

## Xena: Warrior Princess - Subtext Virtual Season 9



**Production #V905 – Yo Ho Ho**

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**WRITTEN BY**  
**Susanne Beck**

**PRODUCED BY**  
**Carol Stephens**

**DIRECTED BY**  
**Denise Byrd**

**SCREENGRABS**  
**Judi Mair**

**ARTWORK**  
**Lucia**

**TITLE GRAPHIC**  
**Calli**

## TEASER

FADE IN:

### EXT. CAMP - BEFORE DAWN

It is a well-laid camp. A fire, banked to smoldering coals, glows mellowly in the darkness. Off to one side, a gold-colored mare twitches in her sleep, stamps one hoof, and swishes her tail before settling.

Closer to the fire, a large, rumpled bedroll is laid out, and beneath the fur cover two figures lay cocooned tightly against one another. The smaller of the two figures shifts, then shifts again, pulling slightly away from the comfortable grasp of her partner.

Another groan and she flips onto her side. Green eyes pop open and scowl.

**XENA**

(fuzzily)

Wha...? What is it?



**GABRIELLE**

(grumpily)

Rock.

One hand darts from beneath the warm blanket and searches around the ground under the bedroll until the offending rock is plucked up and tossed away.

**XENA**

Better?

Gabrielle squirms around, feeling for more rocks with the length of her body. Finding none, she smiles, satisfied.

**GABRIELLE**

Much.

**XENA**

Good. C'mere.

Her smile broadening and her eyes closing, Gabrielle willingly snuggles back into Xena's warm embrace.

All is silent for a moment. Then....

Gabrielle's face twitches. She scrunches her nose, then brushes a hand against her cheek. Suddenly a sharp smack is heard, and Gabrielle once again opens her eyes, scowling.

**GABRIELLE**

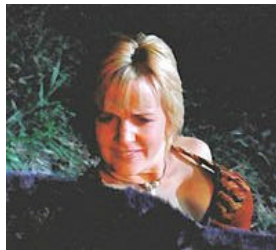
Ouch.

**XENA**

You all right?

**GABRIELLE**

Tartarus blasted mosquitoes. Why don't they ever pick on you?!



**XENA**

*(still sleepy)*

'Cause you're a lot sweeter than I am.

**GABRIELLE**

You know, Xena? Any other night, that might work. But tonight?

She growls.

**GABRIELLE**

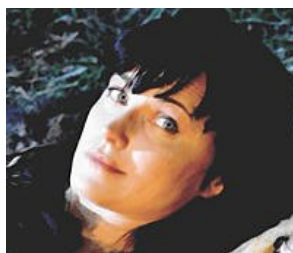
*(cont'd)*

It's almost dawn, and I've had an hour's sleep, if that.

Xena opens one eye.

**XENA**

We'll sleep in, then. Don't have anywhere we particularly need to be.



**GABRIELLE**

Easy for you to say. You  
don't have mosquitoes  
using you for target practice.

Xena grins.

**XENA**

C'mere.

As Gabrielle rolls back to her, Xena tugs the fur blanket up so that it is covering all but the very top of Gabrielle's head.

**XENA**

*(cont'd)*

Can you breathe all  
right down there?

Gabrielle takes in a deep breath through her nose, smiling as she inhales the scent of leather and Xena.

**GABRIELLE**

*(purring)*

Oh yeah.

**XENA**

Good. Try and get  
some sleep. I'll keep  
mosquito watch.

**CUT TO:**

## **EXT. CAMP - A LITTLE AFTER DAWN**

Gabrielle awakens abruptly yet again. Keeping her eyes closed, she attempts to determine what has disturbed her slumber this time. No rocks. No mosquitoes. A searching hand makes its way to Xena's side of the bedroll, only to find it empty. Not that this is surprising.

Finally, with a heartfelt sigh, she opens her eyes.

To find a rotten-toothed, ill dressed, unshaven, and stinking mass of humanity ogling her from above.

Grabbing her sais from the ground next to her, Gabrielle uses the butt of the left one to take the man's knee out, then quickly hops to her feet as he collapses onto the bedrolls.

**XENA**  
(cackling)  
Told ya!



The fallen man simply holds his knee and groans.

Gabrielle looks to her right to see Xena fighting four similarly disgusting bandits. Two more see her and head her way. She easily downs the first one with a right-left combination to the chest and a spinning kick to the head.

The second one, more cautious than his fellows, takes a little more time. After finally egging him into attacking with his sword, she catches the clumsy swipe with both of her sais, rips the weapon from his hands, drops the sais, and jabs two sets of fingers into his neck.

The man drops to his knees, breathless.

**GABRIELLE**  
I was in a bad mood already, buddy,  
and you just made it worse. So if  
you don't want the last thirty seconds  
of your life to be spent like this, I'd  
suggest you tell me what I want to know.

Having finished off with her own set of scumbags, Xena looks on, arms crossed over her chest, clearly impressed.

**BANDIT**  
Wh-what??

**GABRIELLE**  
What in Tartarus are you doing here?  
Saw two women sleeping alone in  
the woods and what? Wanted  
to invite us over for tea??



**BANDIT**

M-m-money! J-jewels!

Leaning back, Gabrielle laughs. It's not a very genuine laugh, but it's a laugh nonetheless.

**GABRIELLE**

Oh, buddy, did you ever pick the  
wrong camp! Do you see any  
jewels lying around here?  
Any money, for that matter?

**BANDIT**

*(seriously short of breath)*  
P-please!

Gabrielle pretends to think about his plea.

**GABRIELLE**

I dunno. Xena....

**BANDIT**

XENA?!?



**GABRIELLE**

*(grinning)*

Didn't realize that either, didja?

*(beat)*

As I was saying, Xena, do you  
think I should take the pinch off,  
or should I keep the "stupid"  
genes from polluting the pool?

Xena smirks.

**XENA**

Your call.

Gabrielle pretends to think a second longer, then with lightning speed, undoes the pinch. The man falls forward, gasping for breath. Gabrielle grabs his shoulder and pushes so they are again face to face. She leans in close.

**GABRIELLE**

You might wanna leave now.  
Before I change my mind.



With wide eyes, the man jumps to his feet and runs out of the camp. The rest of his buddies are all the worse for wear and limp after him, holding tight to various wounds.

Still smirking, Xena crosses the clearing until she is by Gabrielle's side.

**XENA**

Well, that was a refreshing  
pick-me-up, don't you think?

Gabrielle growls.

Laughing, Xena pulls Gabrielle in close and kisses the top of her head.

**XENA**

*(cont'd)*

Sorry 'bout that. I keep warning  
them to just stick with me,  
but they don't wanna listen.

**GABRIELLE**

Yeah, well, could  
you do me a favor?

**XENA**

Name it.

**GABRIELLE**

There's a coastal town not far  
from here. Can we go there and  
sleep in an honest-to-gods inn  
tonight? I'm sick of rocks. I'm  
sick of bugs. And I'm sick of  
drooling, smelly bandits  
interrupting my sleep. Please?

**XENA**

Sure.

Gabrielle pulls away slowly, disbelief evident on her face.

**GABRIELLE**

Sure? That easy?  
No arm twisting?  
No cajoling? No pleading?

Xena grins.

**XENA**

What Gabrielle wants,  
Gabrielle gets.



**FADE OUT.**

**END OF TEASER**



## ACT ONE

FADE IN:

### EXT. COASTAL TOWN - AFTERNOON

As coastal towns go, this one is pretty representative of its breed. The commingled scents of saltwater and gently rotting fish permeate the place. The wooden buildings are worn and warped and dull from the continuous wind and salt spray, but they seem in good repair for all the stress.

Coming by way of the main costal road, Xena and Gabrielle pass through large groups of sailors loading their heavy catches onto the docks, and past the long line of merchant ships unloading bright wares onto those same docks. The mood is loud and roughly-good-natured, but because they are women, they get their fair share of cat-calls and whistles from sex-starved sailors. They roundly ignore all of them as they push past the teeming tide of unwashed humanity looking for an inn.

The first one they come to is a seedy little dive with the charming name of The Third Leg. As they approach, the levered doors swing open and an obviously drunken sailor is tossed out into the mud.

From his ground level view, he spies two pairs of boots directly ahead, and allows his gaze to travel up two pairs of shapely legs, one set quite a bit longer than the other, then over two fabulous bodies. Completely missing twin icy stares directed his way, he jumps to his feet and brushes his hands off on his filthy gray pants, trying his best smile out for size. The fact that the two remaining teeth in his mouth have been reduced to blackened stumps makes the effect a less than attractive one.

#### SAILOR

Hello, la <hic> la <hic> ladies!  
You look like a coupla fun <hic>  
gals! Howsabout a drink?

Xena and Gabrielle bend back at the waist, fanning the air in front of their faces free of the toxic fumes of his breath.

#### GABRIELLE

Thanks, but... We'll pass on  
that offer. Tempting as it sounds.



#### SAILOR

Awww, c'mon! Jes one?

Reaching out, the sailor clamps a hand around Xena's bracer. Xena freezes. Looks down at his hand. Looks up at him.

The sailor's grin widens.

Xena bares her teeth. She's not smiling.

The sailor's smile fades. He releases Xena's arm and takes a careful, wobbly, step back.

Then he notices Gabrielle again, and his smile reappears.

**SAILOR**

*(cont'd)*

How 'bout you, ho <hic>  
honey? We could have a  
good <hic> time, you an' me.

**GABRIELLE**

Not for all the dinars in Greece.

**SAILOR**

Oh, come on baby! Jes one.  
Then you an' me can get better  
ac <hic> ac <hic> familiar.

Stepping away from the man's reach, Gabrielle grabs him by the front of his dirty jersey and jerks him forward.

**GABRIELLE**

I am not your gal, I am not your  
honey, and I am certainly not your  
baby. Now buy a clue from the  
merchant train and go away.

He tries another grab, which Gabrielle adroitly slips, and he winds up off balance and face to chest with the Warrior Princess.

Xena plucks him away from her breastplate by the back of his shirt and stares down into his beady brown eyes.

**XENA**

Leave.  
*(beat)*  
Now.



She emphasizes her command with a slight push, and the sailor stumbles away.

**XENA**

*(cont'd)*

Guess we can cross this  
inn off our list, huh?



Gabrielle just gives her a look.

**CUT TO:**

### **EXT. COASTAL TOWN - AFTERNOON**

Xena and Gabrielle move further into the town. The pickings are pretty slim. The inns that aren't seedy are full, and the ones that aren't full are little better than rat-traps filled with drunken, sometimes violent sailors fresh from the sea.

Xena can tell by the slight slump to Gabrielle's shoulders that she is becoming more and more dejected. Just as she is about to suggest giving up and trying another town further up the coast, they cross into a section of town that is clean and clearly affluent.

**GABRIELLE**

Xena, look!

Xena looks. Before her is a large, clean, well-made inn bearing the name The Headman's Inn. Looking like a temple to the Olympian gods, it is made almost entirely of marble. Large Corinthian columns stretch from ground to roof. Large balconies dot the façade on all sides.

To the right of the large, blue front door, a rather rotund man stands dressed in a costume strange to Xena's eyes. Deep navy pants are topped by some sort of matching coat that sports thick gold threadwork and matching tassels than hang from his shoulders. On his head is perched a blue, billed cap of a type Xena has never seen.

He smiles at her and touches white-gloved fingers to the shining bill of his cap, then turns away to speak to a young, well-dressed couple who approaches him.

Shifting her attention away from the strangely dressed man, Xena looks to the right of the large structure where a patio made from crushed stones of every hue holds a dozen or so small tables, each covered with fine linen. Each table is occupied by elegantly attired men and women who eat and drink of food that, by its very scent, must be second only to ambrosia in taste and quality.

Off to one side of the patio, a young, blonde woman clad in a flowing white gown plays a harp softly and with expert skill.

As Xena looks on, she knows that even one night in this fine establishment is well beyond their means. Gabrielle hadn't been joking with the bandit earlier, when she had told him that he had chosen the wrong camp to loot. Living a mostly vagabond existence gives them little in the way of funds for necessities, let alone the luxury this Inn represents.

With a soft sigh, she shifts her gaze to Argo's saddlebag, where the very tip of an exquisite bone-handled knife protrudes. It has taken her several months to carve the intricate details of a mermaid into the hilt to her satisfaction, and she had hoped, at the very least, to trade the weapon for new tack for Argo, and perhaps new boots for them both. Such a move she knows would be eminently practical.

One look at Gabrielle's shining face as she watches the diners, however, and practicality goes out the proverbial window. To see and keep that look on Gabrielle's face, Xena would gladly sell everything she owned. Reaching into the saddle, she pulls out the knife and wraps it in a soft, black cloth. She then lays a gentle hand on Gabrielle's shoulder, distracting her from her reverie.

Gabrielle turns, smiling.

**GABRIELLE**

Hey.

**XENA**

You ready to go inside?  
Get a place for the night?

The smile fades.

**GABRIELLE**

*(sadly)*

Oh, Xena, I don't think we  
could ever afford to stay in  
a place like this. It sure  
is pretty to look at, though.



**XENA**

You never know.  
Let's give it a try, hmm?

After a moment, Gabrielle nods, and the two walk hand in hand toward the door. The strangely attired man gives them a smile, a short bow, and a tip of the cap before reaching for the door's heavy brass knob and opening it for them.

**GABRIELLE**

Thank you.

**DOORMAN**

My pleasure, my lady. Have  
a wonderful stay with us.

**CUT TO:**

### **INT. HEADMAN'S INN - AFTERNOON**

The Inn's interior décor is one of understated elegance. Subdued tapestries line the walls. The marble floors are covered here and there with exotic rugs from the East. Flowering plants and tall, leafy trees give a sense of the outdoors indoors.

From behind a long, dark-wood desk, a nattily dressed man looks up at their entrance and smiles.

**CONCIERGE**

Good afternoon, ladies.  
How may I help you?

**XENA**

We'd like a room.



**CONCIERGE**

*(brightly)*

Well you've certainly come to the right  
place then! We have several rooms  
available. Each comes with a large,  
down bed, a balcony, a Roman bath,  
and all the amenities. Morning and  
evening meals are, of course, included.

**XENA**

How much?

The man's smile broadens.

**CONCIERGE**

Only thirty dinars.

**GABRIELLE**

Thirty...!

**XENA**

It's all right, Gabrielle.

Lifting the covered knife, Xena is only stopped by a voice that sounds behind her.

**VOICE**

(o.s.)

On the house, Milenteus.  
These women are our guests.

Xena turns slowly, pinning the speaker with her eyes. He is a handsome, middle-aged man dressed with the same understated elegance that is present in the hotel. He smiles. It is a warm expression that reaches his eyes, chasing something darker, sadder, away. Standing, he bows to them both.

**MAN**

Welcome to The Headman's  
Inn, Xena and Gabrielle.

Xena's eyes narrow.

**XENA**

We don't take charity  
from strangers.

The man spreads his hands wide.

**MAN**

No charity intended, Xena. This  
world of ours has far too few  
true heroes. Those there  
are should be honored.

Xena continues to stare at him, her disbelief and suspicion plain.

**XENA**

Who are you and  
what do you want?



His smile still firmly in place, the man approaches slowly. There is nothing but warmth emanating from him.

**MAN**

I am Andros, the Headman of  
this town. And this is my Inn, aptly  
if unimaginatively named. And  
what I would like is for the two  
of you to stay here, as my guests.

*(beat)*

Please. Stay the night at least.

Xena still looks suspicious, but Gabrielle decides to take the man at his word. Smiling, she steps forward and clasps his hand.

**GABRIELLE**

Thank you, Andros. I  
think we'll take you up  
on your generous offer.

Andros shakes her hand warmly, smiling broadly.

**ANDROS**

Thank you, Gabrielle, for  
honoring us with your presence  
here. If you'll allow me, I  
will show you to your rooms.

Gabrielle looks to Xena who finally, reluctantly nods.



**ANDROS**

*(cont'd)*

Good! If you'll follow me?

**CUT TO:**

**INT. INN ROOM - AFTERNOON**

The door closes quietly behind Andros' retreating form, leaving Xena and Gabrielle alone in the large, well-appointed room. Gabrielle turns in a slow circle, her face bright with wonder and contentment.

**GABRIELLE**

Would you look at this place,  
Xena? It's got everything!

Walking over to the bed, she runs a hand along the silken sheets, grinning like a madwoman.

**GABRIELLE**

*(cont'd)*

Oh yeah. I'm gonna  
loooooove this.



**XENA**

*(preoccupied)*  
Mm.

Gabrielle straightens.

**GABRIELLE**

We're in a room most kings  
would kill to have, and the best  
you can say about it is 'Mm'?

Xena gives her a look, which she returns. Doubled.

**GABRIELLE**

*(cont'd)*

Fine. You can grump around  
all you want. I've got a  
Roman tub calling my name.

Walking to the tub, she goes to her knees and places the marble plug into the drain. Then, shifting the lever that covers the spout, she moves slightly away as steaming water enters into the deep, tiled bath. Several jars of bath salts sit along the rim, and she opens each one, taking an appreciative sniff, until she finds the one she likes, and adds it to the water. The steam becomes fragrant with the scent of jasmine, and she inhales deeply, then sighs in pleasure.

**GABRIELLE**

*(cont'd)*

Now this is living.



Coming back to her feet, she quickly divests herself of her clothing, then steps slowly into the deep tub, groaning in appreciation as the warm water soothes her tired muscles. Lowering herself onto a bench on the far side of the bath, she looks across the water at her partner, who is looking out the balcony door, her spine stiff, shoulders tense. She sighs.

**GABRIELLE**

*(cont'd)*

Xena, can you just leave  
whatever's worrying you at  
the door for a few minutes  
and enjoy the bath with me?

I don't think we're in any  
immediate danger, do you?

Xena turns to look at her, then shrugs and walks to the bath. As Gabrielle looks on in appreciation, Xena strips off her armor and clothing, and steps down into the water.

**GABRIELLE**

*(cont'd)*

C'mere.

As Xena approaches, Gabrielle puts her hands on her partner's hips, turns her so she is facing away, then urges her to sit between her legs. Then reaching up, she begins to knead the tense muscles in Xena's shoulders.

**GABRIELLE**

*(cont'd)*

Now, do you want to tell me  
why you're one big knot?



Silent for a moment, and truly enjoying the massage, Xena finally speaks.

**XENA**

It's Andros.

**GABRIELLE**

*(surprisedly)*

Andros? Xena, he's one  
of the nicest people  
we've met in a long time.

**XENA**

That's what's bothering me.

Gabrielle laughs.

**GABRIELLE**

Xena, that doesn't make sense... even for you.

Xena gives her a look over her shoulder, then turns back away.

**XENA**

I don't trust him. There's something he's not telling us. I can see it in his eyes.

**GABRIELLE**

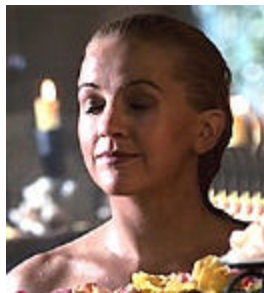
Well, that's easy to fix. When we go down for dinner, you just use a little "Warrior Princess" persuasion, and bam! No more secrets.

That gets a reluctant chuckle from the Warrior Princess in question.

**GABRIELLE**

*(cont'd)*

That's better.  
Now c'mon. Relax.



**XENA**

Can't.

Grinning, Gabrielle moves her head until her lips are right next to Xena's ear. Her hands disappear beneath the water.

**GABRIELLE**

*(purring)*

Are you sure?

**XENA**  
Well....



Gabrielle laughs softly.

**GABRIELLE**  
That's what I thought.

**FADE OUT.**

**END OF ACT ONE**

## ACT TWO

FADE IN:

### EXT. INN PATIO - EVENING

The diners have changed, but the ambience remains the same. Soft strains of harp music float sweetly on the air to mingle with the sounds of muted conversation and cutlery striking against fragile bone china.

Xena and Gabrielle, freshly washed and looking much more relaxed, sit at a table in a quiet corner, beneath a flickering sconce that washes their faces with dancing light. An immaculately dressed man approaches their table and lays out their food and drink with professional aplomb.

His tasks complete, the waiter smiles, gives a small bow, and leaves them to their peace.

Gabrielle immediately digs in, then rolls her eyes back in pure pleasure.

**GABRIELLE**

*(groaning)*

Oh, Xena, this is  
the Elysian Fields.

Xena tastes a bit of what's on her plate.

**XENA**

It's all right.



Gabrielle looks at her.

Xena smirks.

They settle into companionable silence and enjoy the feast laid out before them.

DISSOLVE TO:

### EXT. INN PATIO - LATE EVENING

Chewing the last morsel of an awe-inspiring dessert, Gabrielle pushes herself slightly away from the table and leans back, contentedly patting her straining belly. Xena looks over at her, quirking a smile.

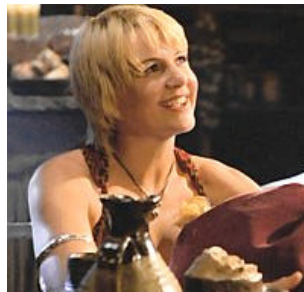
**XENA**

You ok?



**GABRIELLE**

If I were anymore all right, you'd be picking me up off the ground with a spoon. Xena, this has got to be the best meal I've ever eaten. And I've eaten a lot of meals!



**XENA**

*(dryly)*

Ya don't say.

**GABRIELLE**

*(grinning)*

I definitely do say.

Gabrielle allows her eyes to slip closed. Sleepy, sated, and content, she finds herself drifting on the currents of the music and soft conversation that surrounds her. In an often frenetic life, she welcomes the peaceful interludes when they come.

Xena gazes at her from across the table, a gentle, loving smile on her face.

After a moment, a movement catches the corner of her eye, and she turns in its direction to see Andros standing on the western edge of the Inn's elaborate portico, looking at the rising moon, his face haggard and seemingly ten years older than it was when she first saw him.

Her face thoughtful, Xena pushes herself up from the table and rounds it, coming to stand beside Gabrielle. Gabrielle's eyes open. She smiles.

**GABRIELLE**

Hi.

**XENA**

Hi yourself. I'm gonna go  
check up on something.  
Be right back.

Gabrielle's eyes follow the tilt of Xena's head to where Andros stands, still staring into the sky. She makes as if to rise.

**GABRIELLE**

I'll....

**XENA**

No. I can talk to him. You just  
stay here and relax. Ok?

Xena squeezes Gabrielle's shoulder. Gabrielle covers Xena's hand with her own and smiles. Captivated by the smile, Xena leans over and presses a soft kiss to her cheek.

**GABRIELLE**

Ok.

**XENA**

Be right back.

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. PORTICO - NIGHT**

Andros stands in a shadowed corner, watching the moon as it rises over the low hills. He suddenly feels a presence beside him and nearly jumps out of his sandals as he turns to come face to face with the Warrior Princess herself.

**ANDROS**

Oh...!

You startled me.

*(beat)*

Is everything all right? Something  
not to your satisfaction?

**XENA**

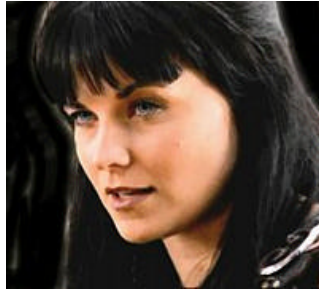
No complaints.

**ANDROS**

Oh. Well, good. I'm glad to  
hear that. Is...there anything  
I can help you with?

**XENA**

You might want to start with telling me what it is you're trying to hide.



Andros' eyes widen.

**ANDROS**

Hide? Xena, I assure you, I'm not hiding anything.

Xena slowly crosses her arms. One eyebrow goes up.

**ANDROS**

*(cont'd)*

I swear it to you.

He hesitates at Xena's continuing stare.

**ANDROS**

*(cont'd)*

P-private thoughts only, as we all do. Please, I only wish for you to enjoy your stay here.

**XENA**

Well see, that's where I have the problem, Andros. You're hiding something, and that's making my gut twitch. And when my gut twitches, I can't relax. And if I can't relax ....

A charged silence falls between them until finally, Andros' shoulders sag.

**ANDROS**

You know of Ikos.

**XENA**

It's an island near Crete. A haven for warlords, pirates and other scum.

**ANDROS**

My family is there.

**XENA**

Mm.

**ANDROS**

My wife and our two young daughters. They were captured by pirates and taken there against their will.

**XENA**

What happened?

Suddenly drained of his energy, Andros leans against one of the Corinthian pillars with his head touching the cold, unforgiving marble.

**ANDROS**

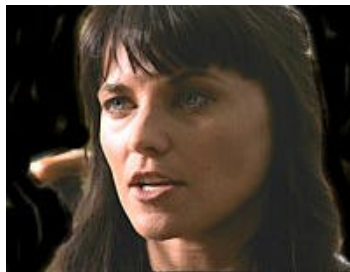
Two months ago, we began having trouble with pirates in this town. Especially the one who calls himself Igor the Black. Normally, even the worst pirates confine themselves to the outskirts, but these were moving inland, threatening citizens and causing a lot of problems.

*(beat)*

We have a militia here, and they're very good at what they do, but even they were overwhelmed.

**XENA**

Go on.



**ANDROS**

It was then that my wife received a message that her mother had taken ill and wasn't expected to live. I thought it best to send her and our daughters to see her. I thought it would keep them safe.



**XENA**

And it didn't.

**ANDROS**

No. I had sent five of my most trusted men to serve as their protectors. Only one returned. Near death. He'd been beaten, and stabbed, and ordered to deliver this message to me.

Reaching into the folds of his shirt, Andros pulls out a dirty, bloody, and much-handled scroll, which he hands over to Xena.

Unfurling the scroll, Xena reads the poorly worded message contained within. Her eyes widen slightly at the amount of ransom demanded. After a moment, she looks up, meeting Andros' steady gaze.

**XENA**

You can't afford what they're asking?

**ANDROS**

*(very seriously)*

Xena, my family is the most dear thing in all the world to me. I would pay those pirate scum their blood money if it meant I had to sell everything I owned and steal the rest. There's nothing I wouldn't do to ensure their return. Nothing.

**XENA**

Then where's the problem?

**ANDROS**

Delivering it. There isn't a ship's captain worth his salt who would go anywhere near that island, no matter how much money I offered. And the ones who would go, well, I'd never see the money or my family again.

**XENA**

I see your point.

**ANDROS**

I've been given three days to deliver the ransom. I bought a small pleasure craft that I plan to sail to Ikos myself. At least I'll be close to them, even if my plan doesn't work. It's all I can think of to do.

**XENA**  
(*thoughtfully*)  
Maybe not.

Andros looks at her, confused.

**ANDROS**  
Have I missed something?

Xena smiles just slightly, more a quick twitch of her lips than anything else.

**XENA**  
Not really. Gabrielle and I  
might be able to help you.



**ANDROS**  
What? No, Xena. No.  
I could never ask....

**XENA**  
You're not asking.  
I'm offering.

**ANDROS**  
No. No. Thank you.  
But no. I couldn't possibly....

**XENA**  
As I said, I'm offering.

She smiles. It is the smile of a predator; immaculate white teeth and flashing eyes. Seeing it, Andros is hard-pressed to keep a shiver from going down his spine.

**XENA**  
(*cont'd*)  
Let me talk to Gabrielle. We'll  
let you know more in the morning.

**ANDROS**  
But....

**XENA**  
Goodnight, Andros.

And with that, she is gone, leaving him to stare after her in a mass of confusion and for the first time hopeful.

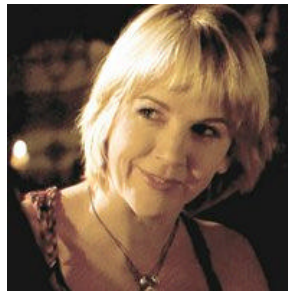
CUT TO:

### EXT. PATIO - NIGHT

Gabrielle watches as Xena approaches, knowing from the set lines of her face that something interesting has just transpired. She gives Xena a smile as Xena approaches the table to stand beside her.

GABRIELLE

That took longer than I thought.



XENA

*(distractedly)*

Are you ready to go up?

GABRIELLE

Are you gonna tell me  
what you guys talked about?

XENA

Yup.

GABRIELLE

Then I'm ready.

XENA

Let's go, then.

CUT TO:

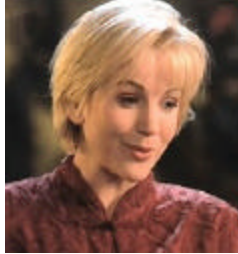
### INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Clad in a silken robe supplied by the Inn, Gabrielle sits on the comfortable bed. The down comforter is pooled in her lap as she watches Xena ritualistically divest herself of her weapons and armor.

When she is down to her leathers, Gabrielle pats the bed and Xena readily accepts the invitation. She climbs into the gigantic bed and slides over, settling down next to Gabrielle. Their bodies touch companionably along their lengths from shoulder to hip to ankle.

**GABRIELLE**

So. Tell me. What were you guys  
in such deep conversation about?



Smiling slightly, Xena leans her head back against the wall.

**XENA**

Andros' family was kidnapped  
by a band of pirates.

Shocked, Gabrielle sits up, turning to look directly at Xena.

**GABRIELLE**

Xena, that's horrible!  
Are... are they still alive?

**XENA**

I don't know. They're being  
held on Ikos. There's  
been a ransom demand.

**GABRIELLE**

Dear gods. That's a horrible place!  
My father used to threaten to ship  
Lila and me there when we were bad.

Now it's Xena's turn to look shocked.

**XENA**

Nice father.

**GABRIELLE**

Yeah, well....



She shrugs.

**GABRIELLE**

*(cont'd)*

Can't he afford the ransom?  
He certainly seems rich enough.

**XENA**

He can afford it.  
That's not the problem.

**GABRIELLE**

Than what is?

**XENA**

There's nobody around who's willing  
to deliver it. Not who can be trusted,  
anyway. He's planning on going  
on his own tomorrow.

**GABRIELLE**

Xena, we can't let him do that!  
He's a merchant, not a warrior!  
They'll kill him and take the ransom  
and his family will die anyway!

**XENA**

I know.

**GABRIELLE**

Well, I assume you told  
him we'd help him out.

**XENA**

I did.

Gabrielle grins.

**GABRIELLE**

And the plan?

**XENA**

*(smirking)*

What makes you think  
I'm gonna tell you?



Rolling her eyes, Gabrielle pokes Xena's chest with the tip of one strong finger.

**GABRIELLE**

You just better tell me.

**XENA**

Or?

**GABRIELLE**

Xena....

Holding up her hands, Xena gives in rather easily.

**XENA**

There's a cove to the north of here.  
Pirate ships often set in to offload their  
loot. There's a system of caves back  
there where they can stash their  
stuff until the coast is clear.

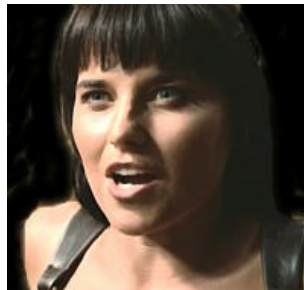
**GABRIELLE**

And you know this because...?

An eyebrow wings upward.

**XENA**

I was a pirate once, remember?



**GABRIELLE**

*(drolly)*

Oh, yes. How could I have  
forgotten? And the plan?

**XENA**

*(casually)*

Well, I figure we head up there  
tomorrow morning, scout the  
area, and when the time is  
right, hijack us a pirate ship and  
its crew and set sail for Ikos.

Gabrielle looks at her as if she's taken one two many sword blows to the head.

**GABRIELLE**

We're going to hijack...  
a pirate ship.

**XENA**

Mm. Hm.

**GABRIELLE**

Pirates. Like hooks for arms, pegs  
for legs, black patches where  
their eyes used to be pirates?

**XENA**

Yup.

**GABRIELLE**

Knives between the teeth,  
swords out the wazoo, walk  
the plank kind of pirates?

**XENA**

Mm. Hm.

**GABRIELLE**

You and me. Against an  
entire shipload of pirates.



**XENA**

Yup.

Gabrielle breaks out in a wide grin.

**GABRIELLE**

Good plan!

Xena can't help but let out the laugh she's been holding in, and gathers Gabrielle into her arms as she does so.

**XENA**

Have I mentioned lately  
how much I love you?

Gabrielle pretends to think for a moment.

**GABRIELLE**

I dunno. You might have  
to refresh my memory.

Turning Gabrielle's head just slightly, Xena lowers her own until their lips meet in a kiss that rapidly deepens into heady passion. When at last they break away, both are breathing heavily.

**GABRIELLE**

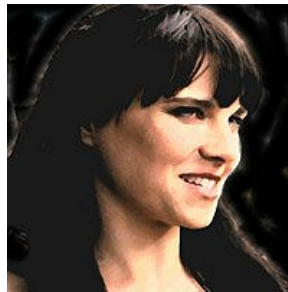
*(cont'd)*

Whoo! That much, huh?

Xena grins.

**XENA**

Oh no. Much more.



They grin at one another like sappy fools for a long moment. Then....

**GABRIELLE**

Xena?

**XENA**

Yes?

**GABRIELLE**

If this is gonna be our last  
night on land for awhile....

**XENA**

Yes?

**GABRIELLE**

Let's make it count.

Grinning even more broadly, Xena pulls Gabrielle against her.

**XENA**

*(very softly)*

Yo. Ho. Ho.

**CUT TO:**



## INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

Gabrielle walks into the room, her arms piled high with clothing and stops, eyes wide in amazement and admiration.

There standing before her is Xena. Dressed in a flowing white shirt that comes in tight against her forearms and torso, a bright red sash wrapped around her waist, and tight black leather pants, she is a vision to Gabrielle. A fancy-hilted saber hangs from a belt at her waist, knives are tucked into the high tops of her shiny, black boots, and her hair flows wild and free over her shoulders.



**GABRIELLE**

Whoa.

Grinning, Xena spreads her hands.

**XENA**

You like?



**GABRIELLE**

I think you should keep  
it after this is all over.

**XENA**

Think so, huh?

**GABRIELLE**

Oh yeah.

Chuckling softly, Xena walks to where Gabrielle is standing.

**XENA**

So, what do you have here?

**GABRIELLE**

Makings of my pirate costume... I think.

**XENA**

Let's see.

Plucking the silken fabrics from the stack in Gabrielle's arms, she grins.

**XENA**

*(cont'd)*

Oh yeah, I think these  
will work just fine.

**CUT TO:**

### **INT. BEDROOM - ONE CANDLEMARK LATER**

Gabrielle stands open-mouthed in front of a mirror propped up in one corner of the massive room. Her upper body is draped in several lengths of colorful silk that look as if they're only being held up by a wing and a prayer to the gods. They're actually much more secure than that, and will allow her to fight without worry of overexposing herself, but the whole effect is somewhat... different to her eyes. Her lower half is sensibly covered, and her weapons are near to hand, but still....



After several false starts, she finally manages to find her voice.

**GABRIELLE**

Xena?

**XENA**

Mm?

**GABRIELLE**

You're a pirate, right?

**XENA**

*(drawling)*

Yes....

**GABRIELLE**

And I'm supposed to  
be... what, exactly?



Coming up behind Gabrielle, Xena puts an arm around her waist and pulls her tightly against her.

**XENA**

You are the pirate's  
most valuable treasure.

**GABRIELLE**

You mean I'm booty.

Xena pulls back just enough to examine the silk-clad body part in question.

**XENA**

You might say that, yes.

**GABRIELLE**

This is payback for  
Rome, isn't it?

Xena contrives to look shocked.

**XENA**

Would I do that to you?

Gabrielle's eyes answer that question better than her lips ever could.

Grinning, Xena hugs Gabrielle, then releases her. Her face sobers.

**XENA**

*(cont'd)*

The truth is, the sea still gets to you. And if you should get sick, your absence from my side would be difficult to explain if you were an experienced pirate.

Thinking on Xena's words a moment, Gabrielle finally nods.

**GABRIELLE**

You're right. Not that I'm thrilled about it, but you're right.

**XENA**

*(seriously)*

Well, is there some other way you can think of to work this?



Gabrielle thinks again, then shakes her head.

**GABRIELLE**

No, you're right. A seasick pirate isn't exactly the look we're going for.

**XENA**

Not really, no.

**GABRIELLE**

Well... do I at least get to fight, if it's needed?

Xena grins and gently pokes an area of exposed skin.

**XENA**

Do I look like the type who enjoys having wimpy little body slaves hanging around?

**GABRIELLE**

Hm. There might be some perks to this job after all.

**XENA**

I figured you'd see it my way eventually.

**GABRIELLE**

*(warningly)*

Just remember....

**XENA**

I know. I know. Paybacks.

**GABRIELLE**

Heh.

**CUT TO:**

## **INT. INN RECEPTION AREA - MORNING**

The reception area is empty save for the Concierge, who gives Xena and Gabrielle a polite smile as they enter.

Andros then enters through a side door, half carrying/half dragging a heavy golden chest behind him. He gives them both a broad smile.

**ANDROS**

Xena! Gabrielle! You're both looking... um....

Gabrielle laughs.

**GABRIELLE**

That's ok, Andros. We're pretty much used to that reaction no matter what we're wearing.

Returning the laugh, Andros drops the chest with a grunt of relief.

**XENA**

We won't be needing that.

**ANDROS**

Excuse me?

Xena points to the chest.

**XENA**

I assume that's the ransom.



**ANDROS**

Yes, it is, but....

**XENA**

We won't be needing it.

**ANDROS**

But how...?

Gabrielle approaches Andros and lays a hand on his wrist. She smiles.

**GABRIELLE**

Andros, these men stole your family. Do you really think they deserve a reward for that?

**ANDROS**

No, but....

**GABRIELLE**

Keep the money. Give it to someone who deserves it.

**ANDROS**

You deserve it. For all you're doing for my family.

**XENA**

No.

**ANDROS**

But....

**GABRIELLE**

Andros, give it to someone who needs it. Surely there are poor people in this town who could use this money. We've seen them when we were walking through.

**ANDROS**

Well, I suppose I could....

**GABRIELLE**

Good.



Giving his wrist a final pat, she steps away.

**GABRIELLE**

*(cont'd)*

We'll see you soon, all right?  
Spend the time getting ready to  
give your family the best welcome  
home this town has ever seen.

With a final grin, Gabrielle collects Xena, and they both leave the Inn.

Andros just stands there. Staring.

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. COVE - LATE AFTERNOON**

The quiet inlet directly abuts the sea. High cliff walls tower above the surf, and deep caves dot those cliffs. The area is inaccessible to all but the heartiest of seamen and one determined Warrior Princess.

Safely hidden behind a rocky outcropping, Xena and Gabrielle look on as a small group of pirates unload wooden chests of treasure from a boat they've rowed to shore. A large PIRATE SHIP waits out at sea, bobbing in the violent surf that rams itself again and again against the towering cliffs, sending up milky curds of white foam.

The pirates carry the heavy treasure chests to a cave a short distance away from the rocky shore.

**XENA**

Looks like that's  
the last of it.

Gabrielle watches as the men, five in all, emerge from the cave and wipe the sand from their bodies. The largest pirate is a heavy man dressed in colorful silks and sporting an eye patch. He grabs something from his belt, then holds his fist out. The others gather around nervously.

**GABRIELLE**

What are they doing?

**XENA**

Drawing lots.

**GABRIELLE**

For what?

**XENA**

*(grimly)*

You'll see.



On cue, all the men open their hands. One of them, a tall, skinny fellow, turns white behind his heavy beard. He makes a desperate run for the waiting boat, only to be hauled back by his mates. Eye patch draws his sword and with the others holding the unfortunate struggling pirate by the arms, plunges it into his unprotected belly.

**GABRIELLE**

*(softly)*

By the gods... Why?

**XENA**

The pirates around here are a superstitious lot. They know that any gang with a ship brave enough to withstand the tide can come along and steal their treasure. So they kill one of their own and leave his ghost to guard the loot. No one will come as long as they see the body.

Looking a little green, Gabrielle turns away as the dead man is dragged back to the caves.

**GABRIELLE**

That's... Gods.

Xena gently rubs Gabrielle's back as the young woman takes in deep breaths of the misty salt air. After a moment, Gabrielle turns back, her color somewhat restored.



**GABRIELLE**

*(cont'd)*

Now what?



**XENA**

They'll go back out to the ship  
with the tide. And when they  
do...we'll be waitin' for 'em.

**FADE OUT.**

**END OF ACT TWO**

## ACT THREE

FADE IN:

### EXT. INLET - NIGHT

The four remaining pirates jump into their boat. Two man the long oars as the other two take seats in the bow and stern. Gradually, the boat pulls away from the shore toward the darkened hulk of the pirate ship awaiting them.

They get perhaps five boat lengths out when a hand comes up out of the water and pulls the pirate sitting on the bow backwards. The splash isn't heard over the roar of the crashing waves, and his presence isn't immediately missed.

A second later, the pirate at the stern disappears in a similar fashion.

This time the oarsmen react, stopping their rowing and straightening on the planks that serve as their seats. Simultaneously, their oars are ripped from their hands and they find themselves becoming one with the ocean as the butts of those oars clout them across the head, toppling them over the side.

Silently, Xena and Gabrielle hoist themselves into the boat and grab the oars to prevent them from floating away on the tide. They look at one another grinning, and settle down to row.

CUT TO:

### EXT. PIRATE SHIP - NIGHT

Xena privately thanks the darkness as two hooks come barreling down from the pirate ship. Torches set into the ship's rails are too far away to pick out their features. In concert, Xena and Gabrielle grab the hooks and attach them to the carved loops at the bow and stern. Xena gives a long wave over her head, and the boat is slowly raised from the water.

**XENA**  
(softly)  
You ready?



**GABRIELLE**  
As I'll ever be.

Xena grins.

**XENA**

Let's go, then.

As soon as the boat comes even with the ship's rail, Xena stands and draws her sword. The waiting pirate blinks stupidly as the face revealed by the flickering torchlight isn't the one he's expecting. He goes down like a sack of turnips as Xena drives the pommel of her sword into his jaw. Shouting her battle cry, she vaults over the railing, sword flashing.

Gabrielle enters more sedately, simply stepping onto the deck before loosening her sais. She straightens in time to see two huge pirates lumbering toward her, wickedly curved swords drawn and ready for action. Standing perfectly still, she gives them her best smile, and a rather flirtatious wave for good measure.

**GABRIELLE**

Hello, boys.

Both men come to a skidding stop and ogle her not-quite-clad body. Leers spread over their unshaven faces, and they begin to approach, more slowly this time.

**PIRATE #1**

Come to papa, you  
comely wench. I'll... oof!

The first man goes down quickly from a sai butt to his massive belly. The second quickly follows from a spinning kick to the jaw.

**GABRIELLE**

Sorry, boys. There's  
only one person who  
can call me 'wench'  
and you're not it.

With a little waggle of her fingers to the woozy pirates, Gabrielle darts off in search of more trouble.

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. DECK PIRATE SHIP - XENA'S POV - NIGHT**

Xena steps her way over downed and bleeding pirates until she is standing on the steps to the forecandle deck. A large, well-built, and expansively dressed man, obviously the PIRATE CAPTAIN, mans the wheel.

**XENA**

This is my ship now,  
Captain. Turn over  
the wheel, or die.

The Captain throws back his head in laughter and draws his sword from the bright sash around his middle. He steps away from the wheel as Xena darts up the steps, and the two clash in the middle. The Captain is strong, fast, and an expert swordsman. Sparks fly as swords strike one another again and again, their echoing clang heard over the crashing of the waves.

Xena laughs, delighted at having such a worthy opponent, and spins away as he attempts to cut into her side with a wide sweep of his cutlass. He turns with her, but is a step too late as the edge of her sword bites deep into the meat of his thigh.

**PIRATE CAPTAIN**

*(growling in pain)*

You die now, wench!

**XENA**

*(laughing)*

Guess again, 'Captain'.

Again, Xena darts out of range, laughing as his desperate, enraged lunge misses. Swords clash again, then lock. The Captain uses his greater weight to bear down on Xena. She lets him think he's winning, then pushes him away and clouts him across the jaw with the pommel of her sword. He drops to his knees, gasping. Xena grabs his hair and yanks his head back, staring deep into his dark eyes.

**XENA**

You've lost. Swear  
fealty to me or  
swim with the fish.

**PIRATE CAPTAIN**

Never!

With a grunt, Xena grabs his heavy bulk and tosses him over the side. He screams until he hits the water. Then nothing is heard but the pounding surf.

Gabrielle runs up onto the forecastle deck. Xena grabs her around the waist and pulls her in tight, eyes sparkling wickedly, grin as feral as any predator's. She turns and her gaze out over the deck and the injured pirates who are just now picking themselves off of the hard wooden planks, groaning and holding tight various injuries.

**XENA**

Seems there's been a  
management change boys.  
Play nice, and we'll  
get along just fine.

Silence. Then...

**CABIN BOY**

Who... who are you?

**XENA**  
(grinning wickedly)  
Me? I'm Xena.



**CUT TO:**

**INT. PIRATE SHIP - MAIN DECK - NIGHT**

Torches blaze as Xena walks along the line of thirty pirates all standing at attention. Her gaze is as cold as the ocean below as she stares down each man, straightening a sash here, checking the sharpness of a sword there.

Several of the men scowl after she passes by, but none of them have a chance to do any more than that as they are reminded of their place by a smiling blonde with an affinity for sais and a definite ability to use them.

Finished with her inspection, Xena moves to stand before the men, Gabrielle at her side. She smiles.

**XENA**  
Instead of cursing me, you  
should be thanking me. I  
am soon going to make  
all of you very rich men.

There is a long moment of silence, broken only by the shuffling of feet on the deck. Finally, one pirate, a giant with a flowing blonde beard, gathers up enough courage to speak.

**BLONDEBEARD**  
How you gonna do that?

Xena's smile cranks up a notch. All of the men notice that it doesn't reach her eyes.

**XENA**  
We're sailing for Ikos.



The men shout out their disbelief and displeasure in colorful language, each louder and more vehement than the last until it appears that they're on the verge of an all-out mutiny.

Gabrielle calmly reaches over, detaches the chakram from Xena's hip, and tosses it. It sails just over the heads of the men, caroms off the mainmast, clangs against the torch brackets one at a time, hits the mainmast again, and sails back into Gabrielle's hand. She smiles and replaces the weapon as the ship becomes deathly silent.

Xena tips Gabrielle a wink then turns her attention back to the pirates.

**XENA**

*(cont'd)*

As I was saying, we set sail for Ikos.  
I think it's time Igor the Black got a  
taste of his own medicine. And I think  
you're just the crew to give it to him.

The pirates shuffle their feet again, none quite daring to speak up. Several cast furtive looks in Gabrielle's direction. She grins at them, wagging her fingers.

**BLONDEBEARD**

What's in it for us?

**XENA**

Once Igor is out of the  
way, all the loot you  
can carry is yours.

The men stare at her, open-mouthed. What she's just proposed is unheard of among pirates. Captains always get a cut of the booty.

**GABRIELLE**

*(helpfully)*

Every last dinar.



A pirate with a hideously scarred face and missing fingers on his left hand steps forward.

**SCARFACE**

All the dinars in the world won't  
be no good if we're dead. Nobody  
gets on that island without the  
Black's permission. Everyone  
who ever tried it is dead.

Xena smirks.

**XENA**

There's a first time  
for everything.

**SCARFACE**

Not for me, there ain't.  
You're crazy.

He turns to face his fellows.

**SCARFACE**

*(cont'd)*

C'mon, ya lillylivers! There's thirty  
of us against two of them! Let's  
take 'em and be done with it!

Xena holds up a hand. The men freeze in place.

**XENA**

Never let it be said that Xena of  
Amphipolis is an unfair woman.  
You all have a choice. You can  
either come with me and make  
yourselves rich beyond your  
wildest dreams. Or...you can  
join your former Captain  
and feed the sharks.

With a growl, Scarface turns to her and draws his sword. Laughing, Xena draws her own  
and with two quick moves, his sword is fluttering overboard and hers is at his throat.

Xena looks casually into the glittering, hate filled eyes of Scarface, then past him to the  
rest of the crew.

**XENA**

*(cont'd)*

So, what's it gonna  
be, boys? Yes...

She pushes the tip of her sword into his neck just hard enough to draw a droplet of blood.

**XENA**

*(cont'd)*

Or no?

The men look at one another and shrug.

**BLONDEBEARD**

XE-NA!

**CREW**  
XE-NA! XE-NA! XE-NA!

**CUT TO:**

**INT. PIRATE SHIP - MAIN DECK - DAY**

The main deck of the ship is dotted with groups of men who diligently go about their appointed tasks. One man stands high in the crow's nest, on the lookout for other ships. Others man the sails, turning the winches that wind the thick ropes onto the spools. Still others mend sailcloth, make ropes and repair nets.

Blonde Beard, First Mate, walks among the men, shouting out orders left and right.

**BLONDEBEARD**  
Avast ye landlubbers! Stop swingin'  
the lead or by the sake of the  
gods, I'll keelhaul ya myself!

A group of six men ignore the warning, standing near the stern and talking among themselves while making it look as if they are repairing netting. So intent on their conversation are they that they don't see a slight, blonde shadow that eases its way closer to their position.

Others notice, however, and pay the price. One pirate, so captivated by the way that the wind plasters the gauzy material of Gabrielle's top to her body, walks into the rail and almost flips into the drink. He's saved at the last moment by a rough hand to the back of his vest, to the general laughter of his fellows.

Another pirate, enjoying the same view, gives himself a concussion by walking directly into the giant timber that makes up the mizzenmast. More coarse laughter follows this.

**SCARFACE**  
*(to his fellows)*  
Bilge rats, the lot of 'em, bendin'  
over for a woman. Give me  
the wheel, and I'd clap em all  
in irons and tie her to the  
mizzenmast and flay her alive.

The men around him grumble, mostly in agreement.

**SCARFACE**  
*(cont'd)*  
I'm not goin' down without a fight,  
I'll say that. All the gold in the world's  
not worth my skin. We're pirates.  
We can get all the loot we want  
anywhere. I say we take our ship  
back and knock some sense into  
those yellowbellied scallywags.



**PIRATE**

But how? She's already  
beaten us once!

Scarface smiles, showing all three of his remaining teeth.

**SCARFACE**

I'll tell ya how.

The men's heads bend closer together. The blonde shadow listens for another moment, a smile growing on her face before she silently glides away, leaving the men none the wiser.



**CUT TO:**

**INT. PIRATE SHIP - MAIN DECK - EVENING**

The evening wind has picked up a pace, and the ship bounds and rolls over the increasing waves. The pirates, well used to rough seas, tend to their tasks with one eye as the other watches the unfolding drama taking place by the wheel.

Xena stands at the wheel, expression stoic, eyes staring straight ahead. Gabrielle stands facing her, face curd-white with a definite greenish tinge. Her hands underscore whatever point she is trying to make, though Xena's expression doesn't change.

The ship rolls and yaws wildly courtesy of a gigantic wave. Gabrielle falls into Xena and clings tightly to her as the ship finally, slowly, rolls back to an upright position. Xena's eyes soften just slightly as she looks down at Gabrielle, then harden once again as she shrugs off her soulmate's grip.

Gabrielle steps back, and as the ship rocks under the force of another wave, she puts a hasty hand over her mouth and runs for the rail.

Hidden in the shadows, Scarface grins nastily and nods to his compatriots.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. JUST OUTSIDE SHIP'S CABIN - NIGHT**

Scarface and two of his cohorts stand just outside the door to Xena's cabin. All are armed and one bears a torch which crackles in the humid silence of the enclosed space.

**SCARFACE**

*(whispering)*

Stay right here and guard  
the door. I'll call you  
when I'm done.

The men nervously look around.

**PIRATE #1**

*(whispering)*

What about the captain?

Scarface sneers.

**SCARFACE**

She's no Captain and you'd do  
best to stop calling her one or  
I'll send ya over the side myself.

**PIRATE #1**

Fine. Xena, then. If she  
comes down here....

**SCARFACE**

She's not coming down here, ya  
yellowbellied bilge rat! She's  
manning the wheel. Besides,  
did it look like she cared about  
the little wench's wellbeing to you?

The men consider for a moment, then shake their heads 'no'.

**SCARFACE**

*(cont'd)*

Right... so just mind my orders  
and man the door. And if you  
even think of leavin' your post....

**PIRATE #2**

Just remember you promised us  
a piece when you were through.

Scarface draws a dagger from his sash and presses it against Pirate #2's neck.

**SCARFACE**

Don't you be remindin' me  
about keepin' my word, Talbat.

**TALBAT**

N... no, sir. I mean yes,  
sir. I mean....

**SCARFACE**

Shut up. You just do as  
I say, and I might even  
let ya have seconds.

The men laugh lecherously.

Scarface nods to them both, silently opens the door, and slips inside. The men strain to peer into the room, then back off when the door is closed in their faces.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. SHIP'S CABIN - NIGHT**

The interior of the small cabin is dim with one small, guttering torch casting a shadowy light over the boxes and scattered possessions of the two women who share the room. It is dominated by a large hammock that bisects the cabin down the middle; a hammock which is currently occupied by a deeply slumbering Gabrielle. The top of her head is the only thing visible over the thick fur covering the rest of her body.

Scarface fancies he can smell sickness in the room despite the small porthole that is open admitting the fresh, ocean-scented breeze. He smiles. It's a supremely nasty expression.

Hefting his dagger, he slips forward while loosening the tie that keeps his trousers up.

Just as he is about to reach the hammock, he hears a rich, almost friendly voice directly behind him that stands the hackles behind his neck on end.

**XENA**

Didn't anyone ever teach  
you that it's rude to enter  
a lady's room uninvited?



Growling, Scarface turns, dagger at the ready. The movement causes his pants to puddle down around his ankles.

Unarmed, Xena stands with her arms crossed. Her eyebrow rises as she flicks her gaze down, and then back up again. She smirks.

**XENA**

*(cont'd)*

Seems that we have a ...  
tiny ... problem here.

Scarface growls and draws the dagger back, only to be stopped once again; this time by the very sharp tip of a very pointy sai pressed between his shoulder blades.

**GABRIELLE**

I wouldn't.

He spins back toward the hammock, scowling as he finds a very hale, very hearty and very wide awake Gabrielle smirking at him.

**SCARFACE**

YOU!!

**GABRIELLE**

You were expecting  
someone else?

**SCARFACE**

GRAAAAAAAHHHHHHHH!!!!

He thrusts the dagger forward in a strong lunge. Gabrielle easily counters it with the side of her hand to his wrist, but he stumbles from the force of her counterattack, tangling his feet in his pants. He goes down hard, landing on top of Gabrielle.

The hammock swings wildly, and tips them both out. Gabrielle lands hard on her back, her wind temporarily lost. Scarface seizes the advantage, hitting her with a solid blow to the jaw and preparing to finish her with his dagger.

He never gets the chance as he finds himself hauled bodily upwards by the back of his jerkin and tossed hard against the rear wall of the cabin. Before he can even blink, Xena is standing above him, eyes glittering murder.

Gabrielle gets to her feet, rubs at her jaw, and touches Xena's back to let her know she's all right.

**XENA**

I think we need to learn a little  
lesson on the dangers of touching  
other people's property without  
their permission, don't you?

Scarface lets out a breathless little scream as he's once again hauled up and carried from the cabin. He looks down in time to see his cohorts slumbering peacefully on either side of the door, courtesy of Xena's fists.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. MAIN DECK - NIGHT**

Torches blaze as the last strap lands on Scarface's naked back. Groaning softly, he sags against his bonds, his legs barely strong enough to hold him upright.

Handing the flogger to Blonde Beard, Xena nods to one of Scarface's accomplices, who has regained consciousness just in time to see his leader receive his punishment. Shaking his head nervously, he tries to back away, only to be caught up by several pirates who stand behind him.

**XENA**

Do it, or you'll  
be joining him.

Rather unsteadily, the pirate walks over and grabs hold of the rope handle of the seawater-filled bucket, hefting it. His nervousness causes some of the water to slosh over the bucket's sides, earning him a fierce glare from Xena.

**XENA**

*(cont'd)*  
Do it.



Taking a deep breath, the pirate grabs the bottom of the bucket, tilts it, and tosses the cold water onto the striped and reddened back of Scarface who lets out one breathless scream before sagging in his bonds again, blessedly unconscious.

With a nod of satisfaction, Xena steps away from the beaten man and turns to face the remainder of her crew, eyes pinning each one of them to the deck.

**XENA**

*(cont'd)*

You have all learned a much  
needed lesson in the  
respect for property. This...

She holds out an imperious hand. Gabrielle closes quickly, sliding her hand along Xena's outstretched arm until she is caught and whirled in tight against Xena's body.

**XENA**

*(cont'd)*

Is mine. This....

She indicates the rest of the ship with her free hand.

**XENA**

*(cont'd)*

Is mine.

She indicates each man standing before her with a sweeping glare.

**XENA**

*(cont'd)*

You... Are mine. You live because  
I allow it. You breathe because  
it pleases me to let you. And if it  
pleases me to halt your breathing....

She smiles.

**XENA**

*(cont'd)*

I'll do that too. Am I  
perfectly understood?



**ALL PIRATES**

YES, CAPTAIN!

**XENA**

*(cont'd)*

Good. Now, I suggest that those of  
you who are off watch return to your  
bunks and get as much rest as you  
can. We'll arrive at our destination  
soon, and there is a great deal  
to do to prepare for our visit.

**PIRATES**

AYE, CAPTAIN!

**BLONDEBEARD**

Captain! About the prisoner?

**XENA**

Leave him there. He'll serve  
as a reminder to the rest about  
what it means to cross me.

**BLONDEBEARD**

Aye, Captain.

**XENA**

You have the wheel. Wake  
me at dawn. We have a  
full day ahead of us.

**BLONDEBEARD**

Aye, Captain.

Xena pulls slightly away from Gabrielle and takes her hand. The others studiously ignore the couple as they make their way along the deck and into the cabins beneath.

**FADE OUT.**

**END OF ACT THREE**

## ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

### INT. MAIN DECK - MORNING

Several scenes of Gabrielle helping pirates measure out and cut lengths of dried reed they use in their daily tasks.

INTERCUT TO:

### INT. MAIN DECK - MORNING

Xena sitting with another group of pirates, making rope.

INTERCUT TO:

### INT. MAIN DECK - EARLY AFTERNOON

Gabrielle helping the men haul up bales of hay from a secure hold and tossing them onto the deck.

INTERCUT TO:

### INT. MAIN DECK - AFTERNOON

Xena holding a sewing class. The men laugh as one of their fellows holds up a pair of breeches with the waist sewn shut and one of the legs sewn to his sleeve. Xena rolls her eyes and uses her breast dagger to cut the man free from his breeches.

INTERCUT TO:

### INT. MAIN DECK - LATE AFTERNOON

Gabrielle helps haul out large pots of renderings and fish oils that the pirates use to waterproof the wood. All the pirates lean forward and crane their necks as Gabrielle bends over the pot. They all snap to pale-faced and sweating attention as Xena shoots them a look hot enough to sear their boots to the decking.

INTERCUT TO:

### INT. CAPTAIN'S CABIN - EARLY EVENING

Xena and Gabrielle pull away from a deep kiss. Gabrielle lifts the bottle Xena's given her and waggles it. She tips her head back and mock-sips the clear liquid, smirking at the look Xena gives her.

With a kiss to the cheek and another waggle of the bottle, Gabrielle is gone, leaving Xena to stare after her with her hands on hips, shaking her head.

INTERCUT TO:

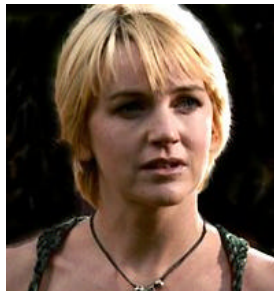


## INT. MAIN DECK - EARLY EVENING

Gabrielle pours the liquid from the vial into a dipper of fresh water. Walking over to the groggily conscious Scarface, she tips his head back and holds the dipper to his lips. For a long moment, it looks as if he's going to refuse, but then his thirst gets the better of him and he drinks deeply from the dipper, then from a second that Gabrielle offers him. Even though he tried to assault her, her touch is gentle and her eyes compassionate.

Scarface snarls at her and strains against his bonds with what little strength he's managed to regain.

After making sure that he is unable to injure himself further, Gabrielle sighs and steps away.



INTERCUT TO:

## EXT. CROW'S NEST - DUSK

PIRATE #5  
LAND HO!!

CUT TO:

## EXT. IKOS - DUSK

A lone man stands atop a high watchtower, bent forward at the waist and peering through squinting eyes out to sea.

LOOKOUT  
Ship ahoy!!

Four men, grouped around the bottom of the tower strain forward, but are unable to see anything in the rapidly encroaching twilight.

HEAD GUARD  
From where? Can you  
get a make on it?

LOOKOUT  
From the west!

There's a short pause as he holds a very primitive "seeing glass" to his eye.

## LOOKOUT

*(cont'd)*

She bears the marks  
of the Buzzard's Wing!

The head guard sneers.

## HEAD GUARD

That'll be Poxo Pete, that mangy cur.  
I warned him not to set one hair of  
his louse-ridden skull near this island  
again or I'd string him up to the nearest  
yardarm and skin him alive. Double  
check, now. Best be sure it's him.

## LOOKOUT

Flyin' his colors, sir! His men  
are at the rails, all armed!

## HEAD GUARD

Fall out, then, ya scurvy dogs! Man  
the long boats and take no prisoners!!  
A hundred dinars to the man  
who brings me Poxo Pete's head!!

With a loud cheer, fifty men bolt from their hiding places on the narrow strip of shoreline on the north side of the island. They drag ten longboats into the water and quickly fill them, then set out toward the slowly approaching ship.

CUT TO:

## EXT. SEA, JUST OUTSIDE THE BUZZARD'S WING - NIGHT

The longboats bump up against the Buzzard's Wing's hull as the men aboard them ready themselves for action.

## INVADER

Avast, ye white livered squids!  
Yer trespassin' on Igor the  
Black's property. Lay anchor  
and prepare to be boarded!

There's a long moment of silence.

## INVADER

*(cont'd)*

Last warnin', ya belly crawlin' wharf  
rats! Drop anchor and prepare ta  
be boarded!! All right then, you  
lot! Over the side! Send  
em all ta Davy Jones!

Hooting and hollering, several men jump onto the netting and scramble up the ship's sides. Others produce grappling hooks and board by climbing the ropes attached to them.

**CUT TO:**

### **INT. BUZZARD'S WING MAIN DECK - NIGHT**

The invaders stream onto the deck, swords and daggers at the ready. With a shout, the first man plunges his sword through the belly of a pirate, then pulls it out and stares, slack jawed.

Another man neatly beheads a pirate with a clean stroke, then watches, wide eyed, as the head bounces and rolls to the mizzenmast, then stops.

Soon, all of the invaders are simply standing still, their weapons limp at their sides, eyes round in confusion and disbelief.

The leader makes his way through the "carnage", eyes as wide as any of his men.

#### **LEADER**

Damnation seize my soul!  
What is all this?!?

#### **INVADER**

We been crimped, sir! These  
are naught but straw dummies  
someone made up fer fun.

#### **LEADER**

Crimped my arse! No bunch a  
cowardly whelps hornswaggles me!  
Pox Pete is aboard this ship and  
not one man will rest until we  
find him! On your toes, men!

#### **INVADERS**

AYE SIR!!

**CUT TO:**

### **EXT. SHALLOWS - NIGHT**

In the shallows, several reeds disappear into the water to be replaced by the heads of Xena, Gabrielle, and the crew of the Buzzard's Wing. Their faces are almost impossible to see, blackened as they are from generous applications of grease and fish oils.

#### **BLONDEBEARD**

*(whispered amazement)*  
By thunder! If I wasn't seein'  
it with me own eyes, I  
wouldn't be believin' it.

He turns stunned eyes to Xena and Gabrielle.

**BLONDEBEARD**

*(cont'd)*

How...?

Gabrielle smirks.

**GABRIELLE**

*(offhandedly)*

Oh, just a little something  
we picked up in Troy.



Xena rolls her eyes.

**BLONDEBEARD**

It's a thing o' beauty all right.  
But what about Scarface?  
He's sure to rat us out, the  
henhearted numbskull.

**GABRIELLE**

*(wider smirk)*

I wouldn't worry about that.  
It's nothing that a little  
linseed root won't cure.

**XENA**

Let's get moving.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. BUZZARD'S WING - NIGHT**

**INVADER**

Sir! Over here!

The leader strides up the steps to the wheelhouse and looks down in the direction that his compatriot is pointing. There, bound and gagged and tied to the wheel, lies Scarface.

**LEADER**

Poseidon's Trident! Scarface?  
What in Tartarus' bloody  
deep are ye doin' aboard  
this bilge-laden scow??

**SCARFACE**

Mmph! Mmmph!!

Reaching down with the tip of his sword, the leader cuts the gag from Scarface's mouth.

**LEADER**

Talk, ya scallywag! Ye  
part of this tomfoolery?

**SCARFACE**

Theena! Theena! Theena  
'id dis, neddlin' nitch!

**LEADER**

What? Speak like ya got a  
tongue in yer head, ya damn  
fool! I'm not understandin' ya!

Scarface struggles against his bonds, redfaced with anger.

**SCARFACE**

THEENA!!! The thole  
goat and thwim to thore!  
Height da Glack!

The leader looks at his fellow.

**LEADER**

Ye ken what he's  
tryin ta say?

**INVADER**

Somethin' about  
stealin' a goat?

**SCARFACE**

Goat! Goat!! GOAT!!

He swings his head in wild arcs, ostensibly trying to point to what he's talking about.

**INVADER**

*(contemplating)*

I think he's gone off his  
nut. Lookit 'im foamin  
at the mouth like that.

**INVADER #2**

Cursed by the gods, me  
thinks. Bad one too, from  
the looks of it, poor sop.

**SCARFACE**  
THEEEEEENNAAAAA!!!!!!

The men step back in disgust as copious amounts of spittle fly from his lips, coating their boots, pantlegs, and the deck liberally.

**INVADER**  
Best ta put him out  
of his misery, no?

**LEADER**  
Nay. The Black's been knowin  
him since he was knee high to  
a tadpole. Best leave him here  
for now. Get on with the search!  
I want Poxey Pete's head!

**SCARFACE**  
(enraged)  
THEEENAAAAAAA!!!!

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. IKOS SHORE - NIGHT**

Ikos is a rather barren piece of dirt and rock. A few wilted trees struggle valiantly against the prevailing winds, their roots sunk shallow in the gritty sand of the narrow strip of beach that surrounds the island. It is dominated by a tall, flat-topped cliff with sheer sides. At the top of the cliff, a huge walled fortress stands like a conquering hero surveying his newly acquired territories. A long, steep row of steps have been carved into the unforgiving, sun-bleached rock, and guards stand at every third step, torches blazing and weapons at the ready. It is the only entrance to the fortress.

Xena's group of thirty-one is surprisingly unseen as they make their way in small groups silently ashore, far away from the main fortress' main gate and its attendant guards.

Xena and Blonde Beard step off to one side as the others stand quietly in place, awaiting the next phase of the evening's festivities.

**XENA**  
You know what to do.

**BLONDEBEARD**  
Aye, Cap'n, I'm sure. Been  
doin' stuff like this since I  
was a wee guppy. We'll be  
ready, no worries on that.

Xena nods.

**XENA**

All right, then. Good luck.

**BLONDEBEARD**

Fair winds to ya, Cap'n.  
See ya soon.

The two shake hands, then Blonde Beard beckons his group, fifteen in all and they disappear into the darkness, silent as wraiths.

**XENA**

The rest of you, follow me.



**CUT TO:**

**EXT. REAR OF CLIFF - NIGHT**

Thirteen men and one woman line flat against the sheer wall of the cliff as Xena, a step away, stares along the top of the wall timing the guards who walk steady patterns around the perimeter.

Unlike the guards who man the posts in front of the fortress, these guards seem rather lax in their duties, though by the sound of raucous laughter and music heard just above the thunder of the surf, Xena can guess why.

After another moment, she nods to herself, then looks at several men who are awaiting her signal, coils of rope in their arms.

**XENA**

Now.

Five grappling hooks, their clawed arms padded, land silently over the lip of the fortress' wall. The pirates pull on them, insuring a snug fit, and nod to their Captain.

**XENA**

*(cont'd)*

Now.

In groups of five, the pirates scramble up the cliff face and the wall, leaping over and squatting flush against it. Xena and Gabrielle go up next. The maneuver is accomplished quickly, silently, and with no detection.

**CUT TO:**

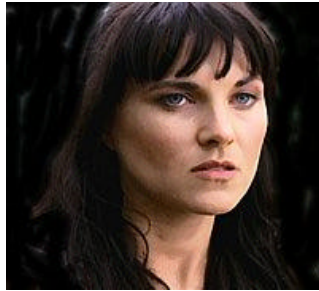
## EXT. FORTRESS WALL - NIGHT

A lone guard steps around the corner and feels the strength drain from his body as two fingers jab into his neck.

Gabrielle steps forward and catches the torch as the man drops it. As his knees hit the ground, Xena is there, tilting his face to meet hers. The pirates look on in awe.

**XENA**

I've cut off the flow of blood to  
your brain. You have thirty  
seconds to tell me what I want  
to know or you die. Understand?



The guard nods frantically.

**XENA**

*(cont'd)*

Good. I'm looking for a woman  
and her two daughters. They  
were kidnapped half a moon  
ago for ransom. They are  
the family of Andros, an  
innkeeper from Perkotis.

**GUARD**

I... don't...the Black ransoms  
a lot of women and girls!

**XENA**

Ah, but see, these are special.  
And I'd be very upset if I found  
out that something had happened  
to them. I don't think you'd like  
to see me upset, would you?

The guard shakes his 'no' even more frantically.

**XENA**

*(cont'd)*

Didn't think so.



She holds out a hand, and Gabrielle slips a waterproofed pouch into it. Opening the pouch, she shakes out a small painting, no larger than her hand. On it is an excellent rendering of Andros and his family. She shows it to the paralyzed guard.

**XENA**

*(cont'd)*

Recognize them?

The man squints, and Gabrielle helpfully lowers the torch for him.

**GUARD**

I... I think so! They're... being kept... on the third floor, in the east wing! Please! Can't....

**XENA**

How sure are you?

**GUARD**

Sure! Sure! Please!

**XENA**

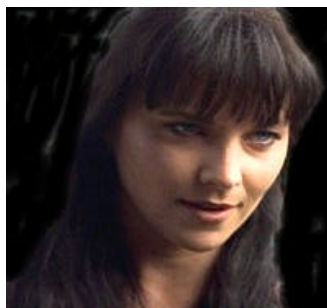
Is there another way into the fortress besides the front door?

**GUARD**

Guard's entrance! Please!  
To... to the east!

**XENA**

Good.



His neck is jabbed again, and a right cross sends him into slumberland.

Xena hands the pouch back to Gabrielle, takes the torch, and eyes her men.

**XENA**

*(cont'd)*

Let's go.

**CUT TO:**

## EXT. GUARD ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Two guards man the entrance. Both look to their left as a humming noise comes from the darkness beyond. Before they can make a move, Xena's chakram takes them out of the picture and they slump to the ground on either side of the door. A pirate named Two Shakes presses his ear against the door, listening. Taking a deep breath, he grasps the handle and pulls. The interior is deserted. He beckons them forward.

Seven pirates enter through the now opened door. Xena touches Gabrielle's arm just as she's about to follow.

**XENA**

Fifteen minutes. If you're  
not back by then....

Gabrielle smiles and pat's Xena's belly.

**GABRIELLE**

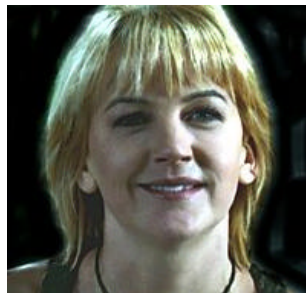
We'll be fine. Now go  
raise some Tartarus.

Standing on her tiptoes, she steals a kiss from Xena's lips.

**GABRIELLE**

*(cont'd)*

For luck.



She then disappears through the doorway and closes it softly behind her. Xena looks at the closed portal for another moment, then over at the remaining crew.

**XENA**

Let's do it.

**CUT TO:**

## INT. CORRIDORS - NIGHT

Gabrielle pushes to the front and leads the men through the empty corridors of an unused section of the fortress judging from the dust on the floor and walls.

**GABRIELLE**

*(muttering)*

Stairs have gotta be  
around here somewhere.

**TWO SHAKES**

Here they be, Ma'am.

**GABRIELLE**

*(smiling)*

Thanks!

The pirate tips his kerchief to her to the guffaws of his fellows. He swats a few and they move on.

At the top of the steps stand four heavily armed guards. They hear the tread of bodies coming toward them, and one steps forward, torch raised.

**GUARD**

Who goes there?

Gabrielle holds up a finger to her compatriots, gesturing for them to wait and follow her lead.

Pulling the flimsy top off of her shoulders and displaying her assets to their best advantage, she slinks up the remaining steps, her most seductive smile gracing her face.

**GABRIELLE**

*(throatily)*

Hello, boys. The Black  
thought you might be lonely  
up here all by yourselves,  
so he sent me over to....

*(broader smile)*

...keep you company.

The men peer down at Gabrielle's lovely face and form and leer. The leader steps back, arms wide in invitation.

With a coy smile, Gabrielle picks her way up the stairs, then nails the leader in the gut with a hard right, and straightens him back up with a knee to the nose. He flies back, knocking the two down in back of him, and she attacks the forth with a low kick to the shin, and a sweeping kick to the shoulder. He topples into an unconscious heap on top of the rest.

**GABRIELLE**

*(cont'd)*

C'mon up, guys!  
The coast is clear.

The pirates look at one another with disbelieving grins, and thunder up the remaining steps.

One lone door stands at the top of the stairs, and Gabrielle opens it with the skeleton key she's appropriated from one of the unconscious guards.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. ROOM - NIGHT**

An attractive young woman huddles in the furthest corner, her two young daughters wrapped firmly in her desperate embrace. Her green eyes are huge with fright, but though her clothes are a bit worn and dirty, neither she nor her family look much the worse for wear.

Gabrielle enters slowly, a gentle smile on her face.

**GABRIELLE**

It's all right. We're here  
to help. Are you the wife  
of Andros of Perkotis?

Still frightened, the woman nods.

**GABRIELLE**

*(cont'd)*

Good. My name is  
Gabrielle. I'm a friend  
of your husband's.

**WIFE**

Is... is he here?  
Is Andros here?

**GABRIELLE**

No. He's on the mainland.  
I'm here to take you  
home to him, all of you.

**WIFE**

I... don't....

Gabrielle steps forward, empty hands raised.

**GABRIELLE**

It's okay. I'm here  
to help, honest.

**WIFE**

B... but my husband...

**GABRIELLE**

... will be fine as soon  
as he sees you again.  
He misses you terribly.

**DAUGHTER**

Can we go with the pretty  
lady, Momma? I wanna  
see Daddy. Please?

After a very long moment, the woman finally nods.

Smiling, Gabrielle squats down and looks the young girls in the eyes.

**GABRIELLE**

Now, I need you to help me, okay?  
You need to be very quiet and do  
exactly what I say. There are a  
lot of bad men here, but if you do  
just as I say, we'll be on a boat  
back to your Daddy so fast, you  
won't believe it. Can you  
both do that for me?

Both girls nod shyly.

Gabrielle grins.

**GABRIELLE**

*(cont'd)*

Good. Your Daddy is  
going to be so happy  
when he sees you again.

**DAUGHTER #2**

I miss him.

**GABRIELLE**

Oh, honey, he misses you  
too. More than anything. So,  
let's get back to him, okay?

**DAUGHTER #2**

Ok.

As Gabrielle stands, she feels a tiny palm press itself against hers. Smiling, she tenderly grasps the trusting hand and walks back to the open door, the mother and her other daughter following quickly behind.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. FORTRESS, MAIN - NIGHT**

In contrast to the heavily guarded steps, the main entrance to the fortress is unguarded. The massive doors are chocked open to admit the ocean breeze, and men and a few women wander drunkenly in and out of the massive structure, laughing and singing.

It's therefore no surprise that Xena and her men fit right in, passing into the main room unnoticed by those around them. At Xena's nod, the men split up, each going in a different direction through the milling knots of pirates and other unsavories.

In contrast to the men populating it, the room itself is massive and ornate, with items of value wherever one looks. Food and drink flow in abundance, and the music, though loud, is passably fair.

By this time, the party has been going on for hours, and Xena's crew has no problem slicing off money belts and picking up other valuable trinkets strewn carelessly on the tables and the floor. Each of the pirates-turned-rescuers keeps a careful eye on his Captain, and when Xena gets close to the horribly garish throne that houses the overly corpulent form of Igor the Black, they spring into action.

One pirate throws a punch, another a kick, another a well-placed push, and soon the entire party has turned into a drunken brawl.

Xena uses the distraction to close the remaining distance to the throne, which sits upon a stone platform. She bounds upon the platform with ease, slipping behind the obscenely large man and slipping the edge of her dagger against the rolls of his exposed throat.

**XENA**

Evening, Igor. I wish I'd have  
known you were having a party.  
I'd have brought a suitable gift.



Igor's sunken eyes widen as he looks around desperately for help that suddenly isn't there anymore.

**IGOR**

Who... who are you?

**XENA**

Someone who's gonna  
give you some much  
needed advice

Igor grunts around the pressure of the knife tight against his throat.

**XENA**

*(cont'd)*

This is just a taste of what life's gonna be like for you from now on, Igor. In fact, if I were you, I'd get out of the kidnapping business altogether. I have a feeling it's gonna take a big turn for the worse.

**IGOR**

*(haughtily)*

How dare you....?!?

Xena laughs.

**XENA**

You listen to me, little man. You're very lucky you're not armed, or you'd be a stain on the floor right now. If I hear that you've kidnapped one more of my friends, I'll come back here and see how many cuts it takes before a pig like you dies.

She reinforces her point by pressing the sharp blade hard enough against his throat to draw blood.

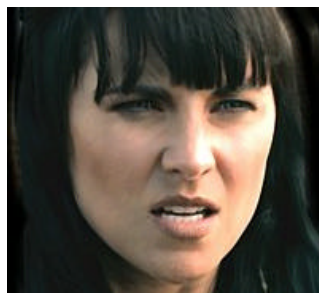
Igor's terrified scream goes unheard in the melee below.

She cocks her head, sensing Gabrielle's presence somewhere nearby. Her eyes gleam.

**XENA**

*(cont'd)*

Remember what I said, Igor. I'll be watching.



Just like that, she disappears as if she'd never been. Her battle cry sounds loud over the din, and her crew instantly heeds, slipping away from the fights they've started and heading for the door as the brawl continues behind them unhindered.

**CUT TO:**

## EXT. FORTRESS - NIGHT

Just as the crew makes it outside of the fortress, a battered guard shuffles his way toward the door.

**GUARD**

The prisoners!  
They're escaping!!

**PIRATE**

In there, man! Hurry!  
We'll try and catch up to 'em!

The guard nods gratefully and heads inside.

Xena's crew laughs.

**PIRATE**

*(cont'd)*

What about the guards?

**XENA**

You let me worry  
about that.

Unhooking her chakram, she gives it a perfect toss. It cuts down the row of torches on the left side of the stairs, then reverses itself and does the same to the right. The stairs are plunged into sudden blackness.

**XENA**

*(cont'd)*

Now! Move!

Xena's crew flies down the stairs, past the confused guards who are wondering where their torches went. They make it to the shore in time to meet up with Gabrielle and her party.

Gabrielle grins.

**GABRIELLE**

Perfect timing!



Xena returns the smile as she looks over the rescued woman and her daughters.



**XENA**  
(to Gabrielle)  
You did good.

**GABRIELLE**  
Of course. Now what?

**VOICE**  
(off camera)  
GET THEM!!

**XENA**  
We run.

**CUT TO:**

### **EXT. DOCK - NIGHT**

The land gradually slopes upward to as the group moves east, and it is there that Igor has built a large dock for his ships. The dock is usually heavily guarded, but Xena can see that Blonde Beard has done his job well. The path is littered with bodies, alive and dead.

The dock currently harbors five ships, and all appear to be deserted except for the one on the very end; the grandest ship of them all, Igor's personal vessel. From the bow, a large torch is swung back and forth in an arcing signal.

**BLONDEBEARD**  
(shouting)  
Ahoy, mateys! Quit swingin'  
the lead and get your arses  
aboard! Ye be attractin' rats!

From behind the fleeing group can be heard the thunder of many booted feet and the angry shouts of robbed men.

Xena, carrying one of the little girls, and Gabrielle carrying the other, double their speed, and the rest of the group follows suit. Up the stairs they run, then over the sturdy, weather-beaten planking of the dock. They can almost feel the drunken breath of the enraged mob on their shoulders.

**PIRATE**  
ARRRGGGHHH!!

The pirate goes down as a spear penetrates his calf. Several others stumble over him.

**XENA**  
Keep going!!!  
(to another pirate)  
Here, take her and  
get to the ship! Move!!

**GABRIELLE**

Xena!

**XENA**

Move! I'll be right  
behind you! Go! GO!

Before she gets the chance to argue further, Gabrielle is pushed ahead by the tide of fleeing pirates heeding their Captain's word. She gives in for the moment and picks up speed, cradling the young girl in her arms.

Standing guard over her fallen comrade, Xena unhooks her chakram and again lets fly. It takes down the first row of attackers and returns to her hand just as a second spear heads her way. Plucking it out of the air, she throws it back, grunting in satisfaction as it pierces the belly of an onrushing man.

She senses something to her right and turns to see three pirates flanking her and grinning.

**XENA**

*(cont'd)*

I told you to GO!



**PIRATE #1**

Not without you, Cap'n!

**PIRATE #2**

I be deaf in me  
right ear, Cap'n.

**XENA**

I'll make you deaf in  
both if you don't move!

The pirate grins and shrugs, weapon drawn and at the ready.

Then, the mob is upon them and she has no time for further argument.

With sword, chakram, fists and feet, she battles against the mob. The bodies of the dead and injured pile at her feet as she uses her chakram to slit the throat of one while using her sword to disarm another. A lucky kick sends her to her knees, where she whirls her sword and thrusts behind her and up. The man about to skewer her drops his sword and falls on top of her, bearing her to the ground.

Punching and kicking, she frees herself from the pile and rises to her feet, only to be pushed forward as one of her own men collapses into her, a slashing cut blooming red across his chest.

A lucky swipe across her arm almost causes her to lose her sword, and she spins just in time to see a huge, ugly-faced man grinning fiercely and thrusting his own sword directly at her unprotected midsection.

Before she can raise her weapon to defend, the man's eyes widen in shock, and he stumbles forward, to his knees, and then to his belly. A lone sai sticks out of his back. Xena looks up to see Gabrielle smirking at her.

**XENA**

*(growling, but inwardly pleased)*  
Dammit! Doesn't anybody  
listen to me anymore?!?

**GABRIELLE**

'Fraid not... Cap'n!



Back to back, Xena and Gabrielle fight off the remainder of the mob, but they can easily see a second, even larger group heading their way. Xena pulls one of the uninjured pirates to her by his shirtfront.

**XENA**

Get back to the ship and  
tell Blondebeard to cast off!

**PIRATE #3**

Not without you, Cap'n!

**XENA**

*(teeth bared)*  
You do as I say!  
Now MOVE!!

Aided by a helpful shove that almost sends him into the ocean, the pirate runs toward the ship, shouting Xena's orders as he moves.

**XENA**

*(cont'd)*

You two, get these men  
and yourselves back to  
the ship. Do it, now.

Shaken and white-faced, the men do as they're told, bearing off their comrades with as much speed as they're able.

**XENA**

*(cont'd)*

Gabrielle....

**GABRIELLE**

Not a chance. Where  
you go, I go. Period.

Xena hands Gabrielle her sai.

**XENA**

I was just going  
to give you this.

Gabrielle's look tells Xena exactly how much she believes that little statement.

Xena sighs and turns back toward the onrushing mob. The vanguard, a group of ten men, is twenty yards away. The rest are fifty yards beyond it, almost consumed by the darkness.

**XENA**

*(cont'd)*

Let's take these out, and  
when I tell you to, run back  
to the ship as fast as you  
can. Don't stop, don't look  
back, just run. Got me?

After a moment, Gabrielle nods, trusting Xena's instincts.



The vanguard is upon them, and together Xena and Gabrielle make short work of the mostly drunken men. A few kicks, punches, and sword blows later, the group is piled unconscious at their feet.

**XENA**  
(cont'd)  
Now. Run.

Without hesitation, Gabrielle turns and takes off toward the ship. It has already left its slip and is slowly sailing parallel to the dock. She can see the concerned faces of the pirates as they stand at the rail shouting for her and their Captain.

The wooden planks fly by as she puts on a burst of speed. The skin at the back of her neck tingles suddenly, and she grins.

**XENA**  
(cont'd)  
GABRIELLE! Get  
ready to JUMP!

Sticking out her left hand like a runner on an Olympiad relay team, Gabrielle catches Xena's grip and holds on tight, allowing her longer-legged partner to help pull her along those last few feet to the dock's edge.

**GABRIELLE**  
Ready!

**XENA**  
NOW!

In perfect tandem, the pair hits the end of the dock and jumps high into the air. Flipping once without losing contact with one another, they land together on the deck of the ship to the raucous cheers of their crew.

Pumping her fist into the air in triumph, Gabrielle then turns and grabs Xena in a tight embrace as the men surround them, pounding on their backs and shoulders. She turns her head to watch in amusement as the remaining members of the mob come to a skidding stop at the edge of the dock and shout at them in rage.

Chuckling, she gazes up at Xena, eyes sparkling.

**GABRIELLE**  
Ya know, this pirate  
stuff isn't too bad.

Xena leans forward and gives Gabrielle a kiss that makes even the pirates blush. Pulling away, she grins.

**XENA**  
Yo Ho Ho.

**FADE OUT.**

**END ACT FOUR**

**TAG**

**FADE IN:**

**INT. THE HEADMAN'S INN MAIN RECEPTION ROOM - NIGHT**

The Headman's Inn is jammed to the rafters, though fully thirty of these jolly souls look quite out of place among the eloquent décor and moneyed clientele. No one, however, seems to mind. The night's orchestral musings have been replaced by thirty odd pirates and their admirers singing a bawdy tunes while working their way into stupefied drunkenness.

**PIRATES**

Fifteen men on a dead man's chest...

**CROWD**

Yo Ho Ho and a bottle of rum!

**PIRATES**

Drink and the devil had  
done for the rest...

**CROWD**

Yo Ho Ho and a bottle of rum!

**PIRATES**

The mate was fixed by the bosun's pike  
The bosun brained with a marlinspike  
And cookey's throat was marked belike  
It had been gripped by fingers ten;  
And there they lay, all good dead men  
Like break o'day in a boozing ken...

**CROWD**

Yo Ho Ho and a bottle of rum!

**CUT TO:**

**INT. HEADMAN'S INN - ANTEROOM - NIGHT**

Andros peers into the crowded and raucous reception hall, his family gathered close about him. All bear smiles which wreath their faces and appear to have become permanent fixtures. Tears of happiness slowly dry on Andros' cheeks.

Xena and Gabrielle, dressed in their traditional clothes, stand beside them, drinks in hand.

**ANDROS**

I still can't believe it. I never hoped...  
never dreamed.... And I have you to  
thank. Both of you. I could never  
repay what you've done for me,  
Xena and Gabrielle. Never.

**XENA**

It's not necessary.

**GABRIELLE**

Seeing you all together again  
is more than enough for us.

**ANDROS**

But, surely....

**GABRIELLE**

Love them well. That's all we ask.



**ANDROS**

*(beaming)*

An easier request was never  
granted. Please say you'll  
stay the night, at least.

Xena and Gabrielle exchange looks. Both grin.

**GABRIELLE**

That is something we  
can accept with thanks.

**ANDROS**

Wonderful! Let me  
show you to your room.

**XENA**

Oh...I think we can  
find it ourselves.

Andros looks at them both, easily seeing the love between.

**ANDROS**

You know? I think  
you're right.

**CUT TO:**

## INT. HEADMAN'S INN - STAIRS - NIGHT

About to head toward their room, Xena and Gabrielle narrowly miss running into Blonde Beard, staggeringly drunk and a mug in each hand.

### BLONDEBEARD

Ahoy, mateys! Ye can't be turnin' in already! The party's just startin! C'mon and join me in a mug o'grog. It's just stu...stu...stu...really good!

### XENA

*(smirking)*

I can see that. I think you've had enough for the three of us.

Blonde Beard polishes off both mugs in two gulps, then stands swaying.

### BLONDEBEARD

Ye be tellin' the truth at that!

Gabrielle pats his arm, laughing.

### GABRIELLE

So, where to from here?  
Back to the high seas?

### BLONDEBEARD

Not sure yet. The Cap'n here made us rich lads. I might want ta savor it for awhile. Or maybe not. Bein' a pirate's what I know, and I'll never stay too long away from my lady, the sea.

He sobers.

### BLONDEBEARD

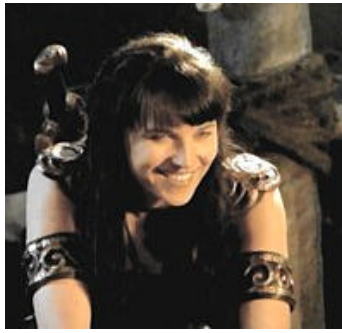
*(cont'd)*

I wanna thank ye both, Xena and Gabrielle. T'was the first honest work I've done fer...gods, forever, it seems. Felt pretty good. Mebbe there's somethin' ta this rescuin' the innocent business after all. I'll have ta think on it.



**XENA**

You do that.



Reaching out, she clasps his arm.

**XENA**

*(cont'd)*

Thank you for your help.

We couldn't have  
done it without you.

Blonde Beard blushes to the roots of his hair and looks down at his feet. Then he looks up, smiling.

**BLONDEBEARD**

Aww, twern't nothin', Cap'n.  
If ya ever need a hand, on  
the high seas or off, you  
just call out for Blondebeard  
the Pirate, all right?

**GABRIELLE**

We promise.

He nods.

**BLONDEBEARD**

All righty, then. Be off with ya,  
landlubbers. I've got me  
some more celebratin' ta do.

Xena and Gabrielle watch as he toddles drunkenly off to join his fellows as we....

**FADE OUT.**

**DISCLAIMER**

The secret language of the pirates was severely  
mutilated during the making of this motion picture.