

Xena: Warrior Princess - Subtext Virtual Season 7



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TEASER

FADE IN:

EXT. NARROW MOUNTAIN TRACK - MORNING

Xena and Gabrielle walk single file down a mountain track just wide enough to hold them. A rocky wall stretches up on one side, and a sheer drop is on the other. Gabrielle is walking in front. The path is obscured by rocks, as though a landslide had recently happened, and they have to climb over them.

GABRIELLE

Xena, are you sure about this shortcut?

XENA

Of course I am.
I led an army through here.

Gabrielle turns and looks at Xena. A huge rock blocks their path.

GABRIELLE

Thirty years ago?



Xena examines the boulder.

XENA

Glad I sent Argo around to meet us.
Let me get past you.



Gabrielle presses against the rock wall, but as Xena edges past her, she captures Xena with both hands and holds her snugly.

XENA

(Cont'd)

Gabrielle... We're on a ledge here.

GABRIELLE

Yes, we are. I feel much safer now.

XENA

Why? If I fall, you'll go with me.

Gabrielle grins.

GABRIELLE

You'll land first.

Xena allows herself to be distracted. She forgets the boulder and leans forward to kiss Gabrielle. The moment lengthens. Far above, a rock loosens and starts down the slope.

Xena and Gabrielle continue kissing, oblivious to the rumble of sound.

The rock picks up speed, rushing downwards towards Xena and Gabrielle.

The kiss continues.

The rock takes a slight bounce and hurtles downward straight at Gabrielle's head. At the very, very last possible second, Xena reaches up and bats the rock aside with a casual swipe of her fist.



The rock shoots to the left and smacks into the boulder, then bounces off and continues down the slope. After a moment the boulder creaks, crackles, and slowly detaches from the mountainside. The rock rolls off the ledge and falls with a thunderous roar.

Xena and Gabrielle finally come up for air, and look down the now cleared path.

GABRIELLE

(Cont'd)

Hmm. Brings new meaning to the power of love, doesn't it?



XENA

Yeah.
I'd heard it can move mountains.
C'mon.



Xena and Gabrielle continue down the path, in a very cheerful mood.

CUT TO:

EXT. DRAB BACKWOODS DIRT ROAD - LATER THAT MORNING

Xena and Gabrielle climb down off the track to the road. Xena dusts her hands off in triumph, and indicates the track with a sweep of her hand.

GABRIELLE

Certainly was more scenic. Which way?

Xena stands in the middle of the dirt road with her hands on her hips. She looks up the road, then down the road. Decisively, she starts down the road. Gabrielle falls into step alongside her.

XENA

Quiet around... oof!

Gabrielle has clapped her hand over Xena's mouth.

GABRIELLE

Bad girl!

Xena removes Gabrielle's hand from her face, but keeps hold of it.

GABRIELLE

(Cont'd)

We're trying to take a week off from trouble, remember? The minute you say it's quiet, we'll be up to our....

Gabrielle checks her line of sight on Xena's body, then she looks up.

GABRIELLE

(Cont'd)

Necks... In problems.

XENA

Oh, c'mon Gabrielle. What could happen out here? There's nothing for leagues, and leagues....

A loud crack makes them both jump. They stop and look at each other.

VOICE

(Off Stage)

Help! Somebody help us!



Gabrielle gives Xena a very knowing look. Xena scowls.

Gabrielle grins, and gives Xena a light slap on the behind as they break into a run towards the sounds of trouble.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. DRAB BACKWOODS DIRT ROAD RIVER WASHOUT - MOMENTS LATER

Xena and Gabrielle run around a bend in the road, slowing down when they spot an overturned wagon ahead of them. It is a large wooden conveyance pulled by two horses. The road crosses a stream, and the bridge has washed out. The wagon is on its side in the water, and the horses are thrashing about.

A young, very pretty woman stands nearby, wringing her hands. An equally young, handsome man is trying to get to the horses without getting his feet wet.



YOUNG WOMAN

Oh! Oh! Pelenius be careful!!!

YOUNG MAN

Don't worry, darling! I'll have us out of this in a moment!

Xena and Gabrielle stop behind them.

GABRIELLE

Think we can skip this one? We helped those old women catch those rabbits yesterday morning.

XENA

Yeah.

Pelenius stands on a rock. He starts to lean towards the nearest horse. He loses his balance and windmills his arms wildly.

PELENIUS

Oh! Oh!!! Help!!!

Pelenius falls in the water. He apparently cannot swim. He goes under. The young woman screams.

XENA

On second thought... you want to save him?



GABRIELLE

Go on.

(beat - off Xena's outraged look)
Hey, you look better wet than I do.



Xena bolts for the water. She brushes past the screaming woman without a word and leaps off the bank, executing a perfect dive into the water. Gabrielle jogs over to the girl.

The woman looks at her and continues to scream.

YOUNG WOMAN

Aieeee! Aieeee! Aieeee!!!

Gabrielle claps a hand over the woman's mouth. The sound abruptly cuts off.

CUT TO:

EXT. RIVER – DAY



Xena swims underwater, her hair floating around her like a dark net. She spots Pelenius on the bottom. Xena dives towards Pelenius and grabs him by the belt. She kicks off from the bottom and heads for the surface.

Pelenius has both arms and legs spread out. His mouth is open as though he is screaming under the water.

Xena erupts from the surface. She shakes her head, throwing the hair out of her eyes with a growl. Xena grabs Pelenius by the seat of his pants and pulls him out of the water, throwing him up on shore. As Pelenius' head comes out of the river, a gurgling scream comes out of his mouth.

PELENIUS

Oooohhhh!!!!!!Noooooo!!!!!!

CUT TO:

EXT. DRAB BACKWOODS DIRT ROAD RIVER WASHOUT - DAY

The young woman spots Pelenius and runs to him, squealing in delight. She jumps on him, hugging and kissing him with great enthusiasm. Xena slishes out of the water and steps over them, shaking herself like an annoyed wolfhound.



YOUNG WOMAN

Oh! Oh! Sweetiebuns! Oh!!!
I thought I lost you!!! Um! Um!!!

Gabrielle joins Xena. They both put their hands on their hips in a similar pose as they watch the two lovebirds. Pelenius coughs up water. The young woman squeals and hugs him all the harder.

XENA

Hey! You two!!!!

The two lovebirds look up at her.

PELENIUS

(coughing)

Thank you! Thank you, oh great... Um....

Pelenius looks up at Xena's drenched, leather clad body.

XENA

Xena.



PELENIUS

Great Xena! Thank you.

Gabrielle snickers.

YOUNG WOMAN

Oh yes! Oh, thank you! Thank you!
We were on our way to town, and
the wagon rolled over - it was
horrible! And on today of all days!

GABRIELLE

What's today?



YOUNG WOMAN

Our wedding day! Pelenius, we
must have them at our wedding!
It's only right! They saved you!

PELENIUS

Yes! Please, won't you join us?
You must!

Xena and Gabrielle exchange looks.

XENA

We've got an appointment that way.

She points in other direction.

XENA

(Cont'd)

Sorry.

Pelenius and the young woman get up and walk over.

PELENIUS

But Thegos is the only town for leagues.
Come with us. Thegos is famous all around
here for their fine food, and wonderful
mead. We'd love for you to be our guests.



YOUNG WOMAN

We're going to have a fantastic
wedding party. Please, do join us!

Both lovebirds gaze at Xena and Gabrielle hopefully. Xena and Gabrielle exchange looks again.

GABRIELLE

Well, okay. I guess we could
stop by for a few minutes.

PELENIUS

Wonderful! Let's head off, shall we!

Pelenius turns and marches off down the road. He gets to the stream, and halts in bemusement. The horses have broken free, and run off, leaving the wagon overturned in the mud. He turns to beam at Xena.

PELENIUS

(Cont'd)

I say, Great Xena, you wouldn't know anything about bridges, would you?

Xena sighs. Gabrielle grabs a piece of Xena's leather armor and starts to walk forward, tugging Xena after her.

GABRIELLE

(under her breath)

Shortcuts. They get us every time.



FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. DRAB BACKWOODS DIRT ROAD - AFTERNOON

Pelenius and his bride to be ride in their miraculously restored wagon, complete with horses. Xena and Gabrielle stroll alongside. The scenery is relatively monotonous forest, but it is shady and a comfortable walk.

PELENIUS

It's absolutely amazing how you found those horses, Great Xena. Like magic!

Gabrielle's eyes twinkle wickedly.

GABRIELLE

Oh, that was nothing. You should hear her call fish. Right out of the water into my frying pan.
(snapping fingers)
Just like that.



Xena gives her the look, which Gabrielle blithely ignores.

PELENIUS

Really? Incredible!

GABRIELLE

And if we walk through the woods? Deer.
Right on our heels. We once even had a herd of....

XENA

Gabrieellllleeee....

PELENIUS

Theresa, did you hear that? Deer!

Theresa clasps her hands over her heart.

THERESA

What a wonderful life you must lead! I can only imagine the stories you could tell us!

XENA
(muttering)
Bet you can't.



GABRIELLE
Well, as a matter of fact, I happen
to be something of a storyteller.

THERESA
Really? Wonderful!

XENA
(under her breath)
A rapidly on her way to being a
bound and gagged storyteller.

GABRIELLE
(also under her breath, in response)
Promises, promises.

Xena gives Gabrielle an astonished look. Gabrielle produces an innocent smile.

GABRIELLE
(Cont'd)
Loosen up, Xena. These people haven't heard
stories about you in decades. I'm out of practice.



The wagon rolls around a bend in the road.

PELENIUS
You'll love Thenos. We've lived their
all our lives. It's the best town in the region.

GABRIELLE
I thought you said it was
the only town in the region.

PELENIUS

Everyone is so friendly! We all share our harvest with each other, and no one ever goes hungry. We love each other!

Theresa takes his hand.

THERESA

We do! I can't wait to be married!
Look! There's the gates!

They top a crest in the road and pause, looking down at a town carved out of the forest. Its walls are tree trunks lashed together somewhat haphazardly.

THERESA

(Cont'd)
Isn't it beautiful?

Xena and Gabrielle look at the place, then at each other.

GABRIELLE

(whispering)
Be nice.

XENA

Beats where we live.



GABRIELLE

We don't live anywhere.

XENA

Exactly.

The town is very small, and by the look of the much-mended fence and the road leading to it, not very ritzy. Outside the walls are several small gardens, with straggly looking plants in them.

PELENIUS

Home! At last! Hurry, let's get inside
and welcome our honored guests!

Pelenius urges the horses forward. They kick up a cloud of dust that covers Xena and Gabrielle as the wagon leaves them behind.

XENA

(coughing)

You sure this is a good idea?

Gabrielle is dusting herself off.

GABRIELLE

C'mon, Xena. It can't be that bad.
They are friendly, right? At least we'll
get a decent meal and a drink there.



XENA

A dinner I don't have to catch, you mean?

GABRIELLE

A dinner I don't have to cook.
I'm out of rabbit recipes.

Gabrielle watches the wagon rumble towards the gates.

GABRIELLE

(Cont'd)

Reminds me a little of Potadeia.

(sighing)

I bet they take having a home
to go back to for granted.

Xena's face briefly takes on a serious expression.

XENA

Yeah, I bet they do.



Xena drapes her arm over Gabrielle's shoulders as they follow the wagon.

CUT TO:

EXT. THENOS TOWN GATES - AFTERNOON

The gates swing open as the wagon approaches. Xena and Gabrielle follow it through into the town. They are immediately surrounded by armed soldiers.

CAPTAIN

Halt!

GABRIELLE

(startled)

I think we slept through a change in the meaning of the word friendly, Xena.



XENA

No kidding.



The town appears to be full of soldiers. On buildings nearby, purple banners are draped. The townspeople are lined up near a rickety building, carrying bags. No one looks very happy.

Theresa screams and holds her hands over her heart.

THERESA

Aieeeee!

PELENIUS

What is this? What are you doing?
What's going on?

A man in a purple sash steps forward. He is more richly dressed than the guards, and he has a well-shaped moustache twitching above his lip.

PURPLE SASH

Prince Xerxes has graciously agreed to extend his protection to this disgusting little town.

PELENIUS

I beg your pardon?

The man holds a big, brass bound box up. It has a slit in the top and it jingles as he moves it.

PURPLE SASH

All inhabitants are being extended the honor of contributing to his Grace's defense fund.

PELENIUS

What?

PURPLE SASH

You may now tender to me the visitor's tax.
Ten dinars.

The man makes a mark on his slate with a stylus.

PELENIUS

But... But we live here!

The man erases the mark, and makes a different one.

PURPLE SASH

AH! That's different.
Twenty dinars for the residents' tax then.

THERESA

But... We're here to be married!
We have no....

The man makes three more marks on the slate.

PURPLE SASH

The Prince will be delighted! Fifty dinars for the marriage tax, to be paid before the ceremony.
Five dinars for the privilege of recording it.

PELENIUS

But... But....

The man points at the wagon.

PURPLE SASH

Are those your horses?

PELENIUS

Yes, but....

Another mark on the slate. The man in the purple sash beams.

PURPLE SASH

Five dinars apiece for a stable tax.
Exact change please.

Gabrielle steps forward and taps the man with the sash on the shoulder.

GABRIELLE

Excuse me....

PURPLE SASH

Wait your turn, visitor!
Ten dinars apiece, exact change, please!

The man turns his back on Gabrielle. Gabrielle shakes her head and walks back to where Xena is standing.



THERESA

But... But... But we have no money!!

PURPLE SASH

(gasping)
What?

The soldiers move forward towards the wagon, pointing their spears menacingly.

GABRIELLE

Xena?

XENA

What?

GABRIELLE

We're going to help them, right?



Xena considers the question, scratching her jaw thoughtfully.

XENA

Do you have twenty dinars?

GABRIELLE

No.

XENA

Guess we're helping them, then.



Xena removes her chakram from her belt, and measures a distance, then cocks her arm and lets it fly. The weapon hits a nearby wall, bounces off and cuts through an awning. It rebounds off a piece of crockery, de-tails a chicken, dives under the belly of the horses pulling the wagon. Finally, it bounces off the ground and sails into the town bell, which rings a long, sonorous note.

The soldiers straighten and turn, then march off and away from the gates, falling into step together as they hit their spears on the ground.

GUARDS

Heya hullah heya hulla....

The man in the purple sash looks around wildly.

PURPLE SASH

Come back! Come back!
We're not finished collecting!
Hello??? Hello?

The chakram zooms back and smacks the horses on the rump. They bolt, yanking the wagon past the man in the purple sash and thundering into the town. Xena catches the chakram as it zooms past, twirling it on her finger before she settles it back on her hip.

PURPLE SASH

(Cont'd)

Stop! Stop! Help! Tax evaders!

The man starts to run after the wagon, waving his hands. The gate is left deserted, except for two chickens, a small dog, and Xena and Gabrielle.

XENA

If we had any sense, we'd
turn around and run.

GABRIELLE

Xena, if we had any sense I'd
still be in Potadeia and you'd be in
Amphipolis serving tables with Toris.
C'mon. They need our help.



Xena and Gabrielle close the gates and start off down the path, following the wagon.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

EXT. THENOS INN COURTYARD - LATE AFTERNOON

The townsfolk are gathered outside the inn. Across the door to the inn a board is nailed with a hastily written 'CLOSED DUE TO TAXES' on it.

Theresa and Pelenius and the wagon are in the center of the crowd. Everyone is upset.

Xena and Gabrielle approach and listen.

PELENIUS

I don't understand! How could
he just come in and take over!

An older man, with a harried expression steps forward.

VILLAGE ELDER

He just did! He marched in with his
soldiers, and that was that! Now,
we have to pay him for everything!

INNKEEPER

Five dinars tax for a mug of mead!
That's more than the mead itself!

Gabrielle and Xena exchange looks. Xena retrieves a coin from somewhere and flips it. They both examine the coin. Xena points at Gabrielle. Gabrielle shakes her head and steps forward.

GABRIELLE

Excuse me.



Everyone turns to look at her.

INNKEEPER

Who are you? You're not one of us!

Xena clears her throat. The innkeeper turns to see her and jumps in fright.

INNKEEPER

(Cont'd)

You are definitely not one of us!

Xena gives the man the look.



GABRIELLE

No, we're travelers, we met....

PELENIUS

OH! Oh! We brought them!
They're our friends!
We met them on the road!

VILLAGE ELDER

Well, you picked an awful time
to visit. Everything's closed!
(beat)
Unless you've got lots of dinars.

Everyone leans towards Gabrielle and Xena with deep interest.

INNKEEPER

Do you?

GABRIELLE

No, but....

Everyone moves back, dismissing Xena and Gabrielle and muttering.

THERESA

(sobbing)

We'll never get married now.
We don't have fifty dinars!
We don't have FIVE dinars!

Suddenly, soldiers come marching over, with a man in a purple sash. The villagers take one look at him, and run. They scatter in all directions, leaving the wagon, the horse, Xena and Gabrielle alone in front of the inn.

PURPLE SASH

Here ye, here ye.
The prince has declared a gathering tax.
Five dinars! Exact change, please!

The man holds his hand out to Xena.

XENA

We're not gathering, we're together.

The man looks at her, then looks at Gabrielle.

PURPLE SASH

Only married people are exempt
from the tax. Five dinars!

XENA

All right then... We're married.



The man in the purple sash gives Xena a doubtful look. Gabrielle raises her eyebrows and crosses her arms, trying not to smile.

PURPLE SASH

To each other?

XENA

(snarling)

Yes. Got a problem with that?

PURPLE SASH

No need to be testy.
Is that your horse?

GABRIELLE AND XENA

No.

The man with the purple sash slaps a tag on the horse that reads ten dinars. He then marches off with the soldiers. Xena catches Gabrielle watching her.

XENA

What?



GABRIELLE

(smiling)

Was that a proposal?



Xena gets a 'caught in the oil lamp light' look. She is saved by Theresa's sudden appearance, motioning to them.

THERESA

Oh! Hurry! Please!

We need your help desperately!!!!

XENA

Sure.

C'mon, Gabrielle.

Duty calls.



Xena marches towards Theresa with determination. Gabrielle follows, a thoughtful smile on her face.

CUT TO:

INT. THERESA'S HOME - A SHORT TIME LATER

The interior of Theresa's home is precious. There is lace and frills on everything including the table skirts. Embroidered pillows sit on every flat surface. The room is crowded with people including Pelenius, and their MOTHERS and FATHERS. The men are dressed in well-made tradesman's clothes and the women wear plain dresses and aprons.

Theresa, Gabrielle, and Xena enter.

PELENIUS

Ah! Great Xena! Thank you so much for coming to help us!

The PARENTS give Xena and Gabrielle wide eyed, doubtful looks.

THERESA

Yes! They're just wonderful, mummy!
I'm sure they'll know JUST what to do!
(beat, to Xena)
Right?

Xena flips a coin and shows it to Gabrielle. Gabrielle sighs.

GABRIELLE

I'm sure we'll help if we can... No one knows why this prince suddenly took over the town?



THERESA'S MUMMY

No!

THERESA'S DADDY

Yes!

PELENIUS' MUMMY

It's a curse of the gods! I've said it!
We must make a sacrifice, at once!

PELENIUS' DADDY

A conspiracy!!!! A conspiracy, I tell you!
They're out to drive us into the ground,
take every last thing from our guts!

Gabrielle looks at all four of them.

GABRIELLE

Right. Okay, Xena, your turn.

Gabrielle turns and slaps Xena's hand as if she's in a tag team. Xena steps forward.

XENA

So, no reason, huh?



THERESA'S DADDY

No!

THERESA'S MUMMY

Yes!

Xena whistles loudly, stopping Pelenius' parents from bursting into chatter.

XENA

I get the picture. Why not just wait?
That prince isn't gonna be here for
long before he drains the place dry.
Once he leaves, you can get married.



The Parents nod and mutter.

PELENIUS

Yes! What a splendid idea! Just the thing!
Great Xena, you are brilliant!

THERESA

NO!!!!

Everyone looks at Theresa in surprise. Theresa puts her hand over her mouth.

EVERYONE

No?

Theresa shuffles over and pulls Xena and Gabrielle aside. She looks behind her anxiously.

THERESA

(whispering)

We can't wait.

We have to get married now.

GABRIELLE

Right now?



Theresa checks the sundial nearby, then counts on her fingers. A worried look crosses her face.

THERESA

Our parents are very, very conservative!

Xena and Gabrielle look past Theresa. The parents and Pelenius are leaning towards them, cupping their ears. Theresa points at the sundial. Xena and Gabrielle exchange confused looks. Theresa points emphatically at her own stomach and raises her eyebrows, making a face.

A clue flies in the window of the home, smacking Xena and Gabrielle on the back of the head.

GABRIELLE

Oh!

XENA

Gotcha.

Xena and Gabrielle back towards the door. Everyone follows them. They crowd around Xena and Gabrielle eagerly.

PELENIUS

Great Xena, I know we can count on you.

Xena grimaces. Gabrielle jabs her in the stomach with an elbow. The crowd closes in. Gabrielle and Xena back up a little faster.



GABRIELLE

We'll... uh... Work on a plan. Okay?

THERESA'S MUMMY

A plan! How splendid!

PELENIUS' MUMMY

It's a gift of the gods! Wonderful! A plan!

PELENIUS' DADDY

A plot you say? A plot!
I knew it! Knew it all along!

THERESA'S DADDY

Brilliant! Brilliant!

Xena and Gabrielle escape out the door and slam it behind them.

CUT TO:

EXT. THERESA'S HOME - LATE AFTERNOON

Outside, the village is fairly well covered in purple tax tags. Xena and Gabrielle look around, then look at each other.

GABRIELLE

Do you ever wonder exactly how you
and I get mixed up in things like this?



XENA

I try not to think about it. C'mon.

Xena starts off. Gabrielle follows her.

GABRIELLE

Where are we going?

XENA

To put our plan into action.

Gabrielle grabs the back of Xena's leather skirt and hauls her to a stop.

GABRIELLE

We don't have a plan.

XENA

That never stopped us before.
Go that way.



Xena points to a small, crooked, dirty, scurvy looking alley. They disappear into it. For a moment, only the fluttering of the tax stamps are heard. Then Pelenius and Theresa stumble into view. Pelenius points to the alley, and they tiptoe exaggeratedly towards it.

CUT TO:

EXT. PRINCE'S ENCAMPMENT - EVENING

The prince has taken over the largest house in the village. His men have camped around it, throwing up a wall of sticks. They have also taken over two or three other houses nearby. One has a hand-lettered sign that says "Tax Collector", the other has one that says "Donjion."

The prince's men march around in groups. There is a central firepit, which has a large, yet unidentifiable animal carcass cooking inside it. A cart is drawn up to the Tax Collector's house, and two men are unloading bags from it and tossing them through the door.

Xena and Gabrielle sneak up behind the well and observe the scene. Gabrielle is unaccountably wearing one of the tax stamps on her right breast.

XENA

All right. There it is.

GABRIELLE

Xena, are you sure stealing the money is a good idea?



XENA

You got a better one? Besides, they're gonna be giving it right back to him. Now, go distract those guards while I sneak into the house and get a bag of those dinars.

Gabrielle looks at the guards. She puts her hands on her hips.

GABRIELLE

Why do I always have to do the distracting? Why don't you distract the guards, and let me do the sneaking?

XENA

Gabrielle, now's not the time for argument number six!



GABRIELLE

But....

XENA

Okay.

You do it because you dance better than I do. How's that?

GABRIELLE

Hmm. That'll do for now. Don't take too long though. My back's not up to this.

Gabrielle pauses, then straightens her clothes, and strolls into the firelight adopting a sexy walk. Xena stares after her, totally absorbed in watching this for several long beats. A rakish smirk appears on her face.

XENA

Atta girl.



Xena reluctantly leaves her hiding spot and disappears into the shadows.

CUT TO:

EXT. TAX COLLECTOR'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Six guards stand outside the house, bristling with weapons. They have so many sharp pointed items they look more like human porcupines than soldiers. The door to the house is locked, chained, bolted, and has a big sign on it that says, "Keep out by order of Prince Xerxes!" And "Or else!"

The soldiers look around very alertly, watching each approach to the house. Their eyes go from one point to the other, at eye level.

Xena, on the ground, crawls towards them completely undetected. She pauses behind a box far too small to hide her body and peeks over it.

One man looks past her, and scratches his unmentionables. Xena puts her head back down to wait.

CUT TO:

EXT. PRINCE'S ENCAMPMENT - NIGHT

Gabrielle strolls into the firelight. The guards all stop and look at her. Gabrielle strikes a pose with one hand on her hip.

GABRIELLE

Howdy, boys.



The guards look at each other, then back at Gabrielle.

LEAD GUARD

Halt! No one's allowed in here!

Gabrielle looks down at her boots, then up at the guard.

GABRIELLE

I am halted and I don't want to go in there.

LEAD GUARD

(puzzled)

Then why are you here?

GABRIELLE

I'm looking for some handsome men to talk to. Know where I can find any?



The guards look at each other carefully then look back at Gabrielle.

LEAD GUARD

No. The only ones here are us.

Gabrielle scratches her jaw.

GABRIELLE

(under her breath)

Tough crowd.

(to men)

I could dance for you.

Would you like that?

The men mutter, and shrug. Gabrielle spots Xena behind her box, convulsed in laughter.

SECOND GUARD

You know any square dances?

My mom used to do those.

GABRIELLE

Would you like to hear a story?

I know some great ones about

Xena, the Warrior Princess.

The men scratch their heads and other places. Gabrielle sighs, and walks over to them, and pulls something out of her belt pouch.

GABRIELLE

(Cont'd)

Game of cards?



Ears perk up, the men rush over, and scramble for a seat at Gabrielle's boots. The men from the tax collectors house almost impale each other.

LEAD GUARD

Oh, this is great. I thought we'd have to polish our swords all night.

(beat)

Do you know Go Fish?

Gabrielle looks at him. She hands him the deck of cards.

GABRIELLE

I know more about fish than you could possibly dream of. Deal.

CUT TO:

EXT. TAX COLLECTOR'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Xena stands up and dusts her hands off. She walks to the tax collectors house and looks at the door, covered in chains, locks, and barricades. She turns and walks to the side window, lifting the latch and opening it. It swings open easily. Xena looks around.

XENA

Piece of baklava.



Xena jumps gracefully inside the house.

CUT TO:

EXT. PRINCE'S ENCAMPMENT - NIGHT

Gabrielle and the guards play cards. Gabrielle looks over the guards' shoulders at the tax collectors house. Suddenly, Xena appears in the upper window, brandishing several pairs of underthings.

GABRIELLE

Bras.



LEAD GUARD

What?

GABRIELLE

Uh, I mean, gourds. Any gourds?

The men all search their cards earnestly. Gabrielle makes a face at Xena. Xena grins back at her, then disappears.

CUT TO:

EXT. TAX COLLECTOR'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Theresa and Pelenius creep from behind the house. They spot Gabrielle with the guards.

PELENIUS

Look! Do you see that?
Sweetums, they've joined the enemy!

THERESA

Oh no! They can't have!
They were so nice!

Pelenius faces the door.

PELENIUS

I will have to do this myself!

Pelenius approaches the door. He grabs one of the chains and pulls hard.

Bells ring. Alarms sound. A bird screams. The dead are woken. Pelenius tries to put the chains back, patting them frantically into place.

PELENIUS
(Cont'd)
Oh! Oh!!! Oh!!!!

THERESA
Aiiiee!

CUT TO:

EXT. PRINCE'S ENCAMPMENT - NIGHT

The bells ring. The guards jump up and turn around. They spot the two lovebirds by the tax collectors house.

LEAD GUARD
Invaders! Thieves!
Tax Cheats! Attack!

The guards scatter their cards and head for the tax house at full speed.

GABRIELLE
XENA!!!!



CUT TO:

EXT. TAX COLLECTOR'S HOUSE - SAME TIME

Xena leaps out of the window, a bag of coins in her hand. She stops dead as she spots the huge crowd of guards headed towards her at a dead run.

PELENIUS
Great Xena! Save us!!! Help!!!

Xena looks at them, and looks at the guards. They are almost to the house.

XENA
And I stopped being
a warlord... why, again?

Xena grabs Pelenius and shoves the bag into his hands.

PELENIUS

What shall we do???

XENA

RUN!!!

Xena gives Pelenius a shove in the right direction, then she throws Theresa after him.

THERESA

Aeeiiiiii!!!!!! I can't run
I can't run I can't!!!!....

XENA

RUN! Or I'll tell everyone
you're PREGNANT!!!



THERESA

Aii... ack! I'm going!

Pelenius and Theresa run like hounds from the square. Xena turns to face the onrushing guards. They raise their weapons and let out a yell.

FADE OUT.

END OFACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. PRINCE'S DONJION (DUNGEON) - NIGHT

It is dark inside. There is a lot of noise outside. Men's voices. The sound of chains. Torches.

VOICES

Throw them in the donjion!
Let them suffer!!

The door opens, and two people are thrown inside. The door closes with a huge bang. The crowd outside cheers wildly.

VOICES

(Cont'd)

Thieves! Take your punishment!!!

There is a brief silence.

GABRIELLE

(spitting something out)
You okay?

There is a sound of an arrow being pulled out of something that is hopefully not flesh.

XENA

Never been better. You?



Gabrielle gets to her feet and feels around in the darkness. She finds a candle.

GABRIELLE

Got your flint?

Xena stands up and feels around in the darkness. She finds Gabrielle. She pulls Gabrielle into an embrace, and kisses her passionately. A moment later, the candle spontaneously ignites next to them.

XENA

(smirking)
How's that?

GABRIELLE

I'm not sure.
Can we try it again?

She grins, and looks around.

GABRIELLE

(Cont'd)

Not like we really want to see the
inside of yet another prison. Same
old walls, same old bars, same old....



Gabrielle has picked up the candle and is turning in a circle. She and Xena stare at their surroundings.

XENA

Same old comfortable beds
and rugs on the floor??



The inside of the 'Donjion' is more like a room in a very good inn. There is a four-poster bed on one side, and a table with a tray of goodies on the other side. The windows have bars, but there are plush rugs on the floor and frilly curtains hiding the window bars.

Xena walks over to the table and inspects the tray.

XENA

(Cont'd)

Stuffed grape leaves. Mm.

Xena picks up a grape leaf and takes it with her to the bed. She drops down onto the bed and puts her feet up. Gabrielle goes and peeks outside the window. Yells erupt immediately.

VOICES

Suffer! Suffer! Suffer!

Gabrielle draws back out of sight. The yells cease. She sticks her head back into the window.

VOICES

(Cont'd)

Thief! Wrath of the gods be on you! Thief!

Gabrielle pulls back. The voices stop.

GABRIELLE

Guess we're not getting out that way.
(beat, looking at Xena)
So what's the plan now?



Xena licks her fingers.

XENA

The plan is, you're gonna get that tray,
and put your bardic butt in this bed.

GABRIELLE

Xena. We've got to get out of here.

Xena looks around.

XENA

Why? You got a better place to spend
the night? We've been sleeping on
the ground the last three weeks.

Gabrielle gives Xena a look.



XENA

(Cont'd)

(drolly)

Well, at least *I've* been sleeping on the ground.



Gabrielle gives in. She walks to the table, carefully skirting the window, and gets the tray of grape leaves. She also picks up a bottle of wine nearby. She brings it all over to the bed and sets it down on the wooden table near Xena's elbow. She climbs over Xena into the bed.

GABRIELLE

Xena, isn't this whole thing just a little strange?

XENA

What?

GABRIELLE

This. This... Jail.

These people. Those taxes.

Xena studiously removes the tax sticker from Gabrielle's breast.

XENA

How much was this one for?

GABRIELLE

(distractedly)

Ten dinars

XENA

Not even close.



GABRIELLE

What?

Xena plumps the pillows up and arranges Gabrielle against them. She takes a grape leaf from the tray and puts it in Gabrielle's mouth.

XENA

Tomorrow, we'll get our hands on that prince and fix this. Until then, enjoy.

Gabrielle leans over and gives Xena a kiss. Xena responds. Gabrielle kisses Xena again, then abruptly pauses.

GABRIELLE

What if they're watching us?

Xena cranes her neck and looks over Gabrielle's shoulder.

XENA

They'll either learn something or go blind. C'mere.

FADE TO:

EXT. PRINCE'S DUNGEON - MORNING

Three men sit outside the dungeon, wearing bandages over their eyes. They appear disconsolate. Surrounding the dungeon are a legion of guards, very well armed.

The makeshift gates around the big houses creak open, and another group of guards march out. They head for the dungeon.

As the group of guards approaches, the soldiers around the dungeon step back, opening a space for them. The guards stop before the house. The front ranks part, and a man steps out from among them. A small, buxom woman with a scroll and a quill follows him.

He is dressed in silk, and wearing a short cape. It is The PRINCE. He is a somewhat thin, weedy looking man with shoulder length brown hair. He is also short.

PRINCE XERXES

Prisoners! Be afraid!
For I am here to judge you!

Everything is quiet when he stops speaking. The guards look at each other. The prince clears his throat.

PRINCE XERXES

(Cont'd)
I SAID... PRISONERS....

Xena appears in the window. She grips the bars and looks out.

XENA

We heard you.

Gabrielle joins Xena, adjusting a strap on her halter.

GABRIELLE

Just the guy we wanted to talk to.

The prince struts over to the window. He waggles a riding crop at Gabrielle.

PRINCE XERXES

I talk. You listen!

XENA

Wait a minute....

The prince smacks his crop against the bars, hitting Xena's fingers.

PRINCE XERXES

Phut! Phut! Silence, Thief!

Xena glares at the prince, and starts to lunge forward. Gabrielle catches Xena's arm and makes a calming 'let me handle this' gesture.

GABRIELLE

Excuse me....

The prince smacks the bars again. Gabrielle jumps.

PRINCE XERXES

SILENCE!

(beat, looking at them.)

You have been caught stealing from my tax collector. Five years in jail. Have a nice day.

The prince turns and struts back to the guards, who close around him. The scribe scribbles on her parchment, sticking the tip of her tongue out in concentration.

XENA

Hey! Wait a minute!

You can't keep us in here for five years!

The prince sticks his head out from between two soldiers.

PRINCE XERXES

No?

(beat)

You're right. Ten years for impertinence!

The guards march away with the prince. Xena and Gabrielle exchange looks.

XENA
That worked.
(snorting)
Not.

Gabrielle examines the bars. She pushes her finger against one. It moves, held in place by what appears to be dried mud.

GABRIELLE
I don't think we have much to worry about.

The scribe has remained behind. She walks to the window and studies Xena and Gabrielle.

SCRIBE
I need to get some information from you.

XENA
Like what?

SCRIBE
Who you are, where you're from, what your favorite colors are... for the Prince's autobiography.

GABRIELLE
Are you writing it?

SCRIBE
Why, yes!

Gabrielle disappears from the window. She walks to the door and opens it. It opens quite readily.

GABRIELLE
Why don't you come on in and sit down?

SCRIBE
How nice! Why, thank you!

The scribe enters. Gabrielle looks out at the soldiers standing at attention. Shaking her head, she shuts the door.

CUT TO:

EXT. PRINCE'S DUNGEON - MORNING

Theresa and Pelenius sneak towards the dungeon.

PELENIUS
We shall never get through,
snookums! Look! The guards!

THERESA

But honeybottom - we must!
We can't just leave them in there!

They hide behind a barrel, and peek over it. The guards stolidly ring the dungeon, arms at the ready. Pelenius edges out from behind the barrel and crawls forward, looking one way, and then the other towards the dungeon. He crawls back.

PELENIUS

Sweetiebuns, I do believe I have a plan!

THERESA

I knew it! My hero!

Theresa and Pelenius crawl around to the back of the dungeon, out of sight.

CUT TO:

INT. PRINCE'S DUNGEON - DAY

Xena sprawls on the bed, a dour look on her face. Gabrielle sits on the edge of the bed, facing their visitor. The Scribe sits on a chair, writing.

SCRIBE

Can you spell that again?
Pota.... What?

Xena sits up.

XENA

How about you tell us something first.



GABRIELLE

Xena....

The scribe looks at Xena.

XENA

Why is the prince doing this?
Taking over this town. Badgering
these people half to death. Is he nuts?

SCRIBE

(striking a noble pose)

They say the Land has no wrath
like a man scorned! The Prince, his
most nobleness, is taking revenge
for a great wrong that was done to him.

Xena and Gabrielle exchange looks.

XENA AND GABRIELLE

Really?

SCRIBE

(lowering voice)

Wanna hear about it?

XENA AND GABRIELLE

Absolutely. Start talking.

CUT TO:

EXT. PRINCE'S DUNGEON - DAY

Pelenius and Theresa are flat on their bellies, behind a bush. The back of the dungeon is completely unguarded.

THERESA

Pooterbooters, I have every single
faith in you, but how are we to
pull that whole wall down?

PELENIUS

We'll just take hold and
start pulling, huggy wonkers.
Won't take but a minute.

They both regard the wall.

THERESA

Wouldn't it be much more fun if
our friends helped us, snookie?
We might break our nails!

PELENIUS

Good idea, munchibunchi!
Let's go get everyone!

Pelenius and Theresa crawl off.

CUT TO:

INT. PRINCE'S DUNGEON - DAY

The Scribe is now lying on the bed with her hands folded on her stomach. Gabrielle sits off to one side, writing on the parchment. Xena paces back and forth, asking questions.

XENA

So, let me get this straight.
The prince was going to marry
the innkeeper's daughter?



SCRIBE

Yes!

XENA

And the innkeeper's daughter ran
off with the winemaker, leaving
the prince at the altar?

SCRIBE

Yes!!!

GABRIELLE

(muttering)

Tch Tch....Gotta watch those
innkeeper's daughters.



Xena gives Gabrielle a look. Gabrielle smiles charmingly at her.

SCRIBE

Oh yes! It was horrible.
I felt SO bad for the Prince!
Imagine, being left like that!
For some... Some... Ugh!

XENA

Right.

SCRIBE

So, of COURSE he had to take revenge!

GABRIELLE

Of course.

SCRIBE

He's not really a bad guy.

XENA

Just a vindictive one.



SCRIBE

Right. I mean... No! No, not really!

CUT TO:

EXT. PRINCE'S DUNGEON - DAY

Theresa, Pelenius, and a dozen others gather outside the back of the dungeon.

PELENIUS

Let's go, mates! The Great Xena risked everything for us. Now we pay her back!

The crowd cheers. Pelenius waves his hands at the frantically. They shut up and cover their mouths. They creep up to the wall and take hold of it, pulling on the wood with audible grunts.

CUT TO:

INT. PRINCE'S DUNGEON - DAY

Gabrielle finishes writing. She puts the parchment down.

GABRIELLE

Fred, do you think you can get us an audience with the prince?



Xena rolls her eyes in disgust, and starts to prowl around the dungeon. She starts to rip small bits of wood off the walls.

SCRIBE

Oh! Well, I don't know....
Why do you want one?
I thought you didn't like him.

GABRIELLE

Well, maybe we can talk to him about what he'd doing here. You know, it's really not fair to punish the entire town for the actions of a few.

SCRIBE

Well, he's a pretty busy guy....

Gabrielle watches Xena out of the corner of her eye.

GABRIELLE

I bet he really likes this jailhouse, doesn't he?



SCRIBE

Oh! Yes! He's very proud of it!

Gabrielle points at Xena, and whispers.

GABRIELLE

If you don't get him to talk to us,
there won't be much of it left.

The scribe looks, gets up and scuttles for the door. She goes through it and closes it after her.

XENA

Give me one reason not to walk out
of here and kick everyone's butt.

GABRIELLE

If we can talk him out of this, we help him,
we help these people, and we get out
of here without bruises. For a change.

XENA

(puzzled)

And? Where's the fun in that?



Gabrielle sighs. Xena saunters over and puts a fingertip on Gabrielle's chin, lifting it up and peering at her.

XENA

(Cont'd)

What's it worth to me?

CUT TO:

EXT. PRINCE'S DUNGEON - DAY

All the efforts of the crowd don't seem to be getting them anywhere. The wall isn't budging, and they can't even pull a nail out of it.

THERESA

(panting)

Sweetiebuns, I don't think this is working.

PELENIUS

We must try harder!
If we all grab onto that....

Pelenius points to a beam midway up on the wall. It is above the crowd's heads.

THERESA

Cuddlepumps, we can't reach that!

It is true. Pelenius looks around, spots a wagon.

PELENIUS

Never fear, munchkin!
I've found a solution!

Pelenius runs for the wagon. The crowd cheers. Theresa waves at them frantically. They clap their hands over their mouths and look all around. Apparently no one hears them.

CUT TO:

INT. PRINCE'S DUNGEON - DAY

Xena lies on the bed, spread out on her side like a jungle cat, appearing smugly pleased. Gabrielle sits by the table, her boots up on it, writing on her parchment.



GABRIELLE

You're so easy.

Xena raises an eyebrow at her and smirks. A loud rumbling wipes the grin off her face and makes them both jump up.

GABRIELLE

(Cont'd)

Earthquake? Giant?
Flash flood? Baked beans?

XENA

Worse.

Xena dives off the bed and grabs Gabrielle, pulling her off her feet and falling with her in the corner of the room. The entire back wall of the jailhouse crashes inward with a horrendous splintering of wood, screaming of horses, and yelping of many voices.

GABRIELLE

Ah. Idiots.

A horn sounds.

VOICE OUTSIDE

All rise for the approach of his
royal Majesty, the ever wonderful,
ever gracious, ever handsome, ever....

(beat)

Prince Xerxes!

The sound of marching feet gets louder. The babbling of the idiots gets louder. Gabrielle gives Xena a horrified look.

GABRIELLE

If he catches them, they'll
all end up in here with us.



XENA

AIEEEEEEEEE!!!!!!!!!!

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. PRINCE'S DUNGEON - DAY

The door slams open. Guards march in and stand at attention, slamming the butts of their spears on the wooden floor. Xena is sitting on the table, the whip from the wagon coiled loosely around her. Gabrielle has her hands behind her back and she is peering innocently at a picture on the wall.



The prince enters and looks around. He does not seem to notice the entire back wall is missing, filled in with a stack of petrified looking idiots with linked arms.

PRINCE XERXES

You begged an audience with moi?
I am here! What do you wish to ask for
that I will of course, refuse to grant you?

Xena starts to answer, then uncoils her whip and flicks it out to smack Gabrielle on the butt. Gabrielle jumps and turns.

XENA

I think he's talking to you.

Gabrielle approaches the prince.

GABRIELLE

Look, I really think this was
just a misunderstanding.

PRINCE XERXES

Impossible. You were captured inside
my tax house. We are finished. Men?

Gabrielle steps in front of the prince, blocking his route.

GABRIELLE

Wait!



PRINCE XERXES

Wait? Wait? Thief!

Out of my path! Men, subdue her!

The men advance on Gabrielle. Xena remains seated on the table, twirling the end of the whip in one hand. One of the soldiers pokes at Gabrielle with his spear. Gabrielle kicks it out of his hands and it flies past Xena. Xena follows its arc with interest, but does not seem alarmed. Another man rushes at Gabrielle. Gabrielle sidesteps him and he impales another soldier's hat with his spear.

GABRIELLE

Hold on a minute!

You're a just man, aren't you?

PRINCE XERXES

Just? But of course I am. Are you not justly imprisoned here? You should not have been inside my tax house.

The prince turns to go. Gabrielle flips a third soldier, and boots a fourth in the butt, sending him sprawling in front of Xena. He attempts getting up. Xena clamps his head between her calves and twists, knocking him out. Xena resumes swinging her feet, clearly appreciative of the show being put on for her benefit.

GABRIELLE

I wasn't in the tax house!

The prince stops. He turns.

PRINCE XERXES

(indignantly)

Of course you were.

(aside to soldier)

Wasn't she?

SOLDIER

No sir. She was outside.

PRINCE XERXES

Outside?

SOLDIER

Yes, sir.

PRINCE XERXES

Then you caught her with money outside?

GABRIELLE

I didn't have any money.



PRINCE XERXES

Of course you had my money!

(to soldier)

Didn't she?

SOLDIER

No, sir. She didn't have any money.

The prince stamps his foot and puts his hands on his hips, flipping his cape up over his shoulder.

PRINCE XERXES

Then why did you arrest her?

This is intolerable! Horrible!

Awful! Unjust!

SOLDIER

You told me to, sir.

PRINCE XERXES

Nonsense! She must go free
at once. No one shall say that I,
Prince Xerxes, is unjust!

The prince walks over and flings the door open. He throws his arm out with a flourish.

PRINCE XERXES

(Cont'd)

Woman, go on your way!

Gabrielle smirks at Xena. Xena crosses her arms.

GABRIELLE

What about my friend?

PRINCE XERXES

What friend?

Gabrielle points at Xena.

PRINCE XERXES

(Cont'd)

(to soldier)

Did you capture her
inside the tax house?

SOLDIER

No, sir.

PRINCE XERXES

Well, then, woman....

(looking closer)

You are a woman, aren't you?

Xena's eyes drop to her chest, then lift back up to the prince's. If looks could kill, he'd be in trouble.



PRINCE XERXES

(Cont'd)

No matter. Go on your....

SOLDIER

She came OUT of the tax house.

PRINCE XERXES

Ah! She WAS in the tax house?

SOLDIER

Yes, sir.

The prince marches to the door, hustling Gabrielle before him.

PRINCE XERXES

Ten years! Good day.
Come along, my dear.
I'll allow you to have lunch with me.

Gabrielle pulls herself free, and gets to the door first, closing it.

GABRIELLE

I can't.

PRINCE XERXES

Of course you can! I said so!

GABRIELLE

I can't go without my friend.
(pointing to Xena)
Where she goes, I go.



The prince looks at Gabrielle in disbelief. He looks at Xena. The soldiers also look between the two of them.

SOLDIERS

Awwwwww....

PRINCE XERXES

But she's in jail!

GABRIELLE

That's okay. I'd rather stay here with
her in jail, than leave with out her.

SOLDIER

Isn't that wonderful, sir?

The prince starts twitching and jerking.

PRINCE XERXES

It is not wonderful. It is...
silly! Foolish! Useless!

The prince storms out, slamming the door behind him. He leaves the soldiers inside the jail. Helplessly, they look around, milling about in confusion. Gabrielle walks to the door

and opens it. She points. The soldiers all trot out, thanking her. Gabrielle slams the door on the last of them. She looks at Xena. Xena shrugs.

XENA

Sounded good to me.



The entire back wall of the jail suddenly collapses into a pile of squiggling townsfolk. Outside, a bell starts ringing.

It starts getting louder. And louder. And louder.

CUT TO:

EXT. PRINCE'S ENCAMPMENT - DAY

A platform has been set up in front of the prince's gates. Tax collectors stand near either end. Theresa, Pelenius, their friends and families suddenly appear from behind the jail. They are covered in scratches, dents, and blood, and their clothing is ripped and dirty.

Near the platform, a bell tower is now standing. A soldier is underneath it, ringing the bell for all he's worth. No one can hear a thing it's so loud.

The prince marches to the platform. He realizes it's too high for him to get onto.

PRINCE XERXES

Men! I command you to lie down,
and let me step all over you!

The soldiers stand around, oblivious.

PRINCE XERXES

(Cont'd)

Men!! Men!!!

One soldier picks his teeth. Another picks a more unsavory location. The prince stomps over and slaps him. The guard jumps.

PRINCE XERXES

(Cont'd)

Down! Down!!!

The soldier has no idea what he's saying. He runs off. Frustrated, the prince tries to pull himself up onto the platform. He gets stuck halfway, on a particular part of his anatomy. Two of the soldiers see him. They rush over and try pushing him forward. The prince's eyes almost come out of his head.

PRINCE XERXES

(Cont'd)

Nnnooooo!!!

CUT TO:

EXT. PRINCE'S DUNGEON - DAY

The door slams open. Xena steps outside, outlined by the light coming through the missing back wall of the jail. She lifts her chakram and pauses, then whips it along with a side motion of her arm.



The chakram whizzes through the air. It conks both soldiers pushing Xerxes on the head, then ricochets off and slices through the rope holding the bell up. The bell falls on the head of the bell ringer, ringing his bell in a more or less permanent way.

Xena watches it go, giving it a little body language as it bounces off a few more items and bodyparts.

The bell sounds fade, replaced by a high-pitched scream from Prince Xerxes. The chakram zooms past, smacking the prince in the butt and sending him flying up onto the platform.

The screaming stops.

Xena lifts her hand catches the chakram. She blows a bit of dirt off it and walks back inside the jail. Xena slams the door behind her with a loud bang.

The crowd all stands still. Everyone looks at each other. Prince Xerxes groans.

A loud creaking is heard. Slowly, the walls on the jail all fall outward, collapsing with a huge crash as the thatch roof falls straight down.

The crowd gasps.

Two scarecrows emerge from the debris and start towards the crowd.

CUT TO:

EXT. PRINCE'S ENCAMPMENT - MOMENTS LATER

The scarecrows approach. The crowd screams in fear.

CROWD

Aieeee!!!!!!!!!!!!

PRINCE XERXES

Men! Monsters! Save us!

Xena shakes herself hard and sends straw flying. A moment later, Gabrielle does the same.

CROWD

Whew!

PRINCE XERXES

Women monsters! Surround them!

Soldiers rush over and form a circle around Xena and Gabrielle.

PRINCE XERXES

(Cont'd)

Bring them over here so that I might judge them again!

(aside to scribe)

It was so much fun the first time.

PELENIUS

Wait! What about our marriage!

CROWD

Yes!

The prince stomps to the front of the podium.

PRINCE XERXES

Wedding? Impossible. None of you can afford my marriage tax! You're all poor wretches!

The scribe pulls on his skirt.

SCRIBE

(whispering)

Sir, we have one!

The prince looks down.

PRINCE XERXES

Impossible!

The tax collector comes over, holding up a sack full of coins. The scribe shows the prince her parchment. The prince frowns.

PRINCE XERXES

(Cont'd)

But I don't want any marriages!
Completely out of the question!

THERESA

But...

We already paid for it!
It's the law!

CROWD

It's the law!

The prince makes a face at them.

PRINCE XERXES

Well, it's my law. I can change it!

Xena and Gabrielle look at each other. They draw their weapons. The guards all take a step back.

GABRIELLE

If your laws are that fickle, I guess we
don't have to follow them either, right?



The prince looks at them. Xena twirls her sword. Gabrielle examines the very sharp tips of her sais.

PRINCE XERXES

Okay. Maybe we can have just one.
(to Pelenius)
Show me the money.

The crowd pushes the tax collector forward, as they cheer.

CUT TO:

EXT. PRINCE'S ENCAMPMENT PLATFORM - MOMENTS LATER

Theresa and Pelenius are shoved up onto the platform next to the prince. The prince looks at their tattered clothing and moves away from them. The tax collector hands him the bag.

PRINCE XERXES

All right. All right.
Don't get too close.

The prince hefts the bag and shakes his head. He opens the top and looks inside.

THERESA

It's all there. I counted it.

PELENIUS

Twice.

The prince removes a coin.

PRINCE XERXES

Fine, fine.
(to scribe)
Write down that they're married
so I can get to the good stuff.
(looking at Pelenius and Theresa)
Go on, it's done. Go away.

Theresa and Pelenius look at each other, and shrug. They start to leave.

PRINCE XERXES

(Cont'd)
Wait!

They turn back and smile. The prince holds up the coin.

PRINCE XERXES

(Cont'd)
This is mine!

THERESA

Well... YES!

PRINCE XERXES

No, it's my coin! Mine! You stole it from me!
You've paid with my own money!
Guards! Guards! Arrest them!

CUT TO:

EXT. PRINCE'S ENCAMPMENT - SAME TIME

The guards around Xena and Gabrielle run towards the prince.

XENA

We can leave now. Let's go.

GABRIELLE

(indignantly)

No we can't! We have to help them!
C'mon, Xena! You can't just
leave all of them like this!



Xena smiles at Gabrielle's words - they remind her of a time much earlier in their partnership. Xena looks around, and quickly formulates a plan.

XENA

All right. Get one of those barrels,
and let's clean this mess up.

GABRIELLE

What's in them?

XENA

Ale.

Xena and Gabrielle run to a wagon that contains barrels, all wrapped in purple ribbon. They drag one off the wagon and run towards the crowd and the soldiers.

It is chaos. The soldiers are trying to get to the platform, but the crowd is in their way. The crowd is trying to get out of the soldiers way, but they keep bumping into each other and blocking the soldiers.

The prince is on the platform chasing after Theresa and Pelenius, who are frantically trying to evade him.

The scribe is furiously scribbling it all down.

Xena plunks the barrel down and holds a hand out. Gabrielle slaps a tube into it. Xena puts the tube into the bunghole of the barrel.

Xena grabs a soldier, bends him over her knee, and sticks the end of the tube into his mouth. She whispers menacingly into his ear.

XENA

(Cont'd)

(threateningly)

Suck or die.

The soldier sucks. Gabrielle reaches out and snatches another soldier. He struggles. Gabrielle wrestles with him.

GABRIELLE

Don't make me hurt you.



XENA

He'd probably enjoy it.



Xena hauls the soldier upright and shoves him on his way. He sways back and forth, hiccuping. Xena grabs Gabrielle's captive, and repeats the process.

GABRIELLE

This is going to take forever.

The soldiers are now managing to get through the crowd. The crowd starts to scream. Gabrielle runs and grabs another barrel. She pulls the stopper out, and a gush of ale emerges. Gabrielle grabs mugs and starts filling them. As the soldiers rush by, she hands them out.

GABRIELLE

(Cont'd)

Here!

SOLDIER

Oh! Thanks!

The soldiers drink the ale. Xena gets tired of the soldiers sucking, and jumps up onto the platform with her barrel. She points the hose at the crowd and starts spraying everyone with the ale.

Everyone is turning brown.

SCRIBE

Oh! Wait! That's been taxed!
You can't..urgfighg....

Xena sprays the Scribe in the mouth with ale. The soldiers are now staggering around, toasting each other. The prince is still chasing Theresa and Pelenius around the platform.

PRINCE XERXES

Guards! Guards! I've got them now!
Hurry! Before they escape!

The prince chases Theresa and Pelenius right into a bunch of guards. Drunk, they all fall down on top of them.

PRINCE XERXES

(Cont'd)

Wonderful! Now I can sentence them!

GABRIELLE

Wait a minute!

PRINCE XERXES

Twenty years! Lock them up in separate
dungeons! Teach them to want to marry!

The Scribe wipes her mouth off, then turns and spots the prince. She stumbles towards him and throws her arms around him.

SCRIBE

Oh! My prince! I love you!

Everything stops in mid motion. The townsfolk freeze, the guards freeze, all the noise stops. You can hear the droplets of ale falling off Xena's hose.

EVERYONE

What?

SCRIBE

I love you. I have always loved you.
You're the most wonderful man on earth.

Xena winces and closes one eye. Gabrielle scratches her ear.

PRINCE XERXES

I... I am? You do?

SCRIBE

Oh! (hic) yes!

Theresa and Pelenius hug each other and sigh. Xena puts her barrel down and jumps off the platform. She approaches the prince. The prince stares at the scribe.

PRINCE XERXES

Oh my. I think I might be fond of you
as well. What a shock! What a calamity!

XENA

Love has a way of biting you
when you least expect it.
(beat - off Gabrielle's look)
Sometimes it's for the best.

Gabrielle shakes the droplets of ale off her hands and walks over to join Xena.

PRINCE XERXES

That's easy for you to say!
What shall we do now?????

XENA

Try this.

Xena puts her arms around Gabrielle and kisses her with sincere passion. Gabrielle puts her arms around Xena's neck and continues the kiss, drawing it out until the reader is forced to gasp for air in her behalf.

There is the sound of something heavy hitting the earth. Xena and Gabrielle look up to see the prince face down in the mud.

GABRIELLE

Puts new meaning to cut off the flow
of blood to his brain, doesn't it?

The scribe turns the prince over and starts patting his cheeks anxiously.

SCRIBE

Sweetie! Wake up!

The prince doesn't wake up. The scribe leans over and kisses him. The prince wakes up. He smiles.

PRINCE XERXES

Drinks are on me!
E'vrybody's getting married!

The crowd starts to cheer and dance with the drunken soldiers. A great party is in the first stages of beginning. Xena and Gabrielle put their arms around each other's shoulders.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FOUR

TAG

FADE IN:

EXT. PRINCE'S ENCAMPMENT - NIGHT

A campfire is lit. Everyone is dancing, drinking, and eating. Laughter rings out over the town. Xena and Gabrielle lean against a tree, watching.

XENA

Glad everything turned out all right.



GABRIELLE

Me too. Looks like the wedding turned out to be a real success.

XENA

Both of them.

The wedding couples are dancing together, covered in white bunting. They do a traditional dance, as some of the townsfolk play instruments. The prince now seems one of them.

GABRIELLE

Nice to see some traditions don't change. Weddings in Potadeia looked a lot like this.

XENA

Yeah. It's all right if you stay in one place your whole life.

Gabrielle watches the crowd. She seems just a little envious.

GABRIELLE

I guess you're right. No sense in dragging tradition around if you live like we do, huh?



XENA

Right.

Xena claps her hand on Gabrielle's back.

XENA

(Cont'd)

Long as we're here, we might as well
enjoy the party. Let's go join them.

Xena and Gabrielle walk towards the celebrating townsfolk. The townsfolk cheer when they are spotted, and draw them into the dancing around the fire. After a moment, they are lost in the happy crowd.



FADE OUT.

DISCLAIMER

Xena and Gabrielle's purse strings were not harmed in the making of this motion picture, but Xena is still finding little purple tags in the darndest of places.