

Xena: Warrior Princess - Subtext Virtual Season 7



Production #V719 - Fallen

Virtual Airdate - May 29, 2002

SPECIAL NOTE: Some of you might notice the structure and the writing for "Fallen" is different than what we have been doing for most of this season. That is because this story was not done as a Subtext Season 7 Script - this script is V1426 of Xena: Warrior Princess Series 6, an unproduced script done for the show itself. / Missy

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TEASER

FADE IN:

EXT. LILA'S GARDEN - POTADEIA - DAY

It's a beautiful day in Potadeia. Lila and Sarah are in the garden, picking vegetables. Sarah is pregnant, but not overly so. Sarah's husband Stefan is weeding nearby.

SARAH

It's going to be nice to see Gabrielle and Xena again,
isn't it? I'm glad they decided to come for a visit.

LILA

So am I. It's a little strange for us, you know.
Gabrielle used to be my older sister.



Sarah and Lila laugh. Stefan looks over at them.

STEFAN

Mind explaining to me again
how that happened?

LILA

It's a long story. You can ask Gabrielle
to tell it to you when she's here.

Sarah smiles, and continues picking eggplant.

SARAH

She certainly leads an adventurous life.

(beat)

You think she'll ever come
home here for good?

Lila shakes her head.

LILA

I wish she would, but no. Xena's her
home. I realized that a long time ago.

A rider on horseback comes up to their gate, and salutes politely. He is a very handsome, charming young man.

JANOS

Hi. Would I be looking at the family home of Gabrielle, sometimes called the Bard of Potadeia?



Sarah and Lila exchanged glances and smile. Sarah primps a little. Stefan watches the man a little uncertainly.

LILA

Yes it is. I'm her sister, Lila.
Would you like to come inside?

JANOS

I'd love to.

Janos dismounts and enters the yard. They go inside the house.

CUT TO:

EXT. WATERFALL/RIVER - DAY

Xena and Gabrielle swim in a small lake, with a waterfall. Xena is standing under the waterfall, letting it hit her back. Gabrielle swims over and leans on the rocks next to her.

GABRIELLE

I could be insulted. I thought you
liked my back massages.

Xena pokes her head out from the spray.

XENA

I do. I just have this damn crick in
my back I can't seem to get rid of.

Xena gives up and sits in the water next to Gabrielle. They splash water at each other, and smile, seeming very relaxed.



XENA

(Cont'd)

Looking forward to visiting home?

Gabrielle smiles broadly.

GABRIELLE

Yeah, I really am. We've been through so much lately - be good to see some familiar faces.

(beat)

We've got so few of those around, now.

Xena considers this. She knows it's true.

XENA

That bothers you, doesn't it?



GABRIELLE

It does. I feel so unconnected, sometimes. I had a nightmare about that last night, just me wandering alone out on the road somewhere. I didn't know where I'd been... where I was going....

Xena puts a concerned hand on Gab's shoulder.

GABRIELLE

(Cont'd)

I'm glad you woke me up from it... what?

Xena has stiffened, sensing something. She breaks away and swims towards their clothing and weapons, and as she reaches the bank a volley of arrows lets loose, and she is under attack.

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODS - DAY

The men swarm around her and Xena fights desperately, getting hold of her sword and fighting off the closest of them. The men ignore Gabrielle, who swims over and bolts from the water, throwing herself fiercely at Xena's attackers. Gabrielle throws several men to the ground, and knees one in the throat, snapping his neck. She gets up without a backward glance and dives for her Sais, coming up with them and ripping through some of the fighters surrounding Xena. A fighter slips through Xena's guard and is about to skewer her when he stops, then slides to the ground. Gabrielle removes her said from his back and wipes it on his body before she continues on. Xena takes a beat to react to this, and the look of grim, cold ferocity on Gabrielle's face. Finally, they beat off the attackers, and they run away, carrying their wounded and dead with them.

GABRIELLE

So much for a nice relaxing swim.
What was that all about?

XENA

You got me. Didn't like our choice of baths, I guess. You all right?

GABRIELLE

Yeah, I'm fine. Didn't get a scratch. Why?

XENA

You were really going at it there.



Gabrielle wipes off her sai.

GABRIELLE

Yeah. It's been like that lately for me.

Gabrielle grabs her clothes with a disturbed look. Xena goes for her gear, then starts searching urgently through it.

GABRIELLE

(Cont'd)

What's wrong?



XENA

It's gone.

Gabrielle looks over. Xena is holding the case for the chakram. It's empty.

XENA

(Cont'd)

They stole my chakram.

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. WOODS - RESUME

Xena is visibly distraught. She examines some debris left by the attackers.

XENA

They must have been tracking us for days. How could I have missed that?



Gabrielle walks over to her.

GABRIELLE

We've been traveling pretty hard, Xena. I don't know, maybe they just got lucky and found us, or maybe....

XENA

Or maybe they just got the drop on me and I'm slowing down a little.

Gabrielle is a little perplexed at what to answer for that.

GABRIELLE

C'mon. Just because they surprised us doesn't mean....



Xena stands up and paces. She flexes her hands then rubs her neck.

XENA

Been a lot of little hints lately. Now they all add up. Funny, I knew one day it'd happen, but I never figured I'd live long enough to worry about it.

Gabrielle is concerned.

GABRIELLE

Are you serious? Maybe I'm missing something here, but you seem fine to me, Xena.



Xena picks up the chakram bag and examines it.

XENA

Maybe someone was sending me a message. Taking the most visible symbol of who I am. What I am.

Gabrielle walks to her and takes the bag, folding it and putting it inside Xena's gear.

GABRIELLE

Or maybe someone saw a very valuable weapon they could sell.

XENA

Yeah, maybe. If they try that, we'll hear about it soon enough.

Xena and Gabrielle continue to put their things away, but Xena is very thoughtful.



CUT TO:

INT. LILA'S HOME - POTADEIA

Janos is being served wine and cakes in Lila's home.

JANOS

We're all on the same side here. Listen, I know you must be concerned about your sister, Lila. Wouldn't you like to have her home safe?

LILA

Of course - but to kill Xena? Why would you want to do that?

JANOS

Why? Lila, what do you really know about Xena? About her past?

LILA

Well... I know she used to be a warlord, but that was long time ago....

JANOS

There are thousands of people who lost homes, lost families... brothers, sisters... children, because of her. She's been allowed to go free ever since, not because of the good she does, but because everyone is too scared of her to do anything about it.

Lila looks troubled.

JANOS

(Cont'd)

Her daughter was the scourge of Rome. She sold thousands of our fellow citizens into slavery.

Sarah looks thoughtful.

LILA

But she also went with Xena and Gabrielle to get Sarah back, and save her from her life of slavery. People can change, Janos.

JANOS

For their own purposes, sure. But at what cost? Look what it's doing to your sister, for her to be constantly on the run, in danger. Don't you care about her?

LILA

Of course I care about Gabrielle. I love my sister. I worry about her terribly, and I know she's been through some horrible things....

JANOS

Because of Xena. She won't be free until Xena's gone. You know that's true.



Sarah and Lila are silent.

JANOS

Gabrielle needs you. She needs your help,
or soon there will be nothing left to her, but
an empty shell. Look - I've already got
her on the run. I've taken her chakram.

Janos shows them the chakram. They all react with surprise.

JANOS

(Cont'd)

But she'll be more cautious now -
that's why I need your help.

They are silent.

JANOS

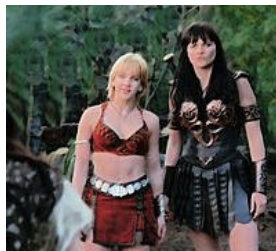
(Cont'd)

Think of Gabrielle.

CUT TO:

EXT. POTADEIA - VILLAGE - DAY

Xena and Gabrielle enter Potadeia. Sarah, her husband, and Lila all greet them - there are pretty streamers everywhere, everything is gorgeous and friendly - exactly as it was when Xena returned and Hope had taken Gabrielle's place.



LILA

Gabrielle! Welcome home.

(beat)

Hello, Xena. It's good to see you.

Lila and Gabrielle hug. Everyone gathers around Xena and Gab and seems happy to see them. They go inside the house.

CUT TO:

INT. LILA'S HOME - POTADEIA - LATER

Lila, Sarah and her husband, Xena and Gabrielle sit around the family table, it's full of bowls and cups. Gabrielle takes a scoop of something and puts it on Xena's plate.

XENA

Hey!

GABRIELLE

Relax, you like that. Trust me.

Xena tastes the item. It's a favorite of hers.

XENA

Tastes just like the ones you make.



LILA

It's a family recipe - our mother taught it to us. She guarded the secret jealously - I passed it on to Sarah.

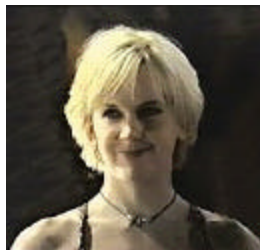
SARAH

And I'll pass it on to my child, when he or she's old enough. Do you cook, Xena?

Xena and Gabrielle both laugh.

GABRIELLE

No, Xena does the hunting, I do the cooking, though we did try trading off the other day. I ended up being chased by a boar and Xena had to throw away our best cooking pot.



Everyone laughs.

SARAH

Hey, Xena - I was telling Stefan about your chakram. Will you show it to him?

Xena and Gab exchange glances.

XENA

It's in for some work at the silversmith's. Maybe next time.

LILA

More wine, anyone?

CUT TO:

EXT. POTADEIA CAMPFIRE - NIGHT

Gabrielle sits near the campfire, cup in hand. Staring into the flames. Lila joins her. Xena is seated a little distance away, watching. Stefan finishes playing a sitar, then gets up and goes inside.

LILA

Hey. I just wanted to tell you
how glad I am you came by.

GABRIELLE

Thanks. It's great to see you
all. I'm glad we came, too.

LILA

You all right? You seem a little
down... tired... something.

GABRIELLE

Seeing you all here... I don't know,
Lila. It's hard for me. I feel so....



LILA

Out of place?

GABRIELLE

Something like that. It's like I have no
connection to anything... or anyone.
Except Xena, of course. Almost everyone
I knew is gone, except you and Sarah.

Lila puts her arm around Gabrielle.

LILA

Gabrielle, you know you're always a part
of us. We love you, and this will always be
your home. You're welcome to come back
here any time you want to. I miss you.

GABRIELLE

Do you? That's good to know, Lila. I miss
you too. I just wish I knew where I was going.
I just feel so lost. I find myself doing
these horrible things... and just not caring.

LILA

It's hard for me to believe you not caring.
Maybe you just need some rest. Why don't
you think about staying for a while?

GABRIELLE

Thanks. Maybe I will.

Lila gives Gab a hug, then gets up and walks to the house. Gabrielle turns to see Xena watching, then gets up and goes to sit by Xena, leaning against her as they both watch the fire.



GABRIELLE

(Cont'd)

What are you thinking about?

XENA

My mother.

GABRIELLE

We've both lost so much, haven't we?

Xena simply nods. They watch the fire.

CUT TO:

INT. LILA'S HOME - POTADEIA - EARLY MORNING

Xena is awake, and gazing pensively out the window. Lila enters, watches Xena for a moment, then walks over to her.

LILA

You're up early.

XENA

It's a habit.

LILA

Even after all these years? But then,
you look pretty good for someone,
what, eighty years old now?

They both laugh, but Xena is not that amused.

XENA

It's a habit your sister never
did pick up. She's still asleep.

LILA

I think she could use the rest.
I'm worried about her, Xena.
She seems so lost.

Xena looks uncomfortable.

XENA

She's all right.



LILA

Have you thought about what she's going to do after you can't be out there fighting all the time? Defending her? We all can't live forever, Xena.

Xena is really not amused.

XENA

Gabrielle can take care of herself.

LILA

Can she? It doesn't look that way to me. She's not like you. She can't take this constant violence... constant killing, Xena. It's hurting her. Can't you see that?

Xena is silent because she knows this is true. Gabrielle enters behind them, obviously newly woken.

GABRIELLE

Morning.

XENA

You could have slept in.

GABRIELLE

I know. Something woke me up, though. Hey, got any of that blackberry tea mom used to make?



Lila stares at Xena, but smiles at Gabrielle.

LILA

I sure do. Sit down, and I'll get you some.

Lila leaves. Xena and Gabrielle regard each other seriously.



CUT TO:

INT. CAVE/HUT - MORNING

The posse is gathered around Janos - he has a handful of straws. The posse is dressed for forest stealth. They are mostly young people, very eager and devoted to their cause.

JANOS

I know the person who picks this short straw
will do a great job, and be a credit to all of us.

Janos holds out his hand. The posse all picks, one young man has the short straw.

YOUNG MAN #1

I'm ready. Janos, will you tell
my girl I said goodbye?

JANOS

I will.

YOUNG MAN #1

You guys can divvy up all my stuff.
There wasn't much left anyway, after
Livia burned our town. Even less than
when her mother did the same to my
grandparents a generation ago.

JANOS

Now it will end, and you'll be a part of
that. It's a very brave thing you're doing.

Janos faces the rest of them.

JANOS

(Cont'd)

It's finally time. Think of your families,
and all the people who have suffered
for so long under Xena's lawless
life. Be brave, my brothers.

They all shout, eager to do battle.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

EXT. POTADEIA - VILLAGE - DAY

Gabrielle and Lila sit by the well. Xena leans on a nearby wagon. Xena is visibly keeping an eye on everything.

LILA

Do you remember how we used to fight over getting water? I swear you had more excuses not to come out here than we had chickens on the farm.

Gabrielle smiles in memory.

GABRIELLE

That hasn't changed. I still make Xena get the water for camp.

Lila looks quickly at Xena, then she laughs a bit. Xena pretends not to hear.

LILA

Really? I figured you ended up doing all that stuff.

Gabrielle is about to answer when an alarm is raised. A man rushes into the village square, bleeding and exhausted.

REFUGEE

Help me! Help me! My wagons were attacked by bandits, down the road! They're burning, and my family's in them!!

Sarah and her husband appear from somewhere. Lila joins them. They all seem a bit nervous.

LILA

We'll help you. We'll go right out there. Right? You'll help them won't you, Xena?

GABRIELLE

Of course we will.



LILA

Then let's go right away.

Xena examines the refugee.

XENA

Nothing serious. The healer's that way.
Lila, you don't have to go. Gabrielle
and I will take care of this.



LILA

(firmly)

Those people are friends of ours.
I'm going to help them. Come on,
Sarah. Let's get bandages.

They leave. Xena pulls Gabrielle to one side.

GABRIELLE

You think it's the same
bandits who attacked us?



XENA

I don't know, but something doesn't
smell right, and I don't think it's
those sheep herds over there.

GABRIELLE

It could just be raiders.
Wouldn't be the first time.

XENA

I know. I've just a got a
bad feeling about it.

Xena examines the courtyard, sees Lila and Sarah watching them.

GABRIELLE

You think someone's after
you. Is this a trap?

XENA

We'll find out. C'mon.



CUT TO:

INT. WARLORD'S CAVE/HQ - DAY

The posse stands in a circle, around Janos' table. He has a square board set up with markers.

JANOS

Xena is cautious. She won't just ride into our trap. She always has a backup plan. In this case....

Janos puts a few rocks where the road is.

JANOS

(Cont'd)

One of them will ride with the rescue party, and one will circle around to the rear, just in case.

Janos puts a stone in the forest, all by itself.

JANOS

(Cont'd)

This will be Xena's friend here, because Gabrielle's family is there and they have to be protected. So we divide....

Janos plucks the rock all alone and puts it in his pocket.

JANOS

(Cont'd)

And conquer. When Xena rides to her friend's rescue, we'll be waiting.

The men get up and mill around, obviously excited.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROAD OUTSIDE POTADEIA - DAY

Xena and Gabrielle walk together. It's a beautiful day, birds are singing, etc, etc. Xena watches everything with a concerned eye.

GABRIELLE

You think we're just being paranoid?



XENA

Someone attacked us and took my chakram. No sense in taking any chances.

GABRIELLE

All right. I'll make my way up through the woods and circle around. I'll signal you if I see anything.

XENA

If it is a trap, you could spring it. Be careful.

GABRIELLE

YOU be careful. I wish Lila and Sarah hadn't insisted on going. This could get dangerous. Please watch out for them, Xena.

Xena looks enigmatic.



XENA

Remember to keep your eyes open. If someone does attack you....

GABRIELLE

Xena, I know the drill.
(*amused*)
I've been Xenabait for years, remember?



Gabrielle separates from them and walks down the other path.

LILA

Where's she going?

XENA

She's taking a different route. She'll meet us on the other side of the forest.

LILA

Is that safe? How could you let her go off alone like that?

Xena just keeps walking.

SARAH

I guess Gabrielle's learned to take care of herself pretty good.

LILA

She'd need to.

Xena's eyes narrow.



CUT TO:

EXT. WOODS - INTERIOR - DAY

Gabrielle slips through the woods, searching for any signs of a trap. She doesn't find anything at first.

GABRIELLE

Maybe we have been out here too long.

Then she stops, her senses picking something up. Shadows start to move around her. Gabrielle puts her back against a tree and draws her sais. A boy steps out from behind the trees, the one who drew the short straw.

BOY

Wait! We're not here to hurt you.

Gabrielle sheathes her sais. The boys all gather around her then start pulling at her.

GABRIELLE

Hey! What are you doing?

BOY

We have to take you with us.
We have to stop you from helping Xena.

Gabrielle starts to struggle, shoving them away and punching and kicking. They are unarmed. She does not draw her weapons. There are a lot of them, though, and they start overpowering her.

GABRIELLE

Please! Just leave me alone!
Don't make me hurt you!



They don't listen. Gabrielle starts to strike out in earnest. Some of the boys start going down. One leaps at Gabrielle just as she does a spinning kick - she catches him in the throat and crushes his windpipe. He falls to the ground gurgling blood. The boys freeze, then run away. Gabrielle is left with the choking kid alone. We see it's the kid who drew the short straw.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROAD OUTSIDE POTADEIA - DAY

Xena senses something. She looks around, but it's quiet.

LILA

Something wrong?

XENA

Thought I heard something.

Lila and Sarah exchange looks.

SARAH

You're really jumpy, Xena. Sure you don't want a drink or something?
Maybe the weather's getting to you.

LILA

Heat does that, as you get older.

Xena smiles grimly.

XENA

You'd know, I'd guess.



SARAH

Look!

They see smoke rise over the horizon.

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODS - INTERIOR - DAY

Gabrielle drops to her knees beside the kid and pulls his shirt open. He's gagging. He can't breathe through his crushed throat. He looks at her in terror.

GABRIELLE

Come on! Come on, Gabrielle.

You've seen Xena fix this.

What did she... oh. I remember.

Gabrielle pulls a quill from her bag and breaks the tip off, looking through it to make sure it is hollow. She draws her knife, and the boy desperately tries to crawl away from her. Gabrielle has to straddle him to keep him still. She cuts a hole in his throat below the injury and sticks the quill into it as the boy tries to throw her off.

GABRIELLE

(Cont'd)

No! Hold still! I'm just trying to help you!!!!



Suddenly, the boy realizes he can breathe through the tube. He stops flopping around like a fish and calms down. Gabrielle smiles at him.

GABRIELLE

(Cont'd)

That's it. Just take it easy.

You're going to be okay.

The boy watches her face, then gurgles something. Gabrielle leans closer to him to listen.

GABRIELLE

(Cont'd)

What? Don't try to talk, okay?

He motions Gab closer. She complies. The boy reaches up suddenly and squirts something into Gab's eyes. Gabrielle grabs at her face and lets out a yell.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROAD OUTSIDE POTADEIA - DAY

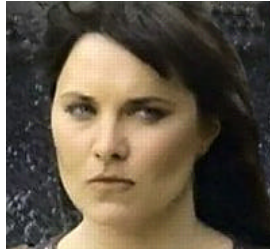
Xena hears the faint yell, and stiffens.

LILA

Did you hear something?
I thought I heard something.

XENA

No. I didn't.



SARAH

I thought I did too. Are you sure?
It sounded like a yell for help.
Maybe you should check it out.

Xena is wondering that very same thing.

XENA

Let's keep moving.

Sarah and Lila stare at Xena in puzzlement.

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODS - INTERIOR - DAY

Gab wipes at her face, but it's no good. She's blind. She draws her sais and the boy on the ground whimpers in fear, sure she's going to kill him. Instead, Gabrielle scrambles to her feet and stumbles in a circle, hitting a tree by sheer luck. She throws herself against the tree with her back to it, and holds her sais out in desperate defense.



FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

EXT. WOODS - INTERIOR - DAY

Gabrielle blindly waves her sais before her, obviously frightened and desperate.

MAN

Watch her! Careful!

The men remove blowpipes from their belts and fit darts inside them. One blows a dart. It hits Gabrielle on the cheek. She gasps, and reaches up to the spot.

MAN

(Cont'd)

Now!

They all blow darts, covering Gabrielle's skin with them. Gabrielle slowly crumples to the ground.

GABRIELLE

(whispering)

Xena... help....



Gabrielle becomes unconscious. Her sais fall from her hands. The men close in on her.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROAD OUTSIDE POTADEIA - DAY

Xena's head jerks up. She senses that something's happened to Gabrielle.



LILA

What is it? Is it Gabrielle? Xena, go
find her. See if she's all right.

Xena lets out a long, loud whistle, then listens. A man comes running down the road, waving that them.

MAN #2

Hello! Help! Help!!! My wagons overturned...
my children are inside it! Please help me!

LILA

Go on, Xena! Something must have happened to Gabrielle!

Xena turns on Lila.

XENA

How'd you figure that out?

Lila falls silent, Sarah looks very nervous.

LILA

I just figured.

XENA

Tell you what. How about you going to see where she is, if that's what you're worried about? I'm thinking those kids need help over there.

Sarah and Lila hesitate. This is not going as they were told it would. They expected Xena to rush off and find Gabrielle.

SARAH

C'mon, Xena. Gabrielle's your best friend, isn't she? I thought you'd care more about her than that.

XENA

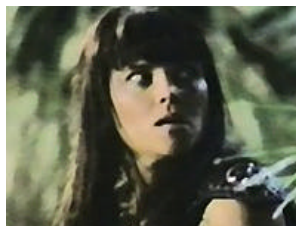
Gabrielle's a very good fighter who can take care of herself. Now what's it going to be?



LILA

I guess we'd better go help those kids. Come on, Sarah.

They walk on. Xena follows, but casts an anxious look up at the woods.



CUT TO:

EXT. WOODS - DAY

A group of men gather, and put Gabrielle's unconscious body on a stretcher. They look around, then move off through the trees silently. Janos sits on a horse, watching Xena and the rest walk by.

JANOS

Xena, why don't you come running?
You always have before... well, I
guess we activate our second plan.

Janos holds up a hand. A posse member runs over.

JANOS

(Cont'd)

Tell the men to get ready. Xena will
be cautious. She might check
the wounded first to make sure.

The man nods, and runs off.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROAD - ACCIDENT - DAY

They reach the accident. Wagons are overturned and burning. Smoke and debris are everywhere. Bodies lay scattered in the center of the burning wagons. It looks real.

LILA

Oh, those poor people. Let's go help.

Sarah, Lila, and Sarah's husband rush forward. Xena's eyes dart everywhere, then she yells out.

XENA

Stop!



Lila turns.

LILA

Stop? There are people dying in there!
Maybe you can watch them SCREAMING
in pain and not care, like you don't seem to
care what's happening to Gabrielle, but I won't!

Xena gets hold of them and hauls them to a stop. The screaming is unbearable, and we start to wonder if Xena's really lost it this time. Then a horn sounds, and a volley of arrows falls from the sky. The 'injured' people get up and start attacking Xena and Gab's family.

XENA
Get down!

Sarah and Lila look very confused. A crossbowman takes aim at Sarah and let's fly. Xena intercepts the arrow at the last moment. She dives to knock Sarah's husband down, but an arrow hits Xena in the leg, and one hits Sarah's husband, who cries out in pain.

LILA
This wasn't supposed to happen!!!

Xena glares at Lila, understanding all.

XENA
That's what happens when you
take sides. You become a target.



It is chaos. Everyone is shooting at them. Suddenly Janos rides into the center of the wagons and holds up the chakram, which reflects the sun into Xena's eyes.

JANOS
Xena! I have it all. I have this. I have
your Gabrielle. It's time for you to face
your crimes, Xena. We'll be waiting.

Janos rides off. The men redouble their attack on Xena and her party. Xena pulls the arrow out of her leg and throws it away.

XENA
Stay here.

LILA
What? Where are you going!

XENA
It's me they want. It's me they'll get.
They'll leave you alone once I'm gone.

Xena examines Sarah's husband's wound. It's not critical. She grabs hold of her sword and takes off running, straight towards the men fighting them, twirling her sword and scaring the hell out of them with her battle yell. She cuts through them like a hot knife and they converge around her, leaving Sarah and Lila completely alone.

CUT TO:

INT. WARLORD'S CAVE/HQ

Gabrielle is carried inside and put on a pallet. One of the posse brings a bowl over. Janos unstops a small stone vial and holds it to Gab's nose. Gab wakes, reaches out and grabs Janos's hand.

GABRIELLE

Wh....

JANOS

Easy there, Gabrielle.
We're not going to hurt you.

Janos takes the bowl and sponges Gabrielle's eyes as the man holds Gab's hands still.

JANOS

In fact, we're here to do
just the opposite. There.

Gab blinks as her vision is restored.

GABRIELLE

Who are you?



Janos gives the bowl up and stands, wiping his hands off.

JANOS

My name is Janos. Don't wrack
your mind. You don't know me.
We've never met.

Gabrielle sits up, watching Janos warily.

GABRIELLE

If we've never met, why am I here?
Why are you attacking us?
What do you want?

JANOS

Not us, Gabrielle. Not you. It's Xena
we're after. Me, and all these people
here, who have joined together to do
what everyone told us wasn't possible.
To kill Xena. To stop her from
hurting anyone else.

GABRIELLE

Why? What has she done to you?



The posse snorts, and whispers.

JANOS

Every person in this room, Gabrielle, was... touched... by Xena or the scourge she spawned and let loose on the land.

Janos walks over and sits.

JANOS

(Cont'd)

Me? My grandparents' village was burned to the ground by Xena's army. My parents were sold into slavery by her daughter. My brothers and sisters died from hunger in the streets of Athens alone.

GABRIELLE

I'm sorry.

(beat)

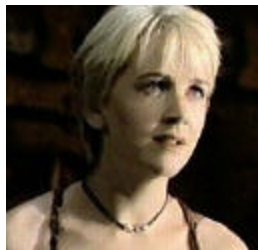
But you're wrong about her. She's changed. She's not the person who did those things anymore. And Eve is a disciple of Eli. She teaches love and peace.

JANOS

Do you think that changes what they did to all of us?

GABRIELLE

Nothing can change that. But vengeance serves no one, Janos.



JANOS

It serves the memory of our pasts, and the
promise of our futures. . She's rampaged
across the land for far too long Which
brings me to you, Gabrielle. What price
have you paid, because of Xena?

Gabrielle stands up. Janos stands and faces her.

GABRIELLE

Our partnership isn't about
who owes who what, Janos.

JANOS

Why not? Look what you've become.
A killer. Full of anger, full of hatred, of
pain... for her? Think of this as a second
chance... a last chance. Join us, and help
us destroy her, Gabrielle, and you can have
peace. You want that, don't you? Peace?
Home? A family? You must be so tired.

GABRIELLE

You don't know what you're asking.



JANOS

How much is your soul worth, then?
You're losing it to her, bit by bit.
Becoming what she is, aren't you?

Everyone stares intently at Gabrielle. Janos holds out his hand invitingly.

GABRIELLE

That's true.

The crowd reacts.

GABRIELLE

(Cont'd)

Every time we fight, every time
I kill, I lose part of myself.

JANOS

Join us.

GABRIELLE

But every time I help someone,
or save a life, I gain a part of
it back. Just like Xena does.

Janos frowns.

GABRIELLE

(Cont'd)

She's the cornerstone my life is built on.
Without our love, I would truly be lost.
I'll never betray her, Janos.



Janos seems sad to hear this.

JANOS

You already have. You're here,
and you're alive. And she'll
come for you at any cost.
(beat)
Even her life. Won't she?

Janos walks away. The posse take hold of Gabrielle, who knows it's the truth.

CUT TO:

INT. TRAP CAVE - DAY

Xena enters cautiously, her sword drawn. She looks around, sees nothing.

XENA

Gabrielle!



Janos appears on a ledge above her.

JANOS

Come in, Xena.
I've been waiting for you.

GABRIELLE

(V.O.)

Xena! Get out of here!

It's a trap!

Xena looks at the trap door above her, looks at Janos, then steps very deliberately inside. The door slams shut behind her.

JANOS

Welcome.

XENA

Who are you?

Janos leans on the balcony and studies her. The rest of the posse watches in the shadows, just a mass of bodies, whispering.

JANOS

I am the ghost of your evil past, Xena.
I am the son of the people your daughter
slaughtered, and the grandson of the
thousands in villages you burned to the ground.

XENA

That was a long time ago.

JANOS

Yes, it was, wasn't it? You've outlived
your time, Xena. You're old, and your life
has gone on too long and hurt too many
people. I, and the people like me
who've gathered here, will stop you.

XENA

Where's Gabrielle?



Janos shakes his head in pity.

JANOS

Make it easy on yourself, Xena.
Don't make us kill you. Do it yourself.
You'll even be remembered as a martyr.

XENA

I've heard all that before. No thanks.

JANOS

No, you're too selfish to do that, aren't you?
Leave your blood on someone else's hands.
That's your style, isn't it? Well, don't worry.
I guarantee, one way or the other, Xena -
you'll change your mind in the caverns.

XENA

Don't hold your breath.



JANOS

Mark my words...
you'll choose your own death.

Janos smiles, and pulls a rope. The ground drops out from under Xena and she disappears.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. TRAP - CONTINUING

Xena and Gabrielle fall through the trap doors in different parts of the ceiling and hit the floor. Xena goes to Gabrielle.

XENA

You okay?



GABRIELLE

For the time being, yeah.
We're in real trouble here, Xena.

XENA

I know. More than I bargained for.

GABRIELLE

Are Lila and Sarah safe?

Xena looks down.

XENA

They're safe.

They are in an enclosed space surrounded by rock. A small opening would allow one person to enter the trap.

JANOS

(V.O.)

It's a very simple puzzle, Xena.
Even someone with your fading
skills should be able to figure it out.

Xena and Gabrielle get up. Xena goes to the opening, looks inside. It smells bad, and is very dark.

XENA

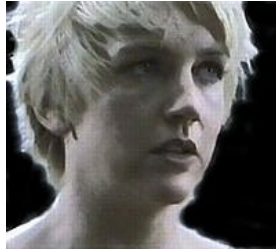
What is this?

JANOS

(V.O.)

Justice. Bold, yet elegantly simple.
One of you will enter that doorway,
Xena, and inside my engine of justice,
I will carve all your crimes, the names
of your victims with knives across
your body, front and back.

Gabrielle reacts, takes a step towards the box.



XENA

And then?

JANOS

And then when the knife points meet
in the center, the trap will open, and
the one left behind will be free.

Xena looks around the room. By her face you can see she is realizing how few options there are.

JANOS

(Cont'd)

Don't wait too long, Xena.

Xena and Gabrielle look at each other in growing horror and realization.



CUT TO:

INT. TRAP CONTROL ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Janos pushes the cone tube he was speaking through away. Lila watches him uneasily. The rest of Gabrielle's family is behind them.

JANOS

We've waited such a long time for this.

LILA

This isn't right.

JANOS

Don't go soft on me now, Lila. Think!
What Xena did to all those people, men,
women, children - that's what wasn't
right. Keep that in your thoughts. You
want to save your sister, don't you?

LILA

Not like this. Gabrielle loves Xena.
This will hurt her so badly.

JANOS

No! You can't think like that. Oh, sure,
at first it will be traumatic, but soon,
soon Lila! You'll have your sister back...
the one you remember from childhood.
You did the right thing, and someday,
Gabrielle will thank you for it.

Lila looks grievously unconvinced.

LILA

I hope so.

FADE TO:

INT. TRAP - SAME TIME

Gabrielle is checking out all corners of the trap. Xena sits slowly down on a rock, and starts removing her weapons.

GABRIELLE

Not a crack. You think we
could try digging? Xena?

Gabrielle turns to see Xena putting her sword down.

GABRIELLE

(Cont'd)

What are you doing?



XENA

I'm going to get you out of here.

GABRIELLE

You're not going in that thing.



Xena stands up. She is now all business.

XENA

I've checked this place out. There's no other possible way to do it. One of us has to go in there, and I'm the one he wants. So that's how it's going to be.

Xena moves towards the trap, Gabrielle intercepts her.

GABRIELLE

No.

XENA

Gabrielle....



Xena tries to push past Gabrielle. Gabrielle throws her back.

GABRIELLE

Xena, I have a say in this. That man's insane, and you have to stop him. You have to get out of here, not me.

XENA

No!

GABRIELLE

You know it's true. You have to survive and beat him. I can't do that, but I can do this.

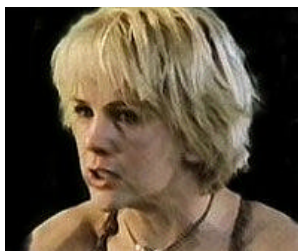
Gabrielle moves towards the trap. Xena grabs her. They grapple.

XENA

Even if that was true, I wouldn't let you.

GABRIELLE

Then we're even, because I won't let you walk in there and give up your life to that BASTARD!



They fight in earnest. Gabrielle goes full out. Xena desperately tries to find a way to subdue Gabrielle without really hurting her, but it's very tough. Gabrielle has gotten very good.

XENA

Gabrielle! Think about it! You've got a family out there waiting for you, a home - a whole life to live!



GABRIELLE

My family's right here, and you know that. You expect me to let you go in that thing and hear you screaming....



Xena grabs Gabrielle and pushes her against the wall. They are nose to nose. Xena is deadly serious.

XENA

I won't scream.

GABRIELLE

Your soul will.
You think I won't hear that?
Feel it?



They stare at each other, then resume struggling, getting more vicious and desperate as it becomes apparent neither will give quarter. Finally, Xena sees a shot, and takes it. Gabrielle goes down hard. Xena catches her as she falls and cradles her body as they both slide to the ground.

FADE TO:

INT. TRAP CONTROL ROOM

Janos is getting impatient.

JANOS

I told her not to take her time.

Behind him, Lila is trying to creep out unnoticed. Janos picks up the tube to speak into it.

JANOS

(Cont'd)

Xena? You're running out of time.

Janos motions to a posse runner. He leaves.

JANOS

(Cont'd)

If I don't hear things moving in a minute, that chamber starts filling with water. Your choice.

Janos puts the tube down, looks at Lila.

JANOS

(Cont'd)

My men will get Gabrielle out of there, I promise you. You've got nothing to worry about.

FADE TO:

INT. TRAP - SAME TIME

Xena cradles Gabrielle's body as she sits on the floor, all the fight has gone out of her. Now there is mainly grief left.

XENA

Sorry I had to do that, Gabrielle.
But you're wrong. If only one of us can make it out of here, better it be you.

Xena hugs Gabrielle to her.

XENA

(Cont'd)

This is my price to pay, my love, not yours. You've given up enough. Maybe now you can have some peace.

Xena cries a few silent tears.

XENA

(Cont'd)

Don't forget how much I loved you, okay?



Xena kisses Gabrielle's head gently, then lays her down. She takes off her sword and sets it across Gabrielle's body, closing her fingers around it. Xena leans over and kisses Gabrielle on the lips, then gets up and walks to the trap. She pauses in the entrance, looks back one last time at Gabrielle, and disappears into the darkness.

CUT TO:

INT. THE TRAP - INSIDE

The entrance slams shut and Xena is in darkness. It is very close. The trap starts moving, grabbing her arms and legs and pulling. Xena struggles. Xena's armor is cut off. She can hear Janos laughing.

CUT TO:

INT. TRAP - MOMENTS LATER

Gabrielle stirs, and wakes. She is confused at first, then she looks down at the sword in her arms, and realizes what happened. Gabrielle jumps up and rushes to the trap, to find the entrance closed.

GABRIELLE

No. No! NO!



Gabrielle beats on the door, then stops, and rushes back to pick up Xena's sword. She attacks the trap in a total frenzy.

CUT TO:

INT. TRAP CONTROL ROOM

Janos is grimly satisfied. He turns to Gabrielle's family.

JANOS

Don't worry. Unlike Xena,
I keep my promises.

Janos pulls a rope, and Gab's family falls through the floor into the trap room below where Gabrielle is.

CUT TO:

INT. THE TRAP

Xena is fighting the machine furiously, but she can't get loose. It pulls her along roughly, finally flipping her completely over onto her back with a loud bang. Xena is now bare, and suspended between a set of knives above her, and a set of knives below her. There are hundreds of them, very sharp.

JANOS

(V.O.)

Ready Xena? I want you to think
about all the people you ever hurt.
he people you killed. You destroyed.

We look down at Xena's face, and for a moment, we see that she is, in this moment, truly scared. The knives start to move, swiveling as the surface starts to come closer to Xena, making an insect like sound.



JANOS

(Cont'd)

You can keep yourself alive a little
longer by holding yourself up. If you
think you can do that anymore.

CUT TO:

INT. TRAP - SAME TIME

Gabrielle's family falls into the trap room. Gabrielle ignores them. Gabrielle is hacking at the trap in an almost mindless rage, with Xena's sword.

GABRIELLE

Xena!! No!!!! NO!!!!

Lila and Sarah try to stop Gabrielle. Gabrielle shoves them away.

LILA

Gabrielle! It's over! Stop it!

Gabrielle does stop and face her. She suddenly realizes why they're there.

GABRIELLE

Why?



LILA

We did it for you.

GABRIELLE

For me? For ME?

(angrily)

You don't even know who I am!

Gabrielle raises Xena's sword and points it at Lila.

LILA

Gabrielle!

GABRIELLE

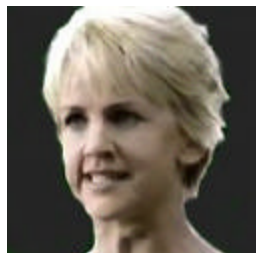
I am not the sister you grew up with!
THIS is who I am now, and the me
you think you did this for hasn't been
around for a very, very long time.

Lila and Sarah are shocked, stunned, scared.

GABRIELLE

(Cont'd)

Now. Stay OUT OF MY WAY.



Gabrielle goes back to her attack on the trap. She is actually cutting through the outside, making some progress.

CUT TO:

INT. THE TRAP - MOMENTS LATER

The knives come closer. Xena closes her eyes, and sees flashbacks of the people she's done the worst wrongs to. The images surround and mock Xena. She is very close to succumbing to Janos's plan. She starts to give in and her back almost touches the knives. Through the laughter, though -

very softly, she hears her name being called. It is Gabrielle. The knives get closer, the insect sounds get a lot louder. But then images of the good things Xena has done start to appear, and Xena takes heart from them. She opens her eyes and faces the terror of the knives squarely.



Her eyes focus on something. The wall of knives moves suddenly, and all we see is a spinning, clashing metal web that seems to engulf Xena. The last glimpse we see are those blue eyes.



CUT TO:

INT. TRAP - MOMENTS LATER

Gabrielle has made a significant dent in the wooden wall. She pulls at debris like a crazed person. Suddenly, all the noise of the trap stops with a huge BANG! Everyone jumps. Then the trap wall opens, and we can see daylight outside. Very slowly, the meaning of this gets through to Gabrielle, who realizes it means that Xena must be dead. The exhausted Gabrielle slowly sits down on the ground, and cradles Xena's sword in her arms. She is devastated.

LILA

Gabrielle? I... I'm sorry.

Gabrielle's face hardens into a mask.

GABRIELLE

Not nearly as sorry as he's going to be.



Gabrielle stands up, then runs out the open trap door. Lila and Sarah follow her.

CUT TO:

INT. TRAP CONTROL ROOM

Janos is ecstatic.

JANOS

I did it. Everyone said it was impossible, and I did it. I killed Xena.

The wall in the control room explodes inwards! Xena jumps out, covered in blood and scratches, but very much alive, and really, really pissed off.

XENA

You don't have what it takes to kill me, and make it stick.



Janos is honestly shocked. He rallies however.

JANOS

I should never have sent a machine to do a man's work!

Janos grabs a two-handed broadsword, and goes after the unarmed Xena. It's a classic battle, as Xena uses her skills to avoid being hacked and slashed. Xena uses items never meant as weapons to gain the advantage, driving Janos back. Janos goes on the offensive, then, taking advantage of Xena's being hurt, and naked and relatively unarmed to drive her across the floor, until her back is to the opening she made in the wall. Janos is sure he's won at this point. He runs at Xena, swinging his sword and yelling like a madman. Xena waits... waits... waits... until the sword is just about to skewer her, then ducks and grabs Janos, using his momentum to take him down. She grabs the sword and holds it over him.

XENA

Die hard, you bastard.

Janos looks up at Xena, bravely accepting his death.

JANOS

Go ahead, Xena. Make me the one of many, and finish what you started with my grandparents. I won't die in vain.

Xena hesitates. Janos twists out from under her and gets the drop on Xena, reversing their positions. Xena locks eyes with him. Janos presses the tip of his sword against Xena's throat.

JANOS

(Cont'd)

You'll be my first.

They are both still for an instant.

GABRIELLE

And your last.



Janos stiffens as he feels a sword pressed against his back. He slowly turns his head to see Gabrielle behind him.

JANOS

It's worth it.

GABRIELLE

No, it isn't. There's no satisfaction in it, Janos. No relief. No peace. Just emptiness, and blood, and pain.

JANOS

She killed my family.
They were all I had.

GABRIELLE

I understand you. But you do them no honor killing in their memory. Choose life, Janos. Someone has to stop the cycle of violence. Be that person.

Xena reacts, almost loses it. Janos slowly stands up, moves away from Xena and Gabrielle, still holding his sword out. He backs until he reaches an escape door, then vanishes. Gabrielle drops Xena's sword and they fall into each other's arms. Gabrielle is crying.

GABRIELLE

You're alive.

Xena lifts her hand. It has a dagger in it.

XENA

So is he, thanks to you.

Gabrielle looks at the knife, then at Xena.

XENA

(Cont'd)

Good thing you were here, to stop that cycle of hatred and violence, huh?

Slowly, Gabrielle starts to smile. Xena is bleeding all over Gabrielle as they sit on the floor together.

XENA

But you know what? I think I am getting too old for this.



Gabrielle just hugs her, and we:

FADE TO:

EXT. POTADEIA RIVERBANK

Lila and Sarah talk to Xena, Gabrielle is seated on a rock nearby, looking out over the river.

LILA

Xena, I'm sorry. There's really nothing else I can say to you.

XENA

You did what you felt was right, Lila. Some people might even agree with you.

LILA

Not Gabrielle.
You think she'll forgive us?

Xena smiles sadly.

XENA

Bet on it.

SARAH

Xena, I don't think Janos will give up that easily.

XENA

No. But I don't either, and he's got something I intend on getting back. We'll watch out for him.



LILA

Good luck. Be well.

Xena leaves Lila's side, and walks over to where Gabrielle is seated next to a tree, the tree they met by.

GABRIELLE

Do you recognize where we are?

XENA

Riverbank outside Potadeia.

Do I get a prize?

Gabrielle just smiles, a little wistfully.

XENA

(Cont'd)

And this is the spot you and I
met for the first time.

(beat)

So maybe this is a good place for us
to go different paths for awhile. Why
don't you stay here, and take a break?

Gabrielle looks back at Potadeia, shakes her head no.

GABRIELLE

I don't fit in here. I never did, not now, and not
on that day long ago that brought us together.

Xena studies the tree and puts her hand on it.

XENA

Do you regret that day, Gabrielle?

Gabrielle seems a little stunned by the question. She gets up and puts a hand on the tree as well.

GABRIELLE

If I were back on that day, knowing what I do
now... you know what I'd say to you, Xena?

Xena looks at Gabrielle, not really wanting to hear the answer.

XENA

No, what would you say?

Gabrielle smiles.

GABRIELLE

Take me with you.



Xena holds back strong emotion hearing this, but doesn't quite make it.

XENA

And I would.



Gabrielle holds out a hand.

GABRIELLE

C'mon. Our path is waiting, and we've got a long way to go yet.

Xena takes her hand.

XENA

Our path? Does that mean you get to choose which fork in the road we take next time?

Gabrielle laughs, as they walk down the road together.



FADE OUT.

DISCLAIMER

No corporeal bodies of any leading characters were beheaded, no bold choices were made, no pots of ashes were transported, and no soulmates were separated in the making of this motion picture.