAWLESS
I don't think so, Gabrielle. I don't think it works that way.

They look at each other. Bittersweet.

LUCY LAWLESS (CONT'D)
But we are together now. In this moment.

RENEE O'CONNOR
Yes, and the moment is all there is. This moment is eternity.

It is a reference to both Xena and Gabrielle and to the entire community in the conventional hall. Their final goodbye.

LUCY LAWLESS
Remember when I told you everything happens for a reason? I had to lose you again so that I could understand that I will always find you.

RENEE O'CONNOR

So it is true. Our lives are not
our own. We are bound to each
other, past and present, and by
each choice - fear or love, cruelty
or kindness - we create our future.

LUCY LAWLESS

And no matter what happens, in this
lifetime or the next, remember... I
will find you.

**PLAYLIST MUSIC CUE: SONG #6 "BECAUSE YOU LOVED ME" by Celine
Dion.**

LUCY LAWLESS (CONT'D)

(SHOUTS OVER THE MUSIC)

Seriously?! Stop the music! THERE
IS NO WAY THE LAST XENA CONVENTION
WILL END WITH A CELINE DION SONG!

PLAYLIST MUSIC CUE: ABRUPTLY END SONG #6 CELINE DION.

CREATION MUSIC CUE: PLAY "XENA THEME SONG"

ALL ACTORS COME ON STAGE. JOIN HANDS. BOW.

THE END