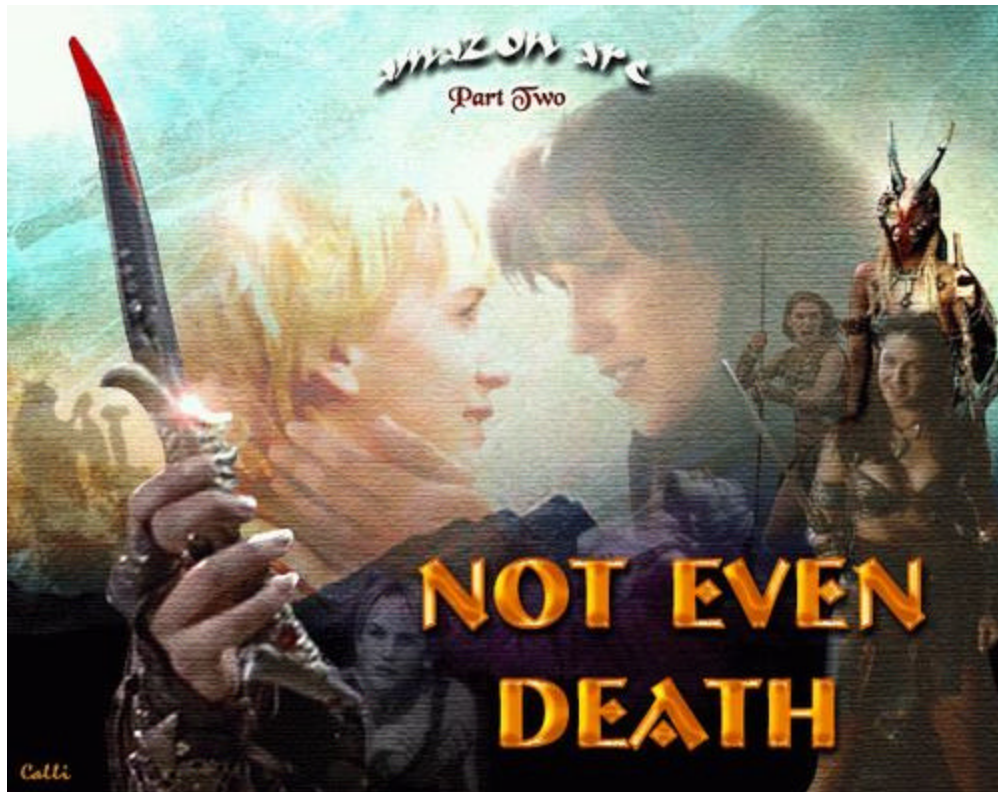


## Xena: Warrior Princess - Subtext Virtual Season 7



Production #V717 – Not Even Death

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TEASER

FADE IN:

INT. AMAZON QUEEN HUT - NIGHT - CONTINUED...

XENA

No, but I'd join with you  
because I love you.

Xena takes both of Gabrielle's hands in her own.

XENA

*(Cont'd)*  
Join with me.



Gabrielle gazes at Xena seriously for a few seconds. Then she withdraws her hands from Xena's.

GABRIELLE

No.

Gabrielle turns and picks up her cloak. She puts it on as she goes to the door. At the door, she turns. Xena stands obviously stunned, with her back towards the door.

GABRIELLE

*(Cont'd)*  
The Amazons mean a lot to me, Xena.  
But at some point the greater good  
has to mean something for us, too.



Gabrielle leaves the hut. Xena slowly sits down on the bed and looks around. Adelia abruptly enters.



**ADELIA**

Xena, I'm glad I found you.  
There is something....

Xena gets up and walks past her without saying a word. Xena walks out the door and closes it behind her, leaving Adelia to stare at her back.

**FADE OUT.**

**END OF TEASER**

## ACT ONE

FADE IN:

### EXT. LAKESIDE BOULDER - EARLY EVENING

Gabrielle sits on a rock, watching the sun set over the lake. She has a handful of flat stones, and as she sits and thinks she throws them one at a time across the surface of the water. They skip several times, before they finally drop below the water and sink, leaving behind ripples.



**GABRIELLE**

I remember the day you taught  
me about ripples, Xena.



Gabrielle throws a rock, and watches it skip and sink.

**GABRIELLE**

*(Cont'd)*

The water gets smooth again, but it's  
changed forever. Boy, were you right.

Unseen, Xena stands in the shadows behind her, listening.



**GABRIELLE**

*(Cont'd)*

I've changed.

Raya appears from the trees. She approaches Gabrielle cautiously, looking around as though she expects something to jump out at her. Gabrielle sees her.

**GABRIELLE**

*(Cont'd)*

Need something?

Raya walks over and sits on a neighboring rock.

**GABRIELLE**

*(Cont'd)*

Got any more gorillas you want to sic on me? Or maybe you'll bring in a Hydra this time. That'll be fun.

Gabrielle's dark tone and obvious rancor surprises Raya a little. It probably surprises Xena a little as well.

**RAYA**

Gabrielle, you make it sound like we're enemies.

**GABRIELLE**

Aren't we?

**RAYA**

We both want what's best for the Amazons. You've proved yourself a fine warrior and....

**GABRIELLE**

Gee, thanks.

Raya frowns.

**RAYA**

Most of us would follow you, if you were willing to compromise.

**GABRIELLE**

Compromise.

**RAYA**

Xena is not one of us, and she never will be. But there are those of us who are true Amazons, and who would gladly partner with you to lead us.

**GABRIELLE**

None of you have the experience Xena does.



**RAYA**

But....

**GABRIELLE**

And she's the only one that  
\*I\* would trust to do this.

*(beat)*

So. Take your pick. Follow Xena or  
stay here and be slaughtered.

**RAYA**

*(angrily)*

We will never follow her.

Raya gets up and storms off. Gabrielle chucks a rock after her, narrowly missing her back. It gets quiet in the clearing again. Gabrielle runs out of stones and sits looking out at the water.

**FADE TO:**

**EXT. FOREST GLADE - NIGHT - XENA'S POV**

Xena stands in the shadows, watching Gabrielle. An owl hoots nearby, and Xena looks up at it.

**XENA**

Wish me luck.



The owl hoots again.

Xena enters the clearing and walks over to Gabrielle, sitting down on the rock by her side. They remain silent for a bit, just sitting there each with private thoughts occupying them.

**GABRIELLE**

I don't know what to do, Xena. It's just  
so pointless. Do they want to die?



**XENA**

No.

*(beat)*

At least, I don't think so. But they  
want to survive on their own terms.

Gabrielle sighs.

**GABRIELLE**

I'm trying to help them. Why can't they just cooperate with me?

**XENA**

Mm. Know how you feel.

Gabrielle looks at Xena. She is upset.

**GABRIELLE**

How could you think I'd use something as personal to me as our relationship for a political end?

**XENA**

That's not what I....



**GABRIELLE**

*(angrily)*

You know it is, Xena! I realize you made a promise to Ephiny, but damn it, this means something to me and we both know how you really feel about commitment of any kind, don't we?

**XENA**

Gabrielle....

**GABRIELLE**

Don't we? You made it clear enough the last time ump....

Xena puts her hand over Gabrielle's mouth, gently but forcefully.

**XENA**

Wanna let me talk for a minute?

Gabrielle's eyes are very stormy.

**XENA**

*(Cont'd)*

Please?

Gabrielle responds to the magic word and relaxes. She nods at Xena, who removes her hand cautiously. They study each other in silence for a few heartbeats.



**CUT TO:**

**EXT. FOREST - OUTSIDE FOREST GLADE - NIGHT**

Deliz approaches the glade. She has her ribs taped, and is wearing a somewhat sheepish expression. She spots Gabrielle and starts to enter the glade, then hears Xena's voice and stops, listening.

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. FOREST GLADE - NIGHT**

Xena takes Gabrielle's hand in hers.

**XENA**

Forget about the Amazons.

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. FOREST - OUTSIDE FOREST GLADE**

Deliz hears Xena's words. Her face becomes grim. She turns and leaves the glade hastily.

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. FOREST GLADE - NIGHT**

Gabrielle watches Xena's face as she speaks. There is an expression on it that she has seen only very rarely.

**GABRIELLE**

I'm listening.



**XENA**

You're right. I've never been able to commit myself to any one person. We both know that. You've known me long enough....

Gabrielle's shoulders slump, just slightly. It is one thing to think a truth, and another to hear it said aloud.



**GABRIELLE**

Yeah.

**XENA**

Gabrielle, I've never been closer to anyone in my life than I am to you.



Gabrielle is close to tears, but refuses to give in to them.

**GABRIELLE**

I know.

**XENA**

And... I never thought it was fair to you to ask you to commit yourself to someone as cursed as I am, and we both know that's true, too.

Gabrielle doesn't answer that one. She is upset, though, and Xena knows it.

**XENA**

*(Cont'd)*

So now I find myself in a damn tight spot because... I want this.

Gabrielle stares at Xena.

**GABRIELLE**

What?

**XENA**

It's not a trick.

Gabrielle gets up and paces around the rock.

**XENA**

*(Cont'd)*

Lousy timing. Look, you can decide....

**GABRIELLE**

Decide?



Gabrielle sits down hard on the rock, and puts her head in her hands.

**GABRIELLE**

*(Cont'd)*

Gods, Xena for me that decision  
was made a lifetime ago.  
Haven't you realized that yet?

Xena is at a momentary loss for words. She makes an attempt at humor.

**XENA**

Does that mean it's yes?



Gabrielle lifts her head and rests her chin on her fists as she looks at Xena.

**GABRIELLE**

I can't believe you're serious about this.

Xena kicks a rock up and catches it. She tosses it out and watches it skip across the lake a half dozen times before it finally sinks.

**XENA**

Me either.

Xena pauses, and looks at Gabrielle.

**XENA**

*(Cont'd)*

But I am. I want this. I hope you do too.

Gabrielle shakes her head slowly.

**GABRIELLE**

I've wanted this for so long...  
I just finally gave up hoping for it.

Xena kicks another rock up, and throws it. Gabrielle gets up again and paces. She turns and looks back at Xena.

**GABRIELLE**

*(Cont'd)*

You're really serious?

Xena nods.

**GABRIELLE**

*(Cont'd)*

Amazons or no Amazons, you want to go  
through a joining ceremony with me?

Xena nods again. Gabrielle leans against a tree and looks up at the moon.

**GABRIELLE**

*(Cont'd)*  
Wow.



Xena looks cautiously encouraged.

**XENA**

So is that a yes?

Gabrielle, finally, smiles and believes it. The joy on her face is almost painfully apparent. She starts to laugh.

**GABRIELLE**

Oh, yes. You bet it is.



Xena stands up just in time to avoid being knocked over as Gabrielle rushes at her and throws her arms around her. Xena lifts Gabrielle up in a hug, happy and very relieved at the words.



**GABRIELLE**

*(Cont'd)*  
*(whispering blissfully)*  
You bet it is.

**FADE OUT.**

**END OF ACT ONE**

## ACT TWO

FADE IN:

### EXT. AMAZON VILLAGE - MORNING

Xena strolls through the village, heading for the council chamber. She is whistling under her breath. Every once in a while, a smile appears on her face as though she can't quite control it.

Xena passes Deliz and Raya deep in conversation. They stop as she approaches and fall silent, staring menacingly at Xena.

Xena stops and looks at them.

**XENA**

Got a problem?



**RAYA**

No problem a few less wanna be  
Amazons around wouldn't fix right up.

**XENA**

You're in luck.

**RAYA**

Oh? You're leaving?

**XENA**

No, I'm getting married. You're leaving.

Deliz backs Raya up, standing behind Raya and looking very imposing.

**RAYA**

I'm not going anywhere.

Xena merely appears amused. She shakes her head and walks on.

**XENA**

Ain't that the truth.



Deliz and Raya watch Xena leave.

**RAYA**

If she thinks a joining will get us to leave our lands, she's crazier than I thought.

**DELIZ**

They're both crazy. I told you she's got no intention of helping us. Probably wants to sell us off as slaves somewhere.

**RAYA**

Not if I can help it.

Raya and Deliz walk over to a small group of Amazons and start talking to them in a low tone.

**CUT TO:**

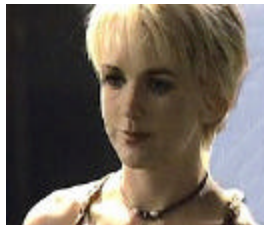
**INT. AMAZON RECORDS HUT - MORNING**

It is empty. There are several bags on the floor, apparently to carry the records of the Amazons when they leave, but none have been packed yet. It's apparent from the gaps in the scroll cases that much has also been lost over the years.

Gabrielle enters the hut, dressed in a set of plain Amazon leathers. She is in visible high spirits, despite the impending troubles. As she crosses the room she enters a beam of sunlight from the window, and she stops for a moment and plays with it, cupping her hand and making it swim through the light as though it were water. She chuckles, then walks to the scroll cases.

**GABRIELLE**

Let's see. Herbs, Oils, Weapons making...  
no, that's not it... Cooking... hmm.



Gabrielle pulls out the cooking scroll, which is in pristine condition and obviously has never been unrolled.

**GABRIELLE**

*(Cont'd)*

That explains a few things.

Gabrielle puts the scroll back and continues searching.

**GABRIELLE**

*(Cont'd)*

Ah. Ceremonies. Here we go.

Gabrielle removes the scroll, which is large and somewhat tattered. She walks to the small reed table in the room and unrolls the scroll, leaning over it and reading the contents.

Slowly, the sunlight in the corner collects into a semi transparent figure. It is Ephiny. She stands watching Gabrielle read, a wistful smile on her face.

Gabrielle senses her presence, and looks up.

**GABRIELLE**  
(Cont'd) (smiling)  
Hi.



Ephiny walks over to her.

**EPHINY**  
Hi, yourself. You going to invite  
me to the happy occasion?

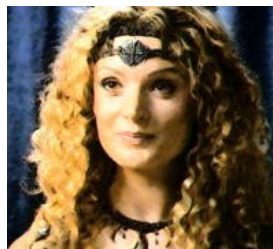
Gabrielle chuckles. She sits down on the stool behind the table, the scroll in her hands. She grins at Ephiny.

**GABRIELLE**  
Absolutely.

**EPHINY**  
So, you found a way.

**GABRIELLE**  
Xena did.

Ephiny smiles.

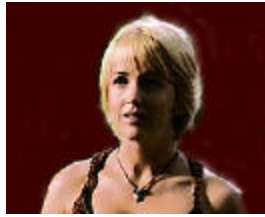


**EPHINY**  
Yes, she did, and she gets an  
ethereal cookie for finally putting  
that smile on your face. About time.  
(beat)  
You're up early.

Gabrielle rests her chin on her fists.

**GABRIELLE**

I wanted a chance to go over the ceremony... see what we're in for. It wasn't anything I'd ever looked at before.



**EPHINY**

Yeah, I know. There's something in the joining ceremony I wanted to talk to you about... that you won't find in there.

Gabrielle looks at Ephiny. Her eyebrows lift.

**GABRIELLE**

Eph, we're just getting joined.  
We've already done everything else.

Ephiny rolls her eyes.

**EPHINY**

That's not what I....

**GABRIELLE**

Good, because if I thought you were going to sit there and give me my coming of age speech, I was going to have to at least attempt to hurt you.

Ephiny perches on the table.

**EPHINY**

I bet you would, but this is serious, Gabrielle.  
There's something I think you should know  
before you both go through this.

Gabrielle stares at Ephiny.

**GABRIELLE**

Now that I know Xena wants to do it, there's  
nothing that could keep me from going  
through with it, Ephiny. Nothing.



**EPHINY**

Just listen. Then decide.

**CUT TO:**

## EXT. AMAZON CAMP - MORNING

Xena is seated near the Queens' hut, sharpening her sword. Argo II crops grass nearby. It is sunny out, and Xena admires the reflection of the light on her sword blade as she works.



Adelia enters the clearing and watches Xena for a few moments, then approaches her.

**ADELIA**

Xena.

Xena puts away her sharpening stone and stands, whipping her sword around in a figure eight, then twirling it over her forearm before catching it and sliding it into the sheath on her back.

**XENA**

Yeeesss?

**ADELIA**

Rumor has it you've finally come to your senses.

**XENA**

This has nothing to do with the Amazons.  
You were just in the right place at the right time.

Adelia nods ruefully. She knows this.

**ADELIA**

Still, you will be performing one of our most sacred rites.  
One that might end differently than you imagine.

Xena doesn't like the sound of this. She faces Adelia.

**XENA**

What are you talking about?  
It's just a joining ceremony.



Adelia motions to the queen's hut. She walks over to the door and opens it. Reluctantly Xena goes inside. Adelia follows her.

**CUT TO:**



## EXT. AMAZON CAMP - MORNING

Raya, Deliz, and their cronies are in a glade, hidden from the rest of the camp. They are arming themselves carefully. Deliz straps on a porcupine quill battle shirt, while Raya sharpens her sword. Two other Amazons tip arrows with a black, sticky substance.

Everyone is very serious.

**RAYA**

We'll only have one shot at this. Make it count.  
You know what's riding on the outcome.

**DELIZ**

I won't let you down this time. I swear it.

One of the Amazons plucks her bowstring. It makes a scary, rattling sound.

**CUT TO:**

## INT. AMAZON RECORDS HUT - MORNING

Gabrielle is up and pacing. She walks across the hut, gets to the wall, turns, walks back. Ephiny is seated cross-legged on the table. The rickety little table shows no sign of strain holding up Ephiny's ghostly form.

**GABRIELLE**

I don't get it.



**EPHINY**

Gabrielle, you do get it. You know what I'm talking about. You and Xena already share a bond.

**GABRIELLE**

No, we don't.

**EPHINY**

Of course you do. Tell me you don't know when she's in trouble? Tell me you didn't know, the second you saw Autolycus that Xena was inside him? Tell me you didn't track her halfway to nowhere just on instinct?



Gabrielle stops pacing, realizing that Ephiny is right.

**GABRIELLE**

Well... but so what?

**EPHINY**

So what? Gabrielle, I hate to be the one to tell you this but that's not something that happens to everyone.

**GABRIELLE**

I ask again, so what? So we do have this... connection thing. So? It's pretty darn useful if you ask me.



Ephiny runs her hand through her curly hair. Even as a ghost, Gabrielle tries her patience.

**EPHINY**

Listen. Our joining ritual is a blood bonding.

**GABRIELLE**

I've done that with Xena.

**EPHINY**

Yes, I know. But this is a permanent one.

Gabrielle walks over and puts her hands on the table. She leans forward.

**GABRIELLE**

Good.

**EPHINY**

Gabrielle, if you already have a bond with Xena, this could take it to a level that you won't know how to deal with.

Gabrielle considers this. She finally shakes her head.

**GABRIELLE**

I don't buy it. There's nothing about Xena or us that I can't deal with, after everything we've gone through.

**EPHINY**

You can't be sure of that.

Gabrielle straightens.

**GABRIELLE**

I \*am\* sure.



**CUT TO:**

**EXT. AMAZON QUEEN'S QUARTERS - MORNING**

There is a large tree on one side of the queen's hut. The area around it is empty. Slowly, the leaves on one of the lower branches part, and Raya's face appears. She watches the door to the queen's hut for a moment, then she withdraws and the leaves slide closed.

The door to the hut opens, and Adelia exits. She appears upset. She shakes her head as she moves away from the queen's hut, muttering to herself.

**ADELIA**

Stubborn.

Stubborn as the Styx is long....

Raya's face appears again after she passes by. Raya watches the door intently. After a few seconds the door opens again and Xena emerges, her face grim. Without hesitation, Xena strides in the opposite direction from Adelia, out into the forest.

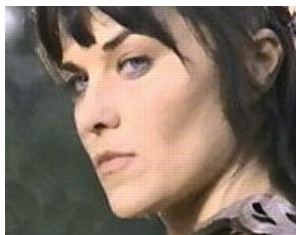
Silently, Raya drops from the tree, followed by Deliz and the others. They slip off after Xena, looking around to make sure they are unwatched.

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. FOREST GLADE - NEAR THE LAKE - DAY**

Xena sits by the lake, deep in thought. She appears troubled by something. She picks up small rocks, but instead of throwing them across the surface of the lake, she hurls them viciously into nearby trees, watching them bounce off.

Xena looks up, cocking her head to one side as though listening to something far away.



**CUT TO:**

### INT. AMAZON RECORDS HUT - DAY

Gabrielle sits alone in the hut. She is studying the ceremony scroll, and taking notes with a tattered bit of parchment and an old quill.

Gabrielle pauses, looking up from her work and tilting her head to one side as though hearing a faint sound somewhere.

**GABRIELLE**  
Now what?

**CUT TO:**

### EXT. FOREST GLADE - NEAR THE LAKE - DAY

Xena looks around to make sure she's alone, then speaks out loud to herself.

**XENA**  
Now what?



Xena seems caught between consternation and some dark grief.

Behind Xena, in the ring of thick trees, shadows slowly resolve themselves into still, silent faces.

Slowly, Xena unwraps a bundle she has carried out to the lake. The sunshine reveals the two bonding knives she had taken from Adelia.

Xena takes a knife in each hand and examines them.

Raya raises her arm, ready to motion the Amazons forward.

With a swift motion, Xena whips both of the knives into the air - but they fly towards the lake, flipping over and over and over again before they hit the surface and disappear leaving twin overlapping ripples behind.



Raya gives the signal, and the Amazons attack.



FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

## ACT THREE

FADE IN:

### EXT. FOREST GLADE - DAY

Raya, Deliz, and their cronies attack Xena. The attack is swift... it's silent... it's deadly... and if it had been anyone other than Xena sitting on the rock, it would have been a very short attack.

Xena hears them as they start to approach. She smiles grimly. As the Amazons reach her, Xena reacts.

Unfortunately for the Amazons, they have caught Xena in a really, really foul mood.

### RAYA

Now we see your true colors!  
Amazons, attack!

Raya leaps on Xena's back. Xena grabs her and pulls her over her shoulder to the ground as she dodges Deliz's charge.

Deliz jumps past her, then turns and swings her sword.

Xena senses it coming and just keeps turning in a circle, pulling Raya's body up with her and using Raya as a shield. Deliz's sword hits Raya on the shoulder and blood goes flying everywhere.

Xena releases Raya and she spins away and crashes into Deliz. Xena lets out a yell just as one of the other Amazons shoot at her. Xena catches the arrows and throws them back at the Amazon, who dodges frantically.

Deliz recovers and comes after Xena again. Xena meets her halfway, pulling out her sword and deflecting Deliz's attack. Xena lets out another yell and with a savage roundhouse nearly cuts Deliz's sword in half. Deliz staggers back. Xena comes after her, sending Deliz' weapon flying with another blow.



Another Amazon rushes up behind Xena. She has an arrow in her hand, but instead of putting it into her bow, she uses it like a miniature spear. The Amazon leaps towards Xena's back and thrusts the arrow at the spot just under her sheath.

The arrow point touches Xena's leather armor - then Xena twists and whirls, grabbing the arrow shaft and pulling it around in a circle. Xena shoves hard, and thrusts the arrow point into the Amazon's guts.

The Amazon screams.

**XENA**

There's some true colors for ya.



Xena picks the Amazon up and throws her bodily into the remaining Amazon. They both fall to the ground. Xena whirls and leaps forward, grabbing Deliz and pulling her down to the earth as though the huge woman had been a fractious foal.

Xena kneels on Deliz's chest, and applies the pinch to either side of her neck.

**DELIZ**

Agghhh!

**XENA**

*(growling)*

You don't have much of a brain, but I've cut off the flow of blood to it. Tell me why you're trying to kill me or I'll let what few bits of fluff you've got up there die and you with them.

**DELIZ**

Auugghghh!

Xena waits. Deliz is obviously choking to death. Deliz looks up to see a complete lack of compassion in Xena's eyes.

**DELIZ**

*(Cont'd)*

Al..all right! I'll talk!

Xena releases the pinch.

**XENA**

Talk. If I have to do that again, it'll kill you instantly.

Raya is nearby, groaning in pain. The other two Amazons lie still near the trees. Deliz sees them and knows she's out of options.

**DELIZ**

You don't care about us.

**XENA**

Don't sell yourself short. I always care about people who are trying to slit my throat. That's why I've lived this long.



**DELIZ**

You're no Amazon. No ceremony's gonna change that. We won't follow you.

Xena grabs Deliz' quill shirt and pulls her up so they are nose to nose.

**XENA**

You're right. I don't give a damn about you.

**DELIZ**

We won't give up our land!

**XENA**

You're right about that, too. You'll die and be buried under it instead.



Xena shakes Deliz.

**XENA**

*(Cont'd)*

Whether you like it or not, I gave my word I'd save the Amazons and I will.

Xena gets up and releases Deliz. She looks disgustedly around the clearing, then she stalks off, heading back for the village.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. AMAZON QUEEN'S HUT - DAY**

Gabrielle sits at the small table in the hut, writing on a piece of parchment. She looks up as the door opens, and smiles when she recognizes Xena.



**GABRIELLE**

There you are. I was about  
to go look for you.

Xena stops just inside the door.

**XENA**

Gabrielle....

**GABRIELLE**

C'mon over here and sit down.

**XENA**

Something's come up. About  
the ceremony. We need to....

**GABRIELLE**

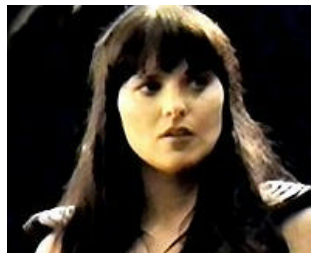
Talk about the blood bond?



Xena is caught off-guard, and it shows on her face.

**XENA**

You know about it?



**GABRIELLE**

Sure. In case the scrolls weren't  
explicit enough, Auntie Ephiny paid  
me a visit just to make sure I understood  
what we were getting ourselves into.

Xena walks over and sits down next to Gabrielle.

**XENA**

We can find another way.

**GABRIELLE**

I don't want to find another way.

**XENA**

Gabrielle, let's think about this.

**GABRIELLE**

Think about what? Xena, you and I have been in Tartarus and through Tartarus for each other. We've been crucified together. We've died, and come back to life together, and for each other. Just what exact part of you is it that you think I can't handle if we go through with this ceremony?

Xena stands. She paces to the window, then comes back to Gabrielle's side. Xena draws her sword and crouches down next to Gabrielle's chair, the sword between them.

**XENA**

This part.

Gabrielle stares at the sword, then at Xena.

**GABRIELLE**

You think that part of you isn't already a part of me? Haven't seen me fight lately, have you?



**XENA**

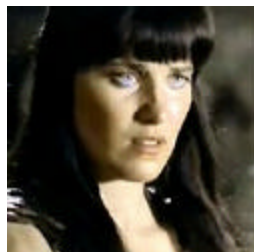
Do you love to kill, Gabrielle?

Gabrielle is silent.

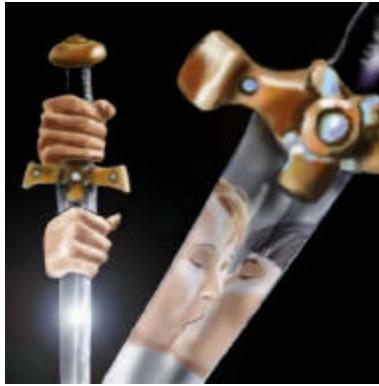
**XENA**

*(Cont'd)*

Do you want to? Do you want to know from the inside what that feels like? Because if we go through with this, that's what could happen to you.



Gabrielle and Xena look at each other past the blade in Xena's hands. They are both still for a very long time. Then Gabrielle reaches over and puts her hand around the blade, closing her fingers around its razor sharpness.



**GABRIELLE**

I'll take that risk.

Xena holds the sword still.

**GABRIELLE**

*(Cont'd)*

You said yes, Xena. You're not getting out of this.

Xena remains looking grim for a few more heartbeats, then she sighs and shakes her head.

**XENA**

I don't want to get out of it.

Gabrielle smiles, and releases the sword. She pushes the blade away and leans over to kiss Xena.

**GABRIELLE**

We'll be fine. Besides, you're taking just as big a risk.

Xena's eyebrows go up.

**GABRIELLE**

*(Cont'd)*

You could wake up one morning composing a poem.



Xena winces. After a moment, so does Gabrielle. They both turn as shouts are heard in the distance, coming closer. They look at each other, then get up and run to the door.

**CUT TO:**

## EXT. AMAZON CAMP - DAY

Two of the Amazon scouts run down the sloped path and into the Amazon village. More Amazons come running out of the woods to see what the problem is.

Xena and Gabrielle arrive at the center of the village at the same time the scouts do. The scouts come to a halt, out of breath. They look around for a second, as though searching for someone, then address themselves to Gabrielle.

**SCOUT #1**

The forest's burning!  
On both sides of us!

The scout points.

**GABRIELLE**

Two fires?



**XENA**

One too many for coincidence.

**SCOUT #1**

Armed men... on horses. They're  
coming this way, burning as they go!

**SCOUT #2**

We have to prepare for battle!

Xena and Gabrielle exchange looks.

**XENA**

I'll go check it out.

**GABRIELLE**

Right. Be careful.

Xena takes off up the path. Gabrielle watches her until she's out of sight, then turns to the scouts.

**GABRIELLE**

*(Cont'd)*

Tell me everything you saw.

**CUT TO:**

### EXT. FOREST PATH - DAY

Xena runs along the path alone. It is quiet, and she looks around as she goes, listening for trouble. Some leaves blow across her path and she leaps over them.

At the top of the ridge, she stops and looks around.



All seems peaceful. Xena shrugs, and keeps going. She runs across the ridge towards the next valley.

CUT TO:

### INT. AMAZON QUEEN'S QUARTERS - DAY

Gabrielle is changing into her ceremonial leathers, which she has retrieved from their traveling bags.

She seems lost in thought as she puts them on, until a light knock sounds at the edge of her door.

GABRIELLE

Come.

Adelia enters and walks over to her.

ADELIA

It has been a long time  
since we've seen that style.

Gabrielle fastens the band that goes around her biceps.

GABRIELLE

It's been a long time since I've  
worn them. I'm surprised they still fit.



ADELIA

I am afraid we have no masks to go with it.

Gabrielle makes a wry face at herself in the mirror.

GABRIELLE

Guess I have to get lucky sometimes.

The door opens, and Raya enters. Her arm is in a rough sling, and her shoulder is heavily bandaged. Gabrielle turns and looks at her.

**GABRIELLE**

*(Cont'd)*

What happened to you?

**ADELIA**

She got bit by your lap dog.

Gabrielle puts her hands on her hips. With all the leather and metal dangling pieces, it's a pretty impressive picture.

**GABRIELLE**

Are you coming to file a complaint?



Raya looks like she's swallowed a lemon.

**RAYA**

No.

*(beat, sighing)*

But a warrior knows when to sheath her sword.  
I only ask that... your majesty... remember  
that all I do is out of love for my people.

Gabrielle makes her wait for it, as she studies Raya in silence.

Raya fidgets.

**GABRIELLE**

I do understand that, Raya. But you  
have to accept that Xena and I are doing  
what we're doing for the same reason.

**RAYA**

Xena doesn't love us. She despises us.

**GABRIELLE**

She's your only hope for survival, Raya.  
Think about it. If you're right, then  
she's risking her life for you anyway.



Raya looks uncertain.

**ADELIA**

Queen Gabrielle is right. Our survival is what counts, not what we leave behind.

**RAYA**

That is easy to say, but nearly impossible to swallow.

Raya turns and leaves. Gabrielle and Adelia exchange looks. Gabrielle shakes her head and goes back to adjusting her bits and pieces.

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. FOREST EDGE - TREE - DAY**

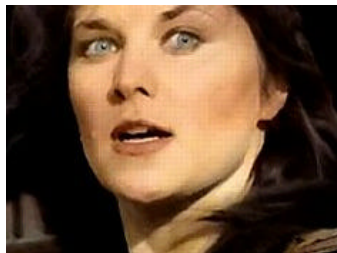
Xena climbs up a tree. She stops to listen, then shakes her head and climbs higher.

Near the top of the tree she balances on a branch and walks out towards it's tip, holding on to a second branch for balance.

She stops, and sniffs.

**XENA**

Damn.



Xena walks out further and spreads the leaves, pulling a lower branch back to clear her view.

Xena's tree is on the top of a long slope. Below her, a fire is raging in the forest, and beyond the burning trees and underbrush she can see men.

Lots of men. An army is spreading out as far as Xena can see, burning down the forest as they move forward.

**XENA**

*(Cont'd)*

Not good.

Ephiny appears on the branch behind her and peers over her shoulder. She does not expect Xena to see her.

**XENA**

*(Cont'd)*

**Get any closer and I may have to jump.**

Ephiny jumps a little.

**EPHINY**

You can see me?

Xena smiles grimly. She indicates the army.

**XENA**

It's time for me to make  
good on that promise.

Ephiny looks at the army.

**EPHINY**

Xena... I love my people. But I love  
my friends, too. I don't want to  
save one at the cost of the other.

Xena turns and makes her way down the branch, passing right through Ephiny's body.

**XENA**

Don't worry. I'm not in  
any mood to die today.



Xena jumps off the branch and lands running. Ephiny watches her, then feels down her own torso where Xena passed through it. She makes a face.

**EPHINY**

Ugh. No respect for the dead.

**FADE OUT.**

**END OF ACT THREE**



## ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

### EXT. AMAZON CAMP - CENTRAL AREA

The Amazons gather around a roughly constructed platform. There is little decoration, but the atmosphere is best described as reluctantly happy, with a little resignation on the edges. Gabrielle stands to one side, next to some of the Northern Amazons, awaiting Xena's return.

The fire pit in the middle of the camp is started, and the flames pop up in the breeze.

Xena appears on the path and runs towards them. Gabrielle watches through the fire as she approaches and their eyes meet through the flames.

The shortest possible path is through the fire, and that's the path Xena chooses. She leaps into the air as she reaches the far side of the fire pit and soars over the fire, tumbling in mid air as she ends up landing neatly at Gabrielle's side.

GABRIELLE

Show off.



XENA

Thank you. Glad you liked it.

Xena faces the Amazons.

XENA

*(Cont'd)*

We're trapped between two oncoming armies. There's no more time. We pack, we leave. You stay, you die.

RAYA

Following you?

Xena puts an arm around Gabrielle's shoulders.

XENA

Us.

Raya is stubborn to the last.

RAYA

You're not joined yet.

**GABRIELLE**

Give us a few minutes.

**RAYA**

But you can't. She threw the  
knives away. Into the lake.

Gabrielle looks at Xena. Adelia looks at Xena. Everyone looks at Xena.

**XENA**

That's right. I did.



A low murmur rises. These were genuine Amazon icons, and even those predisposed to like and follow Xena are shocked.

Everyone is silent for a bit.

**GABRIELLE**

Well.

*(beat)*

All right. You know, I'm glad.

Now everyone stares at Gabrielle.

**XENA**

You are?

**GABRIELLE**

Those knives... that legend you told us,  
Adelia... it's very poetic, but if you really  
think about it, it's very sad. They traded  
themselves for the safety of the Amazons.

**ADELIA**

It is. That is true.

**GABRIELLE**

I don't want to carry on that tradition.

Gabrielle turns to Xena.

**GABRIELLE**

*(Cont'd)*

So we'll make our own legacy.

Xena nods slowly.

**XENA**

Then let's do it.



The Amazons start to gather around them. The wind picks up a little, and the fire crackles. In the shadows between the fire and sunlight, you could almost imagine other shadows forming, watching along with the rest.

**FADE TO:**

**EXT. AMAZON VILLAGE - CEREMONIAL PLATFORM - AFTERNOON**

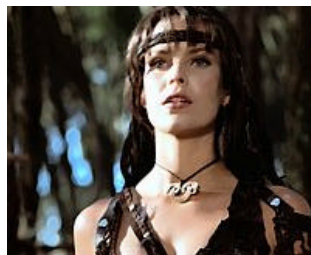
The sun is traveling to the west. The light is moving from yellow to golden as Gabrielle and Xena step up onto the platform and face each other.

Xena reaches over and moves one of Gabrielle's dangling hair clips over. Gabrielle smiles, and clears her throat.

Adelia, dressed as an Amazon shamaness, walks slowly up onto the platform, flanked by two armed Amazons. They stop next to Xena and Gabrielle. Adelia takes hold of Xena and Gabrielle's arms and turns them towards her.

**ADELIA**

In the tradition of the Amazon people,  
we are gathered here to witness the  
joining of an Amazon with the person  
she chooses to share her life with.



Xena smiles quietly. Despite the seriousness of the occasion, Gabrielle cannot repress a grin.

**ADELIA**

*(Cont'd)*

And in so joining with that person,  
make them a part of the Amazon nation.

A low drumming begins in the background.

**ADELIA**

*(Cont'd)*

In our traditions, we challenge the two  
to be joined to overcome a hurdle, a  
trial of pain so that they know the  
price of their being made one.

The drumming gets louder. A few of the Amazons begin to softly chant.

**ADELIA**

*(Cont'd)*

A trial of pain, to overcome, and a sharing  
of blood to seal the bond between the  
two of you - that is what we require.

Gabrielle takes a deep breath. She looks at Xena, who gives her a reassuring smile.

**ADELIA**

*(Cont'd)*

We would customarily use the sacred  
knife relics of our people in this.

Everyone looks at Xena. The drumming and chanting stop. Gabrielle takes a step forward.

**GABRIELLE**

Since Xena's life has intertwined with  
the fates of the Amazons for a long time,  
I think it's right that this ceremony be  
sealed with a blade that is a part of her.



Xena's brow creases, she is unsure of what Gabrielle is up to. She starts to go for her sword, but Gabrielle grabs her hand and holds it still.

Then Gabrielle removes the chakram from Xena's hip, and with a slight twist, separates it into its two halves. One half she hands to Xena, and the other she keeps herself. She turns to face Adelia.

**GABRIELLE**

*(Cont'd)*

We're ready. Go on.

Adelia nods slowly in approval.

**ADELIA**

It will be so.

The drumming starts again, and the chanting. Xena and Gabrielle turn and face each other.

**ADELIA**

*(Cont'd)*

It is easy to bear pain brought by one's self. Harder is it to bring pain on one you love. This is the trial we demand. You must shed each other's blood.

The Amazons move closer, and the drumming gets louder and faster. Now most of the Amazons are chanting.

Gabrielle grips her half of the chakram, and extends her other hand to Xena. Their eyes meet.

**GABRIELLE**

Go ahead.

*(beat, whispering)*

No pressure points.



Xena's eyes twinkle momentarily. She looks Gabrielle right in the eye as she takes her hand and draws the half chakram over it, cutting a deep gash in her palm.

Gabrielle doesn't even flinch.

The drums get louder. Xena extends her hand to Gabrielle.

**XENA**

Your turn.



Gabrielle holds Xena's hand steady and positions the half chakram, hesitating for just an instant before she puts pressure down and cuts through Xena's palm.

Blood drips from both hands.

The drums become deafening. The Amazons crowd close around the platform, seeming far more than the pitiful two score left.

Gabrielle raises her hand and extends it to Xena. Xena takes it in her hand, so that their cut palms are pressed against each other.



With their other hands, they fit the chakram together, so that it is once again whole.

The Amazons start to sing and dance around them, but Xena and Gabrielle only have eyes for each other. They move closer to each other, then go very still, eyes locked, the world around them disregarded.

### ADELIA

And so, two are made one, and the blood of an outsider is brought into the Amazon Nation. Xena, we welcome you.

Xena leans forward and kisses Gabrielle. Their hands are still clasped together.



Ephiny stands near the fire, its flames visible through her transparency. Her eyes are filled with tears.

Unexpectedly, in the midst of the dancing, Xena and Gabrielle collapse. The Amazons nearest the platform jump back in startled confusion. Adelia recovers first.

### ADELIA

(Cont'd)

Take them to the queens' chambers. While they recover, we must make ready to leave.

Amazons start running in all directions. On the platform, Xena and Gabrielle lay in each other's arms, dead to the world.

CUT TO:

### EXT. FOREST GLADE - NIGHT

A glow of fire is seen far off in the sky. Two of the Amazon lookouts spot the glow, and quickly climb to the top of trees to check it out.

As they get to the top of the trees, they can see the tops of the forest on fire across the next ridge. The lookouts scramble down out of the tree and start running.

CUT TO:

### EXT. AMAZON VILLAGE - CENTRAL AREA - VERY LATE NIGHT

It is chaos. Bags and sacks are everywhere. Amazons run to and fro in and out of the firelight, carrying supplies and possessions.

The two lookouts dash into the circle of light and run up to Raya and Adelia.

RAYA

What is it?

LOOKOUT #1

The fire's getting closer.

ADELIA

We're running out of time.

RAYA

*(bitterly)*

Convenient for our leader... excuse me, our leaders to be asleep!

Raya storms off. Adelia looks worried.

ADELIA

Sleep? If it were only that simple.

CUT TO:

### INT. AMAZON QUEEN'S QUARTERS - SAME TIME

Xena and Gabrielle lie on the bed together. Their hands are still clasped. Xena's chakram lies on the foot of the bed. Their eyes are closed.

The sounds of the Amazons packing and running around are clearly audible through the open window.

Xena and Gabrielle do not react to any of it.

CUT TO:

## EXT. FOREST GLADE - SAME TIME

Men work methodically through the darkness. They are lighting fires, and using hand axes to clear underbrush. Behind them, a line of men on horseback wait, with torches.

Behind them, a line of archers stand ready.

**SOLDIER**

Keep your eyes out boys! They could attack at any moment! There are thousands of them!

**CUT TO:**

## EXT. AMAZON VILLAGE - CENTRAL AREA

Things are being brought out that it would be impossible to transport. Cases of half fletched arrows, long sticks for bows, etc.

**ADELIA**

Stop it! We can't take that!



**RAYA**

You would have us leave our land, and go destitute as well? You're worse than Xena!

**ADELIA**

But....

**RAYA**

I told you not to listen to her.

**CUT TO:**

## INT. AMAZON QUEEN'S QUARTERS - LATER

Xena and Gabrielle open their eyes at the same time, and look at each other.

**GABRIELLE**

Wow.

Xena looks down at their still joined hands.

**XENA**

Ow.

*(beat)*

That was....

**GABRIELLE**

Different.



**XENA**

Yeah.

Xena carefully unclasps her hand. The dried blood has made the wounds adhere to each other and it is a painful process. Gabrielle watches, then examines her palm when Xena completes her task.

**XENA**

*(Cont'd)*

Great symbolism with the chakram, Gabrielle, but it'd woulda been a lot faster healing if you'd picked one of your sais instead.

**GABRIELLE**

*(mournfully)*

No way to make a pinprick with a circular blade, huh?

They fall silent, looking into each other's eyes.

**XENA**

Feel any different?



Gabrielle thinks.

**GABRIELLE**

Yeah... a little. It feels... closer.

**XENA**

Closer? Gabrielle you're lying in my arms.

**GABRIELLE**

No... not that kind of close. Just....

Gabrielle strokes Xena's face with her uninjured hand.

**GABRIELLE**

*(Cont'd)*

Like I can feel your heart beating in my chest.



Xena smiles.

**XENA**

I wouldn't have put it like that, but  
yeah, I think I know what you mean.

Xena kisses Gabrielle. It goes on for an extended length of time. They part.

**XENA**

*(Cont'd)*  
Oh yeah.

**GABRIELLE**

Definitely.

They both smile.

The sounds outside break into their little nest of self-discovery at this point and they realize it is chaos outside.

**XENA**

Looks like we're not gonna get  
a chance to enjoy it right now.

Gabrielle pulls Xena back down and they kiss again. Finally they part.

**GABRIELLE**

Not right now. But soon.

**XENA**

After we rescue the Amazons.

Gabrielle strokes Xena's face again.

**GABRIELLE**

Thank you.

Xena hugs her.

**FADE TO:**

### **EXT. AMAZON CAMP - DAWN**

The camp is now far more organized chaos. Amazons stand ready, with packs on their backs. Piles of discarded supplies, and belongings lay scattered about.

The sound of the fire is now evident, and far off, the shouts of the army can be heard.

Xena and Gabrielle stride into the center of camp. They are both in Amazon leathers and armed. Gabrielle shades her eyes and looks towards the oncoming danger.

**GABRIELLE**

We need to get out of here.  
It's getting close.



**XENA**

Let's move. If we leave them enough  
booty behind, maybe they'll get distracted.

Gabrielle picks up her staff.

They can hear crashing behind them now.

**XENA**

*(Cont'd)*

*(yelling)*

Get moving! Up the trail!



Raya and Deliz hesitate.

**RAYA**

We should stay and fight them!

Xena watches the Amazons start to move out. She turns to Raya.

**XENA**

Have fun.

Xena starts after the last of the Amazons. The sounds behind them are getting louder, and louder.  
Gabrielle looks at Raya and Deliz.

**GABRIELLE**

Let's go.

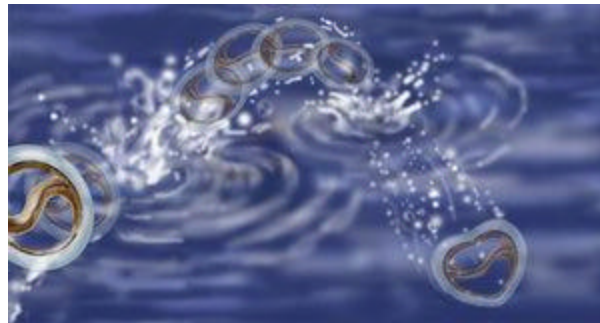
Raya and Deliz exchange looks, then reluctantly start walking, looking behind them as they follow Xena up the trail.

Gabrielle is the last one left. She walks through the Amazon village and pauses at the head of the trail, for one last look.



For a moment as she looks, she sees shadows of the past looking back at her. Then she rubs her eyes and they vanish. She turns, and heads out.

**FADE OUT.**



**DISCLAIMER**

No ancient Amazon marriage traditions were harmed in the making of this motion picture, but Gab and Xena's need for a honeymoon certainly was.

**TO BE CONTINUED....**

