

## Xena: Warrior Princess - Subtext Virtual Season 7



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## TEASER

FADE IN:

### EXT. WOODS - EVENING

With a loud grunt, Xena knocks the last of a half dozen thugs out with a pommel to the head, and cleans her bloody weapon on his shirt before sticking it back in its scabbard. Gabrielle sheaths her sais and looks over to Xena.

**GABRIELLE**

Is it a full moon or something? That's the fifth group of bandits that's attacked us in the past two days!



Xena finishes checking the bandit leader for any identifying badges or clothing, and then stands.

**XENA**

Common thugs. They're probably making their way down from the mountains before the snows hit.

**GABRIELLE**

And we just keep getting in their way?

**XENA**

Looks like it.

**GABRIELLE**

Well, it's not like I'm not all for keeping my skills up, Xena, but maybe we could start moving away from the mountains?

Xena smiles.

**XENA**

Sure. We don't really have anywhere to be at the moment.



**GABRIELLE**

*(thoughtfully)*

You know, when you say things like that, mysterious messengers from distant lands have a habit of popping up unexpectedly.

Chuckling, Xena wraps her arm around Gabrielle's shoulder as they continue down the road.

**DISSOLVE TO:**

**EXT. CAMP – NIGHT**

Xena and Gabrielle have set up camp for the night. The fire is banked and their bedroll is spread over the soft grass. Gabrielle is sitting on the furs, the straps of her top hanging off of her shoulders. Xena kneels behind her, kneading Gabrielle's shoulders with firm hands.

Gabrielle groans loudly as Xena loosens a particularly painful knot behind her shoulder blade.

**XENA**

Better?



**GABRIELLE**

Much. Those hands of yours are pure magic.

**XENA**

*(smirking)*

I have **many** skills.

Unseen by Xena, Gabrielle's eyes twinkle.

**GABRIELLE**

Skills, huh? Talk. Talk. Talk.  
In fact, all talk and no kissing makes Xena of Amph...HEY!

Xena pinches Gabrielle on the bottom hard enough cause her to shoot to her feet. Then, in a lightning move, Xena scoops her into her arms and settles them both on their furs.

**XENA**

*(sighing dramatically)*

Do I have to demonstrate kissing **again**, Gabrielle? If you'd have only practiced on people instead of goats when you were a kid, no pun intended....

**GABRIELLE**

*(gasping)*  
Goats?!



She playfully tugs on Xena's hair, biting her lip to keep a smile off her face.

**GABRIELLE**

*(Cont'd)*

That's it. No kissing for  
you, Warrior Princess.

Xena is trying to kiss Gabrielle, who playfully evades her lips.

**XENA**

C'mon Gabrielle. You know you want to.  
BAAAAAAAAA. BAAAAAAAAA....

Both women burst out laughing but stop instantly when they hear a noise in the trees off to their left. They look at one another. Xena nods. Gabrielle deliberately pulls the fur cover over her reclining form, and Xena slips silently into the woods.

A moment later, SIX SHABBILY DRESSED FIGURES enter the camp taking care to be as quiet as possible, which in truth isn't very quiet at all.

Three move to the left, two to the right. The sixth heads directly for the bedroll. Crouching down, the figure touches Gabrielle's scroll case, which lies less than an inch from the furs.

Rough fingers fumble with the clasp, only to be pushed away as Gabrielle flings the fur away from her body and rolls to her feet, sais already in her hands.



Gasping, the figure stumbles backward, alerting the others, who turn and draw their own weapons: rough made spears, a stone axe and a sling. They don't have a metal weapon between them.

The intruders freeze like statues when the night's silence is broken by the unmistakable sound of a long sword, being drawn slowly, deliberately from its sheath.

Gabrielle smiles brightly.

**GABRIELLE**

Now, I know what you're thinking.  
There are six of you and only two of us.  
But you need to ask yourself something.  
(beat)

Are you really in the mood to  
tangle with the Warrior Princess?

Xena rolls her eyes.

Six jaws audibly drop.

**GABRIELLE**

(Cont'd)

I didn't think so. If you drop your weapons,  
though, I think I just might be able to  
convince her to go easy on you.

Six weapons fall immediately to the ground. Satisfied, Gabrielle lowers her sais.

**GABRIELLE**

(Cont'd)

Come closer to the fire.  
I want to see your faces.

All fight gone from them, the six figures obediently shuffle closer to the fire. The light displays the faces of six grimy, weary, and very young women. Gabrielle looks over their clothing, then back up to their faces. Her eyes widen.



**GABRIELLE**

(Cont'd)

You're Amazons.

**FADE OUT.**

**END TEASER**

## ACT ONE

FADE IN:

### EXT. CAMP - NIGHT

The six amazons are sitting, cross-legged, in a row, watching as Xena and Gabrielle pace back and forth in front of them in opposite directions. They try to follow them, but the opposing directions make it difficult and they look like they're experiencing spasms of some type. Xena and Gabrielle look to each other. Xena pauses, lifts her hand to say something, then drops it and shakes her head. They go back to their pacing.

**XENA**

So, let me get this straight. You're on your Rite of Passage journey, and some how you got turned around and ended up here?



The apparent leader of the group, ESME stands slowly.

**ESME**

Yes, we were to complete several tasks, then return to the village.

Another girl moves to her knees and shoots the smallest girl on the end a dirty look.

**SHIRI**

But **somebody** got us lost.



The smallest girl drops her eyes immediately. Xena and Gabrielle exchange looks. Then Xena points to a third girl.

**XENA**

What's your name?

The girl looks up and smiles.

**GIRL**

Dori.

Xena and Gabrielle look at each other, twin brows raise as they shake off the feeling they've heard that name somewhere before.



Gabrielle kneels by yet another girl.

**GABRIELLE**

And you are?

**GIRL FIVE**

Patia

The fifth in the group stands up and sticks out her chest.

**GIRL SIX**

I'm Nesha. I'm the hunter.

Xena crosses her arms and looks down.

**XENA**

Really? And tell me, mighty hunter... are you eating well?



**SHIRI**

Oh yeah, she can trap a mean carrot.

Gabrielle stifles a snicker and lays her hand on the last girl's knee.

**GABRIELLE**

What's your name?

**GIRL THREE**

*(quietly)*

They call me Jinx.

**GABRIELLE**

Jinx? Why do they call you that?

**ESME**

Because she is. This is her third time out. All the other groups failed because **she** jinxed them.

**AMAZONS**

Yeah!

**SHIRI**

*(morosely)*

Our group got stuck with her.

Gabrielle rises, obviously not happy.

**GABRIELLE**

How can you say that about a sister? You call yourselves Amazons? Amazons take care of each other. They help protect those weaker than themselves and they don't make fun of each other.



**NESHA**

But she got us lost!

**XENA**

*(eyeing Nesha)*

And you've been doing such a fine job of providing for your sisters?

Nesha's eyes drop, unable to meet Xena's gaze.

**NESHA**

No, Ma'am.

Gabrielle takes Xena by the arm and draws her away so that they can talk privately.

**GABRIELLE**

Ma'am. Heh. That was cute.





Xena gives her the 'look' and motions for her to get on with whatever it is she wants to say.

**GABRIELLE**

*(Cont'd)*

Xena, we have to help these girls.

**XENA**

No. We don't.



Gabrielle looks shocked.

**GABRIELLE**

Of course we do, Xena.  
Did you see them?

Gabrielle gestures to the small group of Amazons, huddling around the fire for warmth.

**GABRIELLE**

*(Cont'd)*

I'm surprised they've made it even this  
far without being hurt, or even killed.  
We can't go ten paces ourselves without  
running into someone wanting to rob us...

*(beat)*

... or worse. We can't leave  
them on their own like this.

**XENA**

Yes, we can. We need to.

*(beat)*

Gabrielle, You know Amazons have been  
sending their daughters out on quests like  
these since they formed their Nation. It's a  
Rite every Amazon must go through to be  
seen as an adult in the eyes of the tribe.  
If we interfere....

**GABRIELLE**

But they're so young....

Xena smiles, giving Gabrielle an affectionate hip-bump.

**XENA**

You were that young once too, you know.

**GABRIELLE**

Yeah, and look what happened to me. Ran away from home tagging along after a reformed warlord who made it plain that she didn't want **my** company.

*(beat)*

Xena, I couldn't even start a fire. What do you think would have happened to me if you hadn't taken me in?



Gabrielle looks up at Xena, knowing by the softening in her partner's eyes that her words are having their intended effect.

**GABRIELLE**

*(Cont'd)*

And I don't think I have to remind you that I was a few years **older** than these girls.

Knowing she's been soundly beaten, Xena can only shake her head.

Gabrielle smiles, triumphant. Going to her toes, she presses a kiss to Xena's cheek.

**GABRIELLE**

*(Cont'd)*

Thanks.

**XENA**

Only until we get them back on the right trail and out of the way of these marauders. Then they're on their own.

**GABRIELLE**

*(grinning)*

Deal.

**FADE TO:**

**EXT. CAMP - NIGHT**

The six young Amazons sit around the campfire, ravenously devouring the meal that Gabrielle has prepared. Xena and Gabrielle sit several feet away, staring.

**GABRIELLE**

How long do you think it's been since they've eaten?



**XENA**

A few days.

She waves the air in front of her nose.

**XENA**

*(Cont'd)*

Don't think they've had a bath recently either.



**GABRIELLE**

Why do you think I suggested we sit upwind?

They watch in silence as a fight breaks out over the last of the food; a squabble that ends with the rabbit Gabrielle has cooked flying back into the fire, dish and all. Nesha and Shiri throw themselves at one another and tumble to the ground as the rest of the girls scatter like frightened quail.

Xena gets slowly to her feet, her anger evident in her smooth, silent motions.

**XENA**

*(softly)*

All right, that's enough.

Gabrielle stands as well, looking a bit concerned.

**GABRIELLE**

Xena....



A moment later, the two combatants find themselves dangling several feet off the ground, held in place by a firm hand to the scruff of their necks. Blazing eyes burn into each in turn, forcing them to stare down at the ground far beneath their feet.

**XENA**

Your mothers must be very proud of you both.

**SHIRI**

She started it.

**NESHA**

Did not.

**SHIRI**  
Did too!

**XENA**  
Enough!



She settles both back on their feet with a decided lack of gentleness.

**XENA**  
*(Cont'd)*  
Since you both seem to have energy to spare, let's put it to good use, shall we?

She points to Shiri.

**XENA**  
*(Cont'd)*  
You, clean up this mess. There's a pond right through those trees. I want the dishes and the pan scrubbed until they shine, do you understand?

The girls shoot a questioning look to their Queen but Gabrielle merely shakes her head, letting them know that they got themselves into this mess and now it's time to face the music.

Shiri nods, eyes wide and a bit frightened.

**XENA**  
*(Cont'd—to Nesha)*  
And you, prepare the ground for sleeping. Level it out, remove all the branches and stones, and lay out the bedrolls. When you're done, come back to me.  
You're both on guard duty for the night.

Both girls stare at her.

**XENA**  
*(Cont'd)*  
Move!!

The girls scamper away as if Cerberus himself is snapping at their heels. The other Amazon youngsters stare up at Xena, identical expressions on their faces. They're frozen like temple statues.

Gabrielle walks up to stand next to Xena. Crossing her arms, she stares at the young faces staring back at her.

**GABRIELLE**

You have a lot to learn about being Amazon.



The power of those softly spoken words sting deeper than Xena's display of anger. The girls look away from Gabrielle, deeply shamed.

**JINX**

*(softly)*

We're sorry, Queen Gabrielle.



Gabrielle smiles slightly, remembering similar words from long ago, and the response she'd received.

**GABRIELLE**

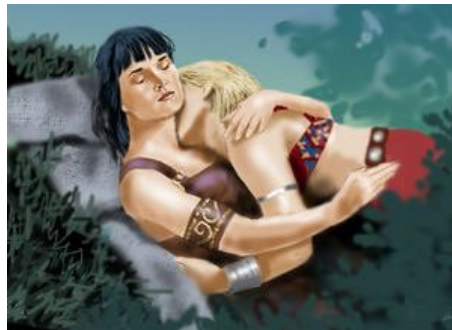
Don't be sorry. Just improve.

Behind her, Xena smiles, also remembering.

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. CAMP - EARLY MORNING**

Jinx is awake before anyone else and she slowly and very carefully gets up from the bedrolls. She looks around camp at her sisters and then across the fire at Xena and Gabrielle, sleeping together. She looks curiously as she notices the Gabrielle is turned facing Xena. Xena is very clearly protecting Gabrielle by the way she has her arms wrapped around her, even in their sleep.



Jinx smiles and looks wistfully at Esme, then she sighs and picks up a water skin to fill. As Jinx walks out of camp, Gabrielle lifts her head and watches her leave past the two "guards" who are both sound asleep at their posts.

Gabrielle sighs.

**XENA**  
*(sleepily)*  
We getting up?



**GABRIELLE**  
Not yet. Go back to sleep.

**XENA**  
I was never awake. This is  
my automatic voice response.

Gabrielle smiles when suddenly a long exaggerated snore comes from Xena. She brushes her fingers through Xena's hair as she waits. When she sees Jinx heading back into camp, she lays her head back down, watching the young Amazon through slitted eyelids. Her eyes widen as she feels a feather-light touch against her belly. She grasps Xena's hand.

**GABRIELLE**  
Be good.

**XENA**  
I'm always good.

Xena pulls her hand free and brushes it against Gabrielle's thigh, causing Gabrielle to squeal. This in turn causes Jinx to stumble and fall on the water skin. The skin's top pops off and water sprays on the other girls, causing them to wake up screaming as if they're under attack. Xena jumps to her feet, bringing her sword with her.

**XENA**  
What's the problem??

All the girls stop immediately and stare at Xena who is dressed only in her thin sleeping shift. Gabrielle covers her eyes and shakes her head.

**GABRIELLE**  
*(muttering)*  
It's gonna be one of those days.



**CUT TO:**

## EXT. POND - EARLY MORNING

Gabrielle walks onto the shore of the small pond just as Xena steps out, the water droplets on her skin glittering like diamonds in the rising sunlight.

She is momentarily taken aback by the vision.

**XENA**  
*(smirking)*  
Something the matter?

**GABRIELLE**  
I...uh... I'm worried about those girls.

Xena nods, appearing unconcerned as she leisurely wipes the water from her body.

**GABRIELLE**  
*(Cont'd)*  
I just can't help thinking that there's something wrong with the Amazons. I can't picture any Amazon in her right mind allowing her daughter to leave the village without even the faintest sense of how to live outside its boundaries.



Finished with her drying, Xena loops the linen around her neck.

**XENA**  
Guess we'll find out soon enough.

As if in answer, Gabrielle's stomach growls. Gabrielle winces, then sighs.

**GABRIELLE**  
Oh well. I suppose it's travel rations for breakfast. Again.

**XENA**  
*(grinning)*  
Oh ye of little faith.



Turning, Xena strides back into the pond, stopping when the water reaches her knees and bending at the waist, head cocked alertly. A moment later, she explodes into motion, both arms darting into the water. She straightens and turns, bearing a very large, very squiggling fish in her hands. She tosses it to Gabrielle, who catches the fish with a triumphant laugh.

**GABRIELLE**

Breakfast!

Exiting the water, Xena walks up to Gabrielle and puts an arm around her shoulders.

**XENA**

C'mon. Let's feed the beast in your belly.

They walk a few steps before Gabrielle stops.

**GABRIELLE**

Xena?

**XENA**

Mm?

**GABRIELLE**

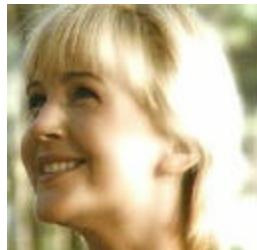
Not that I'm complaining, but...um... you might want to put your clothes back on first. Our little Amazon friends have enough problems without adding heart failure to the list.

She leers just a little.

**GABRIELLE**

*(Cont'd)*

Besides they are SO not ready for you.



Xena rolls her eyes and releases her partner, returning to where her gear lays in a neat pile.

**XENA**

G'wan. I'll meet you back at camp.

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. CAMP - EARLY MORNING**

Xena enters the camp running her fingers through her hair. The young Amazons sit in a circle around the fire, licking their lips as Gabrielle prepares the fish for cooking.

Xena walks up to Nesha.



**XENA**

So, mighty hunter, we've established that you're not a very good guard. If you can't protect your sisters, do you think you can at least feed them?

Nesha's chest puffs out with pride.

**NESHA**

I could fish before I could walk.



**XENA**

Mm. Well, get to it, then. Your breakfast is back there, waiting for you to catch it.

**NESHA**

But....

**XENA**

No buts. Providing for your family is nothing you should have to be 'asked' to do. It's a privilege. G'wan. Get.

Nesha scrambles to her feet and walks off in the direction of the pond.

Xena looks at the remaining girls.

**XENA**

*(Cont'd)*

I suppose the rest of you were fishing before you could walk too?

The girls shake their heads, never looking Xena in the eye.

**XENA**

*(Cont'd)*

Then I guess you'd better get down there and learn from your sister, hmm?



The remaining girls jump quickly to their feet and follow Nesha to the pond.

**GABRIELLE**

Ah. Peace at last.

Xena strides to Gabrielle and, gathers her in her arms, and gives her a proper good morning kiss. The kiss goes on until the sound of shouting is immediately followed by a very loud splash.

Then another immediately after.

**GABRIELLE**

*(hopefully)*

Maybe they're just bathing first?

**XENA**

*(through clenched teeth)*

That doesn't sound like  
bathing to me, Gabrielle.

Another yell, followed by the sound of a very large branch breaking, followed by several splashes in a row.

**GABRIELLE**

*(more hopefully)*

Trying to come up with the  
right branch for a fishing pole?



Xena growls low in her throat.

**JINX**

*(v.o. off camera)*

HELP! HELP!!

Xena and Gabrielle turn as one and sprint down to the pond. Jinx launches herself at Gabrielle, sobbing, as Xena dives into the water after a flailing Esme who is rather far out in the pond.

The other girls are frozen in their fear.

As Xena swims out to rescue Esme, Gabrielle drops to her knees and hugs the sobbing Amazon to her chest.

**GABRIELLE**

What happened?



**JINX**

*(through her sobs)*

I...I was only trying to help!! I swear!!

Gabrielle hugs the young girl tighter, stroking her curly brown hair.

**GABRIELLE**

It's all right. It's all right.  
Just tell me what happened.

**JINX**

E....Esme was up in the t...tree trying to get a branch  
for a pole. B...but the best one was too...too far out  
and she was too heavy. I just wanted to help...I'm  
smaller and I could have gotten it. I could!!

**GABRIELLE**

I'm sure you could have, sweetheart.  
How did she fall?

**JINX**

S...she wouldn't listen to me! She said she wouldn't  
break the branch... but she did, because of me!



**GABRIELLE**

Honey, she didn't fall because of you.  
She was too heavy, like you said.

**JINX**

You don't understand! I jinxed her! I did!  
I climbed up there and the branch broke!  
And now she's dead because of me!

**GABRIELLE**

She's not dead. Xena's got her. See?

Gabrielle gently turns Jinx until the girl can see Xena walking onto shore. She has a very much  
alive, though unconscious and completely drenched, Esme in her arms.

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. SHORE - DAY**

Xena gently lays the half drowned girl on the ground. And then starts checking her neck and head  
for injuries as her sisters look on. Xena glances up.

**XENA**

Lesson number one.

The girls move forward.

**XENA**

*(Cont'd)*

When somebody falls like that, move them very carefully. If you don't, you could make it a lot worse. And then you need to check for broken bones.

Nesha leans over, and watches intently.

**NESHA**

But how will we know?

**XENA**

If anything is broken, you'll know. You will either feel it or your patient will tell you.

Esme starts to come around and opens her eyes very slowly, grinning stupidly when she sees Xena over her.

**ESME**

Please tell me I needed mouth to mouth.

Xena rolls her eyes and stands up.



She ignores Esme's comment and speaks to other girls.

**XENA**

You're very lucky she hit the water or you might be taking her body back to the tribe. These kinds of mistakes are only happening because you refuse to work together and think things through.

*(beat)*

So I have a plan.

Gabrielle and Jinx have approached by this time. Gabrielle smiles at Xena while Jinx kneels down next to Esme to make sure she is okay, only to have Esme slap her hand away. Xena notices the action and she puts two and two together.

**XENA**

Interesting.

*(beat)*

All right, here's the drill. On the way back to the village we're going to split up into two teams. I will take three of you and Gabrielle will take three of you. By the time you get back you will....

Xena looks to Esme.

**XENA**

*(Cont'd)*

...Have learned the skills  
necessary to pass your Rites.

**DORI**

Forgive me, Xena, but if  
you help us we'll fail.

**XENA**

Do you think you're succeeding now?  
Have you accomplished anything?

**DORI**

No, ma'am

Gabrielle chuckles and mouths 'ma'am'.



Xena glares at her partner and we....

**FADE OUT.**

**END ACT ONE**

## ACT TWO

FADE IN:

### EXT. CAMP - DAY

The gear is packed and everyone is standing off to the side while Xena and Gabrielle have a private chat. They watch as both women laugh and then clasp hands in what appears to be friendly challenge. The girls share nervous glances when Xena and Gabrielle approach them.

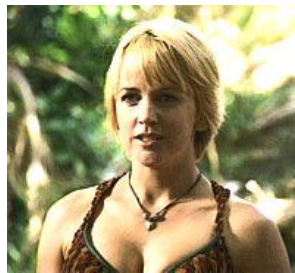
**XENA**

Esme you're with me.

She waits for a moment and when the girl doesn't move, she snaps her fingers and points at the spot next to her, which Esme fills very quickly.

**GABRIELLE**

Dori, you're with me.



The girl scurries over to stand next to Gabrielle.

**XENA**

Patia.

The other girls watch as she scoots over to Xena and Esme. Gabrielle watches as Jinx's shoulders slump. It's clear she's been through this before and has never been chosen.

**GABRIELLE**

Jinx, you come with me.

Jinx brightens considerable and nearly jumps for joy as she joins Gabrielle.

**JINX**

I promise to do my best, My Queen.

**GABRIELLE**

I know.

**XENA**

Shiri.

**GABRIELLE**

Nesha, come with us.

Both girls join their new teams and wait.

**XENA**

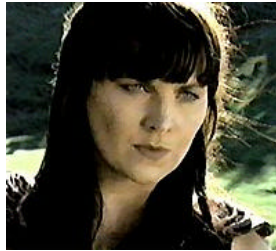
All right this is very simple.  
From here on in those women...

She gestures to Gabrielle and her group.

**XENA**

*(Cont'd)*

... are the enemy. As we go back to the village, we  
will have a friendly competition with each other  
that will train you in the basic skills of combat.



**GABRIELLE**

And survival.

She winks at Xena and smiles. It's clear which set of skills each woman prefers to teach.

**GABRIELLE**

Think of what we're doing as war games. We will  
accomplish all your tasks, and hopefully, teach you  
something about what it means to be part of a team.

There are small groans from the group at the mention of their tasks.

**XENA**

Look, learning this stuff doesn't have to be torture.

**GABRIELLE**

Xena's right. Part of the reason we're doing it as a  
friendly competition is so that you won't learn each  
task individually as though it was a chore and that  
you'll come together as a team. You will learn to work  
together, to think and plan what you're going to do.



**XENA**

All right, let's move out.

She waits; they stand still looking at her and then to the ground.

**XENA**

What's wrong?



**ESME**

We don't know the way.

Jinx fidgets for a minute, and then tugs on Gabrielle's arm. Gabrielle leans over and Jinx whispers something in her ear. Gabrielle looks at Xena and smiles.

**GABRIELLE**

Come on then.

Xena watches with lifted brows as Gabrielle takes her team and walks into the woods. Then she turns to her own charges.

**XENA**

Let's go.

**ESME**

Where?

**XENA**

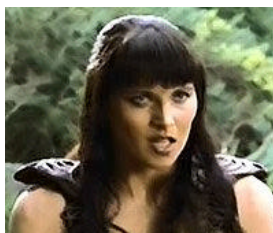
Home.

**ESME**

And we're going to follow them?  
Jinx got us lost, remember?

**XENA**

Are you sure? Are you sure it wasn't  
that enormous ego of yours?



Xena looks back to the forest. Gabrielle and her girls are already out of sight.

**XENA**

Oh, boy. C'mon.

She starts into the forest with her girls behind her.

**CUT TO:**



## EXT. WOODS - DAY

Gabrielle stops on the trail and looks into the sky. She then looks at three eager, but somewhat tired faces.

**GABRIELLE**

Time for a break?



**DORI**

Yes, please.

**GABRIELLE**

Okay. Sorry. I shouldn't have forgotten that. Xena and I have been on the road forever, I'm used to it now, but when we first began traveling together I thought my legs were going to fall right off.

Her words are met by three smiles.

**NESHA**

Food?

**GABRIELLE**

*(gesturing around them)*

If you can find it, you can eat it.



The girls look confused and bewildered. Gabrielle sighs and drops her gear.

**GABRIELLE**

*(Cont'd)*

Roots, berries, nuts? All acceptable foods.

She glances around to find a bush with bright yellow flowers.

**GABRIELLE**

Pull that bush up. You'll find it has very meaty roots that are kind of like carrots.

Nesha gazes at the bush and sighs, obviously reluctant to pull it up because of its beautiful flowers.

Gabrielle smiles.

**GABRIELLE**

*(Cont'd)*

I'm glad to see that there are some Amazons  
who can stop and savor the majesty of Gaia's  
beauty. Everything isn't about war and violence.

Nesha sighs, still gazing at the bush and doesn't move. A few seconds pass and Nesha still hasn't move. Gabrielle and the other Amazons grow restless. Gabrielle tears the bush from the ground, grunting from the effort.

**GABRIELLE**

*(Cont'd)*

Just don't savor it too long, all right?  
Nobody appreciates a fanatic.

*(beat)*

Trust me on this one.



She pulls one up, wipes it off, and looks at it. It's very clear that she's not accustomed to eating this way very often any longer, but she forges ahead and bites into it. Forcing a smile onto her face, she swallows hard.

**GABRIELLE**

Mmm. See? Great stuff.

The girls nod and start digging for their own. Gabrielle turns and quickly spits hers out.

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. WOODS – DAY**

Xena is following her three, who are all walking abreast. Each is holding a small pointed stone, a long sturdy stick and a piece of thin vine. They are with some degrees of success making new spears.

**ESME**

*(presenting hers)*

How's this?

Xena takes the spear looks it over, then vigorously shakes it, causing it to fall apart.

**XENA**

Wrong. But keep trying.



Patia, wordlessly hands hers over for inspection. Xena looks at it, shakes it and it stays together. Then she throws it and it breaks apart as soon as it hits the tree.

**XENA**

Better, but still not right.

Next comes Shiri who hands hers over, not expecting much luck. Xena examines it, hefts it, checking its balance and then throws it. It holds together, sticking out of the ground and the girls run over.

**XENA**

Good job.

**SHIRI**

Hey! You got a rabbit too.

**XENA**

That sounds like lunch to me.



**CUT TO:**

**EXT. WOODS - DAY**

Gabrielle smiles as her three are now actually identifying some different plants. Seems that they weren't sent out completely unprepared, just obviously not ready. And no doubt scared to death once they became lost.

**GABRIELLE**

So girls, tell me what's going on in the nation that you are out here like this. None of you can be more than 14 years old.

**JINX**

Just having troubles keeping our own borders intact, My Queen. Everyday they are challenged and we need more people. That's why....



**GABRIELLE**

That's why you were sent out. I got it.

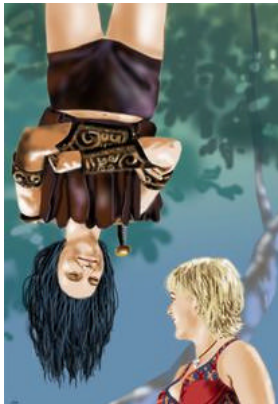
Gabrielle takes two water skins from her shoulder and tosses them to the girls.

**GABRIELLE**

Go fill those. Be careful and wait for me right here. I'll be right back.

They nod and head for the creek. Gabrielle turns, looks into the trees and then runs and jumps up onto one of the limbs. She climbs just a little further up into the tree until she sees the object of her desire. She places her fingers at the edge of her lips and lets loose with a birdcall that Xena will recognize comes from her. She listens for a moment as Xena tells the Amazon girls to fashion more weapons and, with firm instructions, makes it clear they are not move an inch from that spot. Then Xena disappears into the woods.

A moment later Xena is hanging upside down from the branch above Gabrielle, swaying gently.



**XENA**

You called? The Red Bellied Sapsucker, I believe.

**GABRIELLE**

Cute. How are they doing?

**XENA**

We're not dead yet, so I guess we're doing okay.

**GABRIELLE**

*(gesturing)*

Isn't all the blood rushing to your brain?



**XENA**

Nah, I'm okay.

Gabrielle's nose crinkles as she smiles.

**GABRIELLE**

You're loving every minute of this, aren't you?



**XENA**

Of course not. This is torture.

**GABRIELLE**

Uh huh. You can't fool me.

**XENA**

Okay, I admit it. It's the getting to use the strategy I love, without the violence so often attached to it. What's not to love?

Gabrielle smiles at Xena's unexpected enthusiasm.

**XENA**

What can I do for you?  
You surrendering already?



**GABRIELLE**

Dream on. I did find out something I wanted to tell you. Seems the Amazons are having trouble controlling their borders. That's why they're sending out initiates who are so young. My guess is they need the warriors.

**XENA**

*(eyebrow raised)*

Why am I not surprised?

**GABRIELLE**

Can you find out more from your three so we'll know what we're walking into?

**XENA**

Consider it done.

*(beat)*

Okay, I gotta get back. Meet us at that flat rock formation I told you about tomorrow at noon and we'll kick this competition up a notch. Bring three items to share.

**GABRIELLE**

*(with a twinkle in her eyes)*

A pot luck?

Xena, my how you've changed.

**XENA**

*(raising an eyebrow)*

Watch it, bard. You just have your girls make three things that they'll trade for three things from my group. You'll have to wait to find out the rest of what I have in mind.

She gives Gabrielle a saucy smirk and disappears from sight.

Gabrielle rolls her eyes and grins before descending back to the ground.



**CUT TO:**

**EXT. XENA'S CAMP - NIGHT**

The small group has managed to make decent progress back toward Amazon territory. Xena seems pleased as she watches them work with the items she has given them. Esme is fashioning slingshots, Patia is smashing red berries in a bowl and Shiri is cutting up what appears to be the stomach lining of that rabbit they had for lunch.

**ESME**

And this is going to help us  
beat the Queen and the others?



**XENA**

That's the plan. Of course, we'll have to  
work as a team. The Queen can be  
quite crafty when she wants to be.

**SHIRI**

Sure, but you must know her tricks.

**XENA**

True, but remember, she knows mine too.

**PATIA**

All of them?

**XENA**

All of them. We're partners. But  
that doesn't mean we don't  
surprise each other occasionally.

Xena gives them an evil little grin and they all smile back.



**CUT TO:**

**EXT. GABRIELLE'S CAMP – NIGHT**

Gabrielle is leaning between Jinx and Dori and gesturing at something they're doing.

**GABRIELLE**

Make that tie tighter or the feathers will  
fall away from the leaves and if that  
happens your cover won't be any good.

**NESHA**

And using this we'll be able to  
keep them from seeing us?

**GABRIELLE**

That's the idea. I'm sure it will work on your sisters, but there's just no way to hide from Xena if she really wants to find us.

**DORI**

We're doomed.

**GABRIELLE**

*(chuckling)*

Not necessarily. I may have a few tricks up my sleeve that Xena might not see coming.



**JINX**

That'd be great if you had sleeves.

Gabrielle gives her a playful thump to the back of the head.

**GABRIELLE**

Just keep working.

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. CLEARING – DAY**

Both teams approach a large flat rock from opposite directions. Xena and Gabrielle are both grinning at each other. The girls are trying to look fierce and intimidate each other.

**XENA**

Care to surrender now?





**GABRIELLE**

*(grinning)*

Sure. After you do.



Xena snorts.

Gabrielle gestures to Nesha who places three sets of camouflage on the rock.

**GABRIELLE**

*(Cont'd)*

We held up our part of the bargain.

**XENA**

So did we.

Xena motions and Esme places three slingshots and a large bowl of bright green balls on the rock. Gabrielle steps forward and picks up one of the green items and hold it up.

**GABRIELLE**

What is this?

**XENA**

Ammunition.



**GABRIELLE**

You're kidding.

**XENA**

Look, we can't let them play with real weapons or they'll kill each other and probably hurt us.

So I came up with this solution. Those are small bits of bladder and intestine filled with crushed leaves and a bit of water. We're using the same thing only made of red berries. So when we target you and shoot you, we will mark you in red and you'll know you've been hit.

**GABRIELLE**

And when we hit you,  
you're marked in green.

**XENA**

*(smirking)*

When you try to hit us.

Gabrielle taps her chin with one finger.

**GABRIELLE**

We'll see.



**FADE OUT.**

**END ACT TWO**

## ACT THREE

FADE IN:

### EXT. FOREST – MORNING

Xena and her three charges are watching Gabrielle's camp from a safe distance as they fix a nice breakfast of roasted game bird and potatoes baked in the fire ring.

**ESME**

Boy, that smells good.

**PATIA**

They must have cheated. The Queen must have gotten them that.

Xena turns and shoots a deadly look toward Patia, who winces and takes a step back.

**ESME**

*(scowling)*

The Queen doesn't cheat, you idiot.

**XENA**

Human nature is to do whatever it takes to win, Esme. You know that, right?



**ESME**

*(frowning brow)*

So I was wrong about Queen Gabrielle?

**XENA**

With me, you might have had to worry.  
But your instincts about Gabrielle were dead on. Being able to trust your gut is important. Good job.

Esme beams under the praise while Patia scowls. Shiri can't remain silent any longer.

**SHIRI**

I'm hungry.

**XENA**

Should have thought about that when you decided to sleep in this morning.

**SHIRI**

I didn't....

Xena silences her with another look.



**ESME**

*(speculatively)*

We could attack their camp and take the food.

**XENA**

You can try if you want.

**SHIRI**

Not a good idea?

**XENA**

Not a good idea.

Xena is looking carefully at the perimeter of the camp and she smiles.

**XENA**

*(Cont'd)*

However I think one of you could 'drop' in and grab a bite. Come on.



**CUT TO:**

### **EXT. GABRIELLE'S CAMP – MORNING**

Gabrielle is quite pleased with the offering that her girls have brought for breakfast. She watches with almost motherly affection as they cook the fowl they brought back from the traps they had set the night before.

**DORI**

I can't believe we did it.

**GABRIELLE**

Well, that's the first rule of survival. You have to believe in yourself and your abilities. That was one of the first things Xena taught me.



**NESHA**

Sounds like you had a good teacher.

**GABRIELLE**

The best. I hope the girls with her learn something.

**JINX**

I think they'll learn to be afraid.  
Be very afraid.

Gabrielle bursts out laughing but it's short lived when Xena's battle cry cuts through the air. Gabrielle jumps to her feet looking around for her partner and knowing that her camp is about to be attacked.

**GABRIELLE**

Damn!

Patia seems to fall head first from the trees above, she makes a quick grab and manages to retrieve the bird that had been roasting on the spit, before recoiling back into the trees above, disappearing very quickly. Gabrielle spins and looks up only to get shot right in the center of the chest with a red marker which bursts and runs directly down her top and between her breasts. She gets a disgusted look on her face as she wipes the goo from her skin and flings it away.

**GABRIELLE**

*(Cont'd)*

*(yelling into the air)*

Cute! Very cute!



Her yells are answered by laughter that is disappearing into the forest.

**GABRIELLE**

*(Cont'd)*

That, ladies, was your first lesson in distraction and ambush.

**DORI**

I think they were just being mean.

**GABRIELLE**

Nuh uh. They were using their skills. That required strategy and planning and a host of other things that we're learning out here.

**NESHA**

That's bad.

**GABRIELLE**

Not for them. But we shouldn't let it happen again.

**DORI & JINX**

Yeah.

**NESHA**

We can't just do nothing!

**GABRIELLE**

Attacking without being able to defend is useless.  
*(thoughtfully)*

Sometimes your opponents are their own worst enemy. And sometimes the best offense is a good defense.



The girls all pause as they absorb Gabrielle's words. An enormous grin breaks out on Dori's face and she puts her arms around the other Amazons. They put their heads together and begin to whisper.

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. XENA'S CAMP – MORNING**

Xena is enjoying the roast fowl along with her girls. Managing to make a raid has lifted their spirits considerably.

**SHIRI**

They're going to retaliate aren't they?

**XENA**

You can bet on it.



**ESME**

When we're least expecting it.

**XENA**

Probably. But if they don't have a chance to retaliate....

**PATIA**

Yeah! Why give them the opportunity to regroup?

**SHIRI**

Real Amazons don't sit around on their butts waiting to be attacked. We need more spears!

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. TREE - DAY**

Xena shakes her head ruefully as she watches her team begin to track Gabrielle's. She goes into the trees and calls Gabrielle with another birdcall. A few moments later Gabrielle joins her on the limb.

**GABRIELLE**

*(teasingly)*

Cuckoo? How appropriate.



**XENA**

Care to tell me why you laid a trail that a blind man could follow?

They watch the progress of Xena's team.

**GABRIELLE**

I might be focusing more on survival tactics than combat, but your team isn't the only one learning a thing or two about strategy, Xena. Wait and listen.

They watch as Xena's team walks into a small grove of bushes and out of view.

**INTERCUT TO:**

Close up of Esme, Patia and Shiri with their eyes as wide as saucers and their mouths hanging open.

**INTERCUT TO:**

Xena and Gabrielle in the tree.

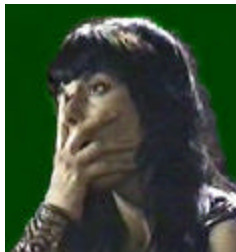
Three piercing screams ring out in the forest. A split second the girls scramble out of the bushes and into view. They are shaking their arms and running in circles.

Gabrielle shakes her head and begins to laugh.

**GABRIELLE**

Oh, Gods.

Xena covers her eyes and then peeks between her fingers as she watches a Mama skunk and three baby skunks scurry out of the grove in the opposite direction.



**XENA**

*(with admiration and a slight laugh)*  
That was horrible. Effective, but horrible.  
And a lesson they won't forget anytime soon.

**GABRIELLE**

Their noses won't let them.

**XENA**

I have to sleep in the same camp with them, you know.

Xena shakes her head again as she hears Gabrielle's team starts laughing.

**DORI & NESHA & JINX**

*(in unison)*

Watch out for the SKUNKS!



**XENA**

*(groaning)*

I hate the smell of skunk.

**GABRIELLE**

Look at it this way... you'll know where they are for **days**.

**XENA**

*(sardonically)*

That was very thoughtful of you, Gabrielle.



**GABRIELLE**

*(laughing)*

I thought so.

**XENA**

You know, my girls haven't really said anything about the problems that the nation seems to be having. Basically the same thing they told you. Border skirmishes. The tribes being forced together. That is causing friction among the factions.

**GABRIELLE**

Well, that's more information that we usually have.

**XENA**

So true. Well, I'd better get back. I'm sure they're totally at a loss right now.

Xena jumps down from the tree and dashes through the woods towards her team.

**GABRIELLE**

Smell ya' later.



**CUT TO:**

## EXT. GABRIELLE'S CAMP – NIGHT

Gabrielle and the girls are sitting around a nice fire. They have obviously eaten well and they are very happy. Gabrielle is telling them a story and all three of them are entranced.

### GABRIELLE

I didn't even think about what I was doing when the arrows started flying. I just knew that Terreis was in danger and I tried to save her.



### JINX

This is one of the stories that mothers still tell their daughters but hearing you tell it is wonderful because you actually did it.

### GABRIELLE

Why do they still tell that story?

### NESHA

Because it shows the true spirit of what it means to be Amazon. These may be games, but the spirit behind them is important too.

Gabrielle purses her lips and considers it when there is a noise from the woods.



### XENA

(v.o. off camera)  
Baaaaaa Baaaaaa

The girls all jump up and look into the woods. Gabrielle narrows her gaze at the direction the noise is coming from.

### DORI

What was that?

**GABRIELLE**

Relax, it's just a ... umm.... a Wild Roaming  
Northern Greek Goat. They're very rare  
and when I get done with this one,  
they'll be extinct. Stay here. And uh....

She blushes a little and rubs the back of her neck.

**GABRIELLE**

*(Cont'd)*

Don't wait up.

Gabrielle wanders into the woods. Nesha sadly pats her stomach.

**NESHA**

Think she'll bring some  
back to share?

Jinx suddenly catches a clue and she grins wryly at the other girls, content not to blow Xena's cover.

**JINX**

Something tells me Queen  
Gabrielle does not share.



**CUT TO:**

**EXT. WOODS – NIGHT**

Xena is lying on the ground holding her stomach as she tries not to laugh. Gabrielle stops and stands over her arms crossed, tapping her foot. It's clear by the look on her face, she's not really mad, but she has to try and pull it off. Xena wipes tears from her eyes and props herself up on one elbow.

**XENA**

Well hello there.  
Funny running into you here.

**GABRIELLE**

Anyone ever tell you that you can  
be a huge pain in the butt sometimes?

**XENA**

Constantly. Usually in several  
different languages.

She grins and jumps up, opening her arms to Gabrielle.

**XENA**

*(Cont'd)*

Couldn't go to bed without giving  
my favorite girl a hug and a kiss.

**GABRIELLE**

*(warily)*

I'd better be your only girl. Your  
breastplate is booby-trapped, isn't it?

**XENA**

That's where usually I keep 'em.



Xena gestures for Gabrielle to come closer.

**XENA**

*(Cont'd)*

I'm here for no illicit purposes, I assure you.  
I bring a banner of truce. I just want a kiss.

Gabrielle steps into Xena's arms and immediately melts into her body.

**GABRIELLE**

Can we just stay like this?

**XENA**

You hate sleeping standing up.

**GABRIELLE**

Yeah, but I could do it right now.  
I don't sleep well when we're apart.  
You know that.

**XENA**

At least you'll get some sleep tonight.  
You don't have the toxic trio in your camp.

Gabrielle snickers and tightens her hold on Xena.

**GABRIELLE**

How are your girls?

**XENA**

Tired and STINKY. Yours?

**GABRIELLE**

Jumpy. Always looking  
over their shoulders.

Xena and Gabrielle share conspiratorial smiles.



**XENA & GABRIELLE**

*(in unison)*

Good.

**GABRIELLE**

So has your team figured out that they  
need to focus a little more on the less  
aggressive arts of survival and combat?

**XENA**

*(wiggling her hand)*

Eh.

They're nearly there.  
How about your girls?

**GABRIELLE**

The same, only they're getting tired of  
focusing on defense. By the end of this  
they should see both sides of the coin.

**XENA**

Good plan, Gabrielle.



**GABRIELLE**

*(teasingly)*

Well, the person who taught me to  
strategize was... you know... Not bad.

**XENA**

She had a good pupil.

**CUT TO:**

## EXT. XENA'S CAMP – MORNING

Xena watches with amusement as the girls rub mud all over their bodies.

**ESME**

Are you sure this is necessary?

**XENA**

Yes, it'll mask the smell. And more importantly, I'll be able to travel with you without my eyes watering.



**PATIA**

That was pretty tricky of them.

**XENA**

Yes it was, and you fell for it. Remember, when you're following Amazons or anyone for that matter, if they leave a trail you can see, they want you to follow it for a reason. And it's usually not a good one.

**SHIRI**

You know, my mother warned me about that.

**XENA**

Now, don't you wish you had listened?

**SHIRI**

I listened, I just forgot.

**XENA**

Will you forget again?

**SHIRI**

Not in this lifetime. We need to do something to make sure this doesn't happen again. Fortify our defenses, maybe?

**PATIA**

*(snorting)*

Yeah, right. So...  
How do we get back at them?

**XENA**

What do you think would be good?

**ESME**

Well, we need new clothes. These stink.

Xena tries very hard to smother a grin.

**XENA**

You wanna steal their clothes?



**ESME**

One of the things we were supposed to do was sneak into a camp and take something.

**XENA**

And how do you suggest you get them out of clothes they're sleeping in?

**PATIA**

Simple, we take them when they're swimming or bathing.

**XENA**

*(smiling)*

Now you're thinking like Amazons. We're making progress. So all you have to do is figure out a way to get what you want. If they're near a lake or a pond, you know they bath in the morning and they swim at night. So the question becomes what's the best way to get it?

Esme narrows her eyes in thought.

**ESME**

There was something I noticed on the way out of the skunk den. It was bubbling....

**PATIA & SHIRI**

Yeah?

**CUT TO:**

## EXT. NIGHT - POND

Patia, Shiri, and Esme are using split shells to dip into a metal cooking pot and extract bowls of dark liquid. They pour the liquid on the ground around the pond, giggling as go. When they're finished Shiri and Esme haul over a good-sized flat rock, taking care to place it closer to the water. They pour the liquid in the space between the rock and the bushes.

**XENA**

*(under her breath)*

There is no way Gabrielle is going to believe this was NOT my idea.



**CUT TO:**

## EXT. POND – MORNING

Gabrielle's team, including Gabrielle, are all taking a morning bath. Their clothes have been washed and are drying on bushes near the pond. Jinx, her hair wet, and naked as the day she was born is sitting on the flat rock placed near the pond by Patia, diligently guarding the clothes. In her hands a slingshot, should she need it.

Jinx hears a gentle 'plunk' in the pond in front of her. She bends over to take a look.

Gabrielle glances up to see her staring at nothing and her eyes go wide.

**GABRIELLE**

Uh oh.

Suddenly, several volley's of paintballs crash against Jinx's exposed bottom, sending her into the pond headfirst.

**GABRIELLE**

*(to herself)*

Don't you do it, Xena.



Jinx emerges from the water and screams.

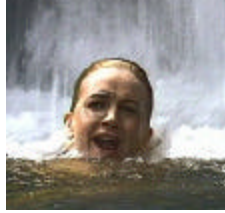


Gabrielle curses and begins swimming towards Jinx along with the rest of her stunned, team.

**GABRIELLE**

*(Cont'd Yelling)*

No, you don't, Xena. Not my....



Esme holds a torch to the liquid trail of Greek fire they laid the night before, sending up all wall of flames between the pond and bushes. Xena's team, covered in dry mud that looks like brown plaster, begins to hoot and shout as they dart from the bushes and snatch up the drying clothes.

Gabrielle's team has no choice but to stand by helplessly.

**XENA**

*(through the flames to Gabrielle)*

Give up yet?

Gabrielle looks to her team in question.

**GABRIELLE**

It's up to them.

**DORI & JINX & NESHA**

Never!

Gabrielle smiles proudly. She and the girls make their way to the rest of their gear, which, thankfully, is on their side of the flames.

**GABRIELLE**

You heard 'em, Xena.

Xena nods and gives her partner a little wink before her team disappears back into the woods.

**GABRIELLE**

*(to the girls)*

Please tell me you each brought  
an extra change of clothes.

All three girls look at each other and wince.

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. XENA'S CAMP – DAY**

Xena is trying not to smile as she listens to her team grumble about the fit of the clothes they swiped. She is holding Gabrielle's clothes in her hands.

**XENA**

Little small, are they?

**ESME**

Just a little, but at least they don't stink.

**XENA**

There's always an up side.

Xena is about to say something else when she hears a call from Gabrielle. She licks her lips, smiles and stands up, giving an exaggerated stretch.

**XENA**

*(Cont'd)*

Enjoy the spoils. I'll be right back.

Xena turns and heads into the woods, with Gabrielle's clothes still in her hands.

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. WOODS – DAY**

Xena walks into the woods slowly, looking for Gabrielle.

**XENA**

Where are you?



A bush to Xena's left shakes a bit and Xena grins.

**XENA**

*(Cont'd)*

*(addressing the bush)*

Well, my, my... what do we have here?

Gabrielle remains hidden in the bush.

**GABRIELLE**

Xena....

**XENA**

I do believe that was the call  
of the Naked as a Jaybird.

**GABRIELLE**

*(louder)*

XENA....

**XENA**

You know in a situation like this you  
just have to say to yourself...Self...

**GABRIELLE**

*(growling)*

Give me my clothes.

**XENA**

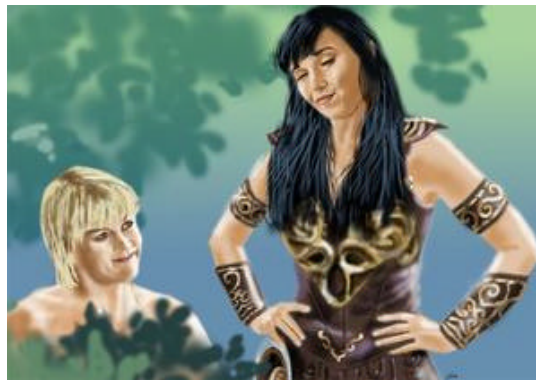
Now why would I want to do that?

Besides, I've seen you naked  
more times than I can count.

**GABRIELLE**

*(wryly)*

That was when we were partners. At the  
moment we're mortal enemies. Mortal  
enemies aren't allowed to see me naked.



**XENA**

It seems that my team has your  
team at a severe disadvantage.



**GABRIELLE**

Not as much as you think. I gave  
the girls my spare traveling clothes.  
Now give me my clothes!

**XENA**

I'll give them to you if you surrender.

**GABRIELLE**

Gods, that's a low blow.

**XENA**

All's fair in love and war  
Gabrielle. You know that.

**GABRIELLE**

Do I have to beg?

**XENA**

No, just surrender.

Xena can hear Gabrielle sigh and just as she is about to say something she hears a loud yell from the direction between the two camps and she knows it's trouble. She tosses Gabrielle's clothes into the bush.

**XENA**

Meet you there!

**GABRIELLE**

*(quickly as she begins to dress)*

Right behind you.

Xena dashes towards the sounds.

**FADE OUT.**

**END ACT THREE**

## ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

### EXT. WOODS – DAY

Xena rushes into a clearing where she finds all six girls together and trying to fight off three bandits that have managed to find them.

The girls are fighting hard, using both the offensive and defensive moves that they were shown. One of the bandits manages to sneak up behind Dori.

**PATIA**

*(to Dori)*

Look out!

He is about to deliver a deathblow when Patia hurls himself at him, knocking him to the ground. Doris quickly joins her sister and together, they send him scurrying into the woods, happy to have avoided meeting Charon this day.

Dori's eyes meet Patia's.

**DORI**

*(panting)*

Thanks.

Patia gives her a small smile and nods.

Jinx and Esme are having a much harder time with the youngest of the bandits. They're working as a team, one with a sword and another with a stick-turned-club. But it's clear that he's a talented swordsman and the girls, with their spears and sticks are simply outclassed.

**YOUNG SWORDMEN**

Time to meet your maker.

Xena draws her sword and summersaults between Jinx and Esme.

**XENA**

Funny. I was just thinking the same thing. About you.



The man growls and lunges forward. The sound of steel striking steel fills the air.

Nesha is unconscious at Shiri's feet and Shiri, the poorest of the fighters is valiantly trying to protect her sister, but is about to be stabbed by the third man. Suddenly, over her shoulder a single sais whizzes by, impaling the bandit in his shoulder. The man screams and drops his sword. Shakily, Shiri picks it up and awkwardly points it at him, but he's had enough and stumbles into the woods.

With only one man remaining, and before Gabrielle can warn them off, the girls form a ring around Xena. Xena gets inside her opponents defenses, and slices the fleshy part on the man's upper arm, sending a blood spraying everywhere, including all over the girls.

With his good hand, the bandit throws his sword at Xena, turns on his heels, and makes a run for it.

**GABRIELLE**

*(to Nesha, who is just coming around)*  
Are you all right?

The girl nods.

Gabrielle glances up at the rest of young women who look pale and shaken, but proud.

**GABRIELLE**

*(Cont'd)*  
How about the rest of you?



They all nod. And there are a few whimpers as they start to take notice of the blood covering them.

**GABRIELLE**

*(Cont'd -- sighing)*  
Come on, let's get you cleaned up.

Grimacing, she gathers them together and they start walking toward the pond.

Xena heads into the woods to make sure there won't be any more trouble with these particular men.

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. POND - DAY**

Gabrielle is washing her arms in the pond while all the girls wash again. They're all quiet and it's clear that their first real fight has given them pause.



Xena walks slowly to the edge of the pond and kneels next to Gabrielle.

**GABRIELLE**

So?

**XENA**

*(lowering her voice)*

They won't be giving us any more trouble.

Xena hands Gabrielle one of her sais. The last time she saw it, it was sticking out of one of the bandit's shoulder.

**GABRIELLE**

*(resigned but relived)*

Right.

**XENA**

Are they okay?

**GABRIELLE**

Nesha is going to have the headache from Tartarus. Esme has a small wound in her shoulder that I'll take care of as soon as she's finished getting cleaned up. Other than that I think they're just shaken up. Xena, they are too young for this. They shouldn't have had to see or do that. Not yet.



Xena leans forward and presses her lips to Gabrielle's forehead. Gabrielle sighs. Xena pulls away... a fire in her eyes.

**XENA**

You're absolutely right. And I intend to find out exactly what their mothers were thinking sending them out like this. They might need help defending their borders, but these young women are not ready to give what the Amazons need. No matter what the training.

This time it's Gabrielle who reaches up and cups Xena's chin, then gives her a small kiss on the cheek.

**XENA**

*(Cont'd)*

Have they told you what happened?

**GABRIELLE**

Apparently, your girls heard a noise and thought it was my girls coming back to try something. They went to meet them and ran into the guys, at the same time...

**XENA**

Yours showed up.

**GABRIELLE**

And they all banded together. They should be proud themselves. Unfortunately, I think all they're feeling at the moment is sick and scared.

**XENA**

Okay, we're one team now. It was time for them to show each other what they'd learned anyway. From now on we stay together.



**GABRIELLE**

Agreed. Jinx says that Esme was really giving those bandits a rough time of it. She had a good teacher.

**XENA**

Thanks. Same with your girls. I saw Jinx use a defensive move that I know you taught her. It saved her life.

Gabrielle accepts the compliment graciously and intertwines her clean fingers with Xena's dirty ones. She holds up both their hands and makes a face.

**GABRIELLE**

*(fondly)*

C'mon, time for your bath.

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. CAMP – EVENING**

Xena has taken pity on the group and spent a good long while hunting. The mostly-eaten remains of a wild boar are spread out as a feast, and the girls seem much happier now that they'd had a little while to absorb what happened, and have full bellies. She is leaning against a log finishing off a piece of meat and Gabrielle is seated on the log next to her, sipping something from a cup.

Jinx approaches Esme, Patia and Shiri with a bowl of liquid.



**JINX**

Here if you rub this on your skin,  
it'll take the smell away.

The girls look warily at her, almost afraid to take the bowl.

**JINX**

It's okay, really. Queen Gabrielle  
showed us how to make it.

**XENA**

I think by now you know you can trust  
your sister. They won't let you down.



Esme shyly takes the bowl and smiles at Jinx

**ESME**

Thanks. It smells good.

**JINX**

I added some honeysuckle. It's not  
necessary, but I know you like it.

Gabrielle and Xena share a grin, remembering those first awkward moments when friendship  
started to shift into something... deeper.

**PATIA**

So, I guess we all lost  
the war games, huh?

Gabrielle moves over to Patia and clasps her shoulder.

**GABRIELLE**

No, actually I'd say you all won. Xena and I  
are proud of every last one of you. And you've  
learned the most important lesson of all.



**XENA**

I can teach you fighting skills.

**GABRIELLE**

And I can teach you survival skills.

**DORI**

But one without the other  
doesn't make much difference.

**XENA**

Right.

**SHIRI**

Hey! You each purposely had our teams  
focus on something different so we'd  
see what we were lacking, didn't you?

Xena and Gabrielle shrug and smile.

**GABRIELLE**

On the way home you can teach  
each other what you've learned.

**ESME**

Well, I've already learned one thing.

**XENA**

What's that?

**ESME**

Everyone is important in the tribe.  
We're best as a team.

Esme turns to Jinx and smiles shyly.

**ESME**

*(Cont'd)*

I'm sorry about all the mean things I said.

**JINX**

It's okay.



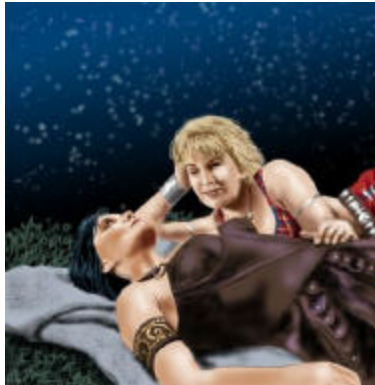
**ESME**

No, it's not, but I promise  
I'll never do it again.

**CUT TO:**

## EXT. CAMP – NIGHT

All the girls are sleeping soundly. Xena and Gabrielle are lying together staring up at the sky. Gabrielle rolls on her side and tucks her hands under her head as she looks to Xena.



### GABRIELLE

Xena, do you remember what Shiri said at dinner tonight? About the Amazons breaking up? What do you think she meant?

### XENA

I don't know. But I know two things. One, it's unlikely that the girls have much clue as to what is really going on. And two, the Amazons are in trouble, Gabrielle. And we're going back to see what we can do.

### GABRIELLE

You know that, huh? That we're going back?

### XENA

You've never let your people down before.  
You won't now.



### GABRIELLE

Simple as that?

### XENA

*(Bittersweetly)*

Nothing with us is ever simple.

Gabrielle lays her head on Xena's shoulder and Xena wraps her arm around her.

**GABRIELLE**

*(sighs)*

I know, but it seems like the only time I'm around is when there's trouble. You know, just once I'd like to be there when a baby is born.

**XENA**

*(whispering)*

Someday, Gabrielle. Someday.

**FADE OUT:**

**EXT. AMAZON LAND – DAY**

Xena and Gabrielle are following the girls back to the village. Suddenly a group of scouts drop from the trees. They recognize the girls immediately, but look suspiciously at Xena and Gabrielle. The scout leader, a young woman of 20 or so steps forward.

**MASADA**

*(to the girls)*

You've finished your Rite?

The girls look between themselves and Esme starts to say something but Gabrielle steps forward.

**GABRIELLE**

They have. They have completed their Rite of Passage successfully.



**MASADA**

Who are you?



**ESME**

Masada, this is Queen Gabrielle, be respectful.

Masada head drops immediately.

**MADSADA**

Please forgive me, My Queen.

**GABRIELLE**

There's nothing to forgive Masada.  
It's not as if I'm here a lot.

**MASADA**

*(gesturing to her scouts)*  
We would be honored if you would  
allow us to escort you to the village.

**XENA**

Esme and the others tell us that your  
having boarder problems. Wouldn't it  
be better if you stayed on your patrol?

**MASADA**

But....

**GABRIELLE**

I think Esme and the others have earned the  
right to escort us to the village. They've  
done a fine job of escorting use this far.

**MASADA**

As you wish My Queen.

They continue past the scouting party toward the village. Jinx moves next to Gabrielle and smiles.

**JINX**

Thank you, My Queen. It was kind  
of you to cover for us like that.

**GABRIELLE**

I wasn't covering for you Jinx. In my opinion  
you and your sisters have passed your  
Rite you worked hard and you learned a lot.

**PATIA**

But there's still more to learn, right Xena?

**XENA**

You never stop learning.



**FADE OUT.**

**END ACT FOUR**

**TAG**

**FADE IN:**

**EXT. AMAZON VILLAGE – DAY**

Several of the village elders are standing with Xena and Gabrielle as the six girls are whisked away by their peers all of them talking excitedly about their adventure. Xena and Gabrielle just smile. One of the older women lays a gentle hand on Gabrielle's arm.

**ILYSA**

My Queen, we are grateful for your arrival.  
We need your leadership in these trying times.



**GABRIELLE**

We're happy to help and we'll do what we can.

**ILYSA**

Just as all of our stories of you say. You come  
to us when we need you most and you lead us.  
But now I'm sure you must be tired. Let  
us take you to a hut so that you might rest.

**GABRIELLE**

That would be very welcome.

**ILYSA**

Right this way.

Ilysa leads then across the compound to a large hut. She gestures to the door and smiles as Gabrielle passes. She cocks her head when Xena starts to follow.

**ILYSA**

Will you be staying with our Queen, Xena?

**XENA**

Where else would I stay?



**ILYSA**

Perhaps other quarters could....

**GABRIELLE**

No. Xena stays with me.



**ILYSA**

As you wish, My Queen.

The woman bows and leaves them standing and watching her go.

**XENA**

What do you suppose that was all about?

**GABRIELLE**

I'm sure we'll find out soon enough.  
But right now, I have this knot right  
between my shoulder blades.

**XENA**

Luckily, I know the cure for that.

Xena moves ahead of Gabrielle and pushes the door open.

**XENA**

*(Cont'd)*

After you, My Queen.



**FADE OUT.**



**DISCLAIMER**

No Amazons were hurt during the production of this motion picture,  
but Xena sure was glad she missed those teen years with Eve.

