

Xena: Warrior Princess - Subtext Virtual Season 9



Production #V902 – Who Watches the Watcher – Part 2

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TEASER

FADE IN:

LAST WEEK ON XENA....

EXT. HEDELON CITY - DAY - ONE WEEK LATER

Hedelon City stands at the end of a stone lined road. It is large, and has thick stone walls. The crowned sun sigil is painted in several prominent places, and many people walking in and out of the city also wear the sigil on their robes.

Alstan and his people enter the gates. They are greeted by the men standing nearby with waves and warm shouts.

GUARD

Alstan! Brother! We didn't expect
you before another moon!

ALSTAN

Ah, my friend. I need council! There
has been a challenge to the message,
and I've come for wisdom in defeating it.

Several men gather around him. Unnoticed, Xena and Gabrielle pause in the shadow of the walls to listen. They look around in disbelief at the size of the city, and the number of people.

GABRIELLE

Xena, this is a lot bigger than I imagined.



XENA

Me too. Hard to believe something like this
grew so fast.... Right under our noses.

The guard puts his arm around Alstan's shoulders.

GUARD

Trouble? Hard to believe. The word has
gone out over the land, and many have
come here to celebrate it. Look around!

Alstan turns and looks. The city seems full of pilgrims.

ALSTAN

A sight for sore eyes. But no matter, it's only a minor setback. Come. Let's go to the temple, so I can hear again the message and restore myself.

The travel party heads off down a wide avenue. As they pass a statue, they turn and bow respectfully to it, then continue on. Xena and Gabrielle start after them.

GABRIELLE

We need to find out who's behind this, Xena. We can't take on a whole city. And these people really sound like they.... Hey!

Xena has stopped short in her tracks. Gabrielle plows into her and bounces off, grabbing hold of Xena's arm to steady herself.

XENA

(grimly)

We just found out.



Gabrielle turns and finds herself staring at the statue.

It is Eve.

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. HEDELON CITY - ALLEYWAY - DAY

Xena and Gabrielle hide in a cul-de-sac. Xena is sitting on a box, her hands clasped in front of her. Gabrielle crouches at her side, one hand resting on Xena's shoulder.

GABRIELLE

Okay, that was a shock.



XENA

Yeah.

Gabrielle rubs Xena's arm.

GABRIELLE

Well, at least it makes things a little easier.
We can just go in and talk to her.

XENA

Can we?



GABRIELLE

Sure. I mean, if it really is her in the middle of this, maybe it's all just a huge misunderstanding. You know how that can happen.

Xena is looking straight ahead.

XENA

What if it isn't?

GABRIELLE

(frowning)

If it isn't? I don't understand, Xena. You don't seriously mean you think Eve's behind those guys, do you? She's your daughter... how could you?

Xena looks very somberly at Gabrielle.

XENA

Because she's my daughter.

Gabrielle falls silent. After a moment looking into Xena's eyes, she just puts her hand up and brushes the back of her knuckles against Xena's cheek.

GABRIELLE

I think she'd find what those guys are doing as rotten as we do.

Xena exhales heavily.

XENA

Maybe. We'd better wait for it to get dark before we try getting inside just in case.



Gabrielle looks around.

GABRIELLE

Okay. Let's go find a place to hole up until then. We're a little conspicuous in this crowd.

Xena gets up and pulls her cloak around her, hiding her armor and weapons.

XENA

How about we get you a spiffy new robe, and you can....

GABRIELLE

I can?

XENA

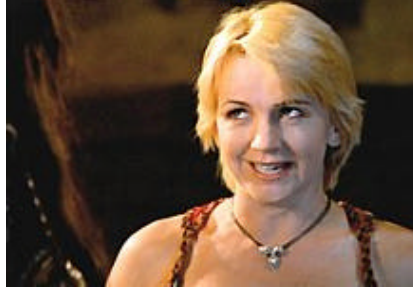
(wryly)

Even in the right clothes, you're a little more inconspicuous than I am.

GABRIELLE

(smiling)

That wasn't a short joke, was it?



Xena manages a smile in return.

XENA

Never. C'mon.

Xena and Gabrielle go to the edge of the wall and peer out cautiously. They see only a few strolling people, so they ease out into the alley and join the heaviest flow of traffic.

They do attract notice. Several men nod and point at them as they fade into the crowd.

CUT TO:

EXT. HEDELON CITY - AFTERNOON

Gabrielle is walking the streets of the city. She is now dressed in an oatmeal colored robe without any adornment and sandals. She does blend in to the crowd, and attracts little notice.



She spots a huge building off one street, with steps leading up to the entrance. People in robes with the sun sigil sit on the steps, some speaking with passersby.

GABRIELLE

Looks like as good a place as any to start.

Gabrielle wanders casually over and takes a seat on the steps near a group of men and women, close enough to listen to their conversation.

CUT TO:

INT. HEDELON CITY INN - AFTERNOON

Xena is now dressed in a simple rough tunic much like the workers seen in the streets of the city. She has just entered the inn, and she takes a seat at a table near the back.

The inn is three-quarters full, mostly with people who labor for the city. There are merchants here, sailors, wagon masters, stable masters - the middle working class. Xena does not stand out in the crowd, but she does attract a few eyes as she takes a seat in the rear.

A serving woman finishes up pouring a drink and goes to Xena's table.

SERVER

What can I get you?

XENA

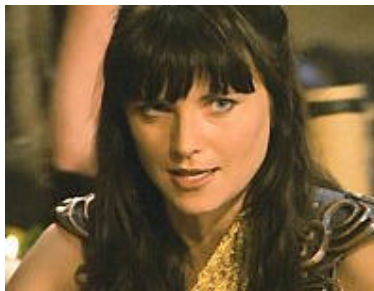
Goat's milk.

The server stares at Xena in puzzlement.

XENA

(cont'd)

Ale and some bread.



SERVER

Okay, we've got that.
New in town?

XENA

Just got here.
Seems like a nice place.

Two of the merchants nearby have been listening. One turns now to face Xena. The server leaves to get Xena's order.

MERCHANT

Sure it is.

(beat)

Unless you work instead of talk all day long. You a worker or a talker?

Xena puts her boot under a huge sack of grain near the table and lifts it just by flexing her leg. She sets it back down.

XENA

What do you think?

The men chuckle. The server comes back with a mug for Xena, and a wooden platter of bread.

XENA

(cont'd)

So why's this a bad place for honest labor?

SERVER

It's not. He just complains about everything.

MERCHANT

Yeah? So you must like giving the boys in the robes your dinars then, eh?

The server leaves. Xena gets up and takes her mug and platter to the merchant's table. She sits down next to them.

XENA

Tell me about the boys in the robes.

The merchants look around, then lean closer to her, lowering their voices.

MERCHANT

Don't talk too loudly. They speak a lot of love and tolerance, but I've seen people who cross them get taken to some very unpleasant places.

XENA

Yeah?

MERCHANT

Yeah. This used to be a nothing little backwater. Then the robes showed up and started talking all their sharing and love talk and people bought into it.

XENA

Sharing's not a bad thing.

MERCHANT

No, if you're all doing it.

(wryly)

Thing is, that's how it started, but now the sharing's more the robes taking and giving back very little.

XENA

Uh huh. So they ask for donations?



MERCHANT

Ask?

(laughing)

If you sell anything or buy anything in this town, you pay them a percentage. Guess they feel it's due em after they built the place up.

XENA

What if you don't pay?

The merchants look around carefully.

MERCHANT

I could tell you, but I don't want my tongue hung on the gate.

Xena's eyebrows go up.

MERCHANT

(cont'd)

(whispering)

But I'll show ya, if you dare to come with me.

Xena looks thoughtfully at the merchant. Then she tosses a coin on the table and stands up, pausing to wait for him to join her.



CUT TO:

EXT. HEDELON CITY TEMPLE STEPS - AFTERNOON

Gabrielle has now joined the group sitting on the steps. Two of the men with sun sigil robes are on either side of her, and two of the others sit across on the steps.

GABRIELLE

But San, you said
what you're teaching....

SAN

Not I, Gabrielle. I do not teach;
I simply pose questions.

GABRIELLE

(smiling)

Okay. The question you posed was,
'Can you love your neighbor
without loving yourself first?'

SAN

Yes.

GABRIELLE

My question to you is... If love is such
a gift, isn't it selfish to give yourself
that gift before you give it to others?



San ponders this. The other sun sigil robed man scribbles something down on parchment. The other two onlookers listen with interest.

SAN

That is, indeed, a question, Gabrielle.
I don't know if I can answer it,
but I know our leader could.

GABRIELLE

Eve?

Both robed men look at her with slight discomfort. The two onlookers also seem shocked.

SAN

Ah.... Yes, though we call
her Enlightened One,
or the One who hears.

GABRIELLE

Well, maybe I could
ask her the question.

The two men look at each other.

GABRIELLE

(cont'd)

Shouldn't really take long.

SAN

(shrugging)

We can see if the Enlightened One is
willing. But there is no way to know.
You could be disappointed.

GABRIELLE

One way to find out.



They get up, and the two robed men start to walk up the steps, leading Gabrielle towards the entrance to the temple.

CUT TO:

EXT. HEDELON CITY DOCKYARDS - LATE AFTERNOON

Xena and the merchant sneak along an alleyway near the dockyards. As they reach the corner, the merchant stops and presses against the wall. Xena does also.

MERCHANT

Over there.

Xena cautiously peers around the corner and looks. Near the end of the road is a large building with a wall around it. In the wall is a gate, and over the gate is the crowned sun sigil. There are guards at the gate, wearing tunics also bearing the sigil.

XENA

What is it?

MERCHANT

That's where people who disagree with the robes get taken.

Xena examines the structure.

XENA

How do you know?

The merchant looks momentarily discomfited. He shifts, and moves back a little from Xena, but doesn't leave.

MERCHANT

I have a brother in there.

Xena watches as two men in robes approach the gate. They are greeted by the guards, who open the doors respectfully to them. They enter, and the gates are closed after them.

XENA

Why tell me all this?



The merchant chuckles softly.

MERCHANT

Because I know who you are, Xena.

Xena doesn't seem surprised. She watches the gates open again, and this time the two robed men emerge with a figure between them dressed in rags.

XENA

I see.

MERCHANT

I know you're no
friend of the gods.

XENA

What makes you think
I'm a friend of yours?

The merchant takes another step back.

MERCHANT

Let's just say I've heard stories.
In any case, you wanted to
see the truth. There it is.

The merchant turns and runs off down the alley, disappearing rapidly in a light cloud of dust.

Xena sighs and goes back to examining the building. After a moment she steps back and looks down at herself, spreading her arms out in question. She shakes her head, then moves around the corner and starts skulking towards the building, doing her best to be inconspicuous.

CUT TO:

INT. HEDELON CITY MAIN TEMPLE - LATE AFTERNOON

Gabrielle walks with San and his friend through the temple. It is a stone building with plain, white walls and a meticulously clean floor.

On either side of the main corridor there are chambers. Gabrielle looks inside one as they pass and sees several robed bodies, male and female, sitting on woven mats on the ground studying parchments.

There are torches set in the walls, but the atmosphere is one of austerity and frugality. Gabrielle reaches out to touch one of the walls as she walks. She draws her hand back in and finds not even a smudge of dust on her fingers.

GABRIELLE

How long have you been here?



San turns, surprised at the question.

SAN

Myself? Three moons only.

GABRIELLE

What about everyone else?
This place?

SAN

Ah. Two harvests, I think.
Is that right, Temis?

Gabrielle looks up at the building.

TEMIS

I think so. This place used to be a
nobleman's palace. The Enlightened One
gave the nobleman the message, and he
turned it over to her to use in her works.

GABRIELLE

Ah. I see.

They walk on, passing room after room. Most are empty and silent. Some are occupied
with meditating people. All appear clean and almost sterile.

They walk up a flight of steps. At the top of the steps are a pair of ornate doors, heavily
carved and hammered with gold and silver. It is the only sign of wealth so far.

SAN

That is the place where we hear
the messages she gives to us.

Gabrielle follows them up the steps. At the top of the stairs, San opens the big door and
they step through it.

CUT TO:

EXT. HEDELON CITY DOCKYARD ROOFTOP - SAME TIME

A rooftop overlooks the temple building. A pair of hands suddenly wraps themselves
around the edge of the roof, and immediately thereafter, Xena vaults up and over the edge
and lands on the top of the roof with a thump. She dusts her hands off and goes to the far
edge, kneeling down and peering over at the temple.



The building she is on is higher than the walls, and she can now see over them. She shades her eyes, and watches as a group of men in rags stand near the inside of the wall, all busy working on various tasks.

Standing watch over them are guards with sigil marked tunics. The working men are in ragged clothing, and appear thin. One turns to point at a well in one corner of the yard, but the guards gesture angrily at him, and he goes back to working.

XENA

Guess they get their dinars
one way or the other.

Xena climbs up onto the edge of the roof and pauses, then throws herself into space towards the next roof, this one much closer to the temple building.

She lands and crawls over to the other edge, peering over cautiously at the walls just on the other side.

A guard looks up, and she ducks, listening for an alarm.

It remains quiet. Slowly, she lifts her head back up and peeks over. The guards have gone back to watching the road heading in to the gates.

Xena waits a few more seconds. Then she climbs up onto the low wall around this roof, and balances there, readying herself to leap onto the wall.

The guards suddenly turn and start in her direction. Xena makes an instant decision and leaps over their heads as they run to the doorway of the building she'd been standing on. She lands on the wall as they reach the door and start banging on it.

Xena runs along the top of the wall, then jumps off it into the inner courtyard.

CUT TO:

INT. HEDELON CITY MAIN TEMPLE - INNER CHAMBER

Gabrielle waits alone in a small chamber just inside the main temple area. Like the rest of the building, this chamber is plain and austere, though there is a woven mat on the stone floor and several wooden chairs.

Gabrielle looks up at a mosaic on the wall. It is made of earthly ceramic tiles, and it outlines the crowned sun sigil with a set of wavy lines under it.

The inner door opens and Gabrielle turns, but it is a young girl in a simple robe that enters. The girl seems as surprised to see Gabrielle as Gabrielle is to see her.

GIRL

Oh! I'm sorry. I didn't realize
anyone was in here.

GABRIELLE

It's all right.

GIRL

(hesitant)

Are you waiting to see the Enlightened One? I think she's meditating.

GABRIELLE

Yes, I am. Do you live here?

The girl approaches her, apparently reassured. She is in her early teens, thin, with hair almost the same color as Gabrielle's.

GIRL

I do. I used to live in the streets here, but the Enlightened One found me, and taught me the words.

GABRIELLE

Do you like being a part of all this?

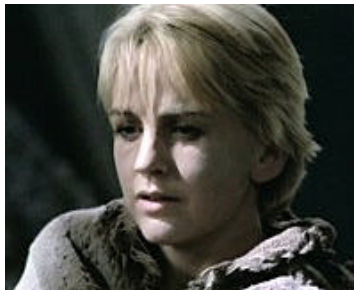
The girl looks at Gabrielle strangely.

GIRL

Wouldn't you? That's why you're here, isn't it?

GABRIELLE

Not exactly.



Voices suddenly sound in the inner room. The girl turns, rushing back to the door as the voices approach.

Gabrielle stands quietly, folding her arms across her chest.

Several voices are now audible, though the words are not entirely clear. The young girl pulls the door open and now the voices become clearer.

MAN'S VOICE

Enlightened One, just one more question, please....

SAN

Eldren, please, the
visitor is waiting.

WOMAN'S VOICE

You shouldn't be bringing
outsiders in here like that, San!
What were you thinking??

A crowd of people burst into the room, Eve in their center. Gabrielle stays still, watching intently. The people around Eve talk at the same time, surrounding her with a buzz of sound and chaos. Eve wears a set of plain robes without an insignia of any kind.

SAN

Anyone with a question is
welcome, you told me. I
thought the goal was to....

MAN

Yes, but we all have questions.
There is only so much
time in a day!

WOMAN

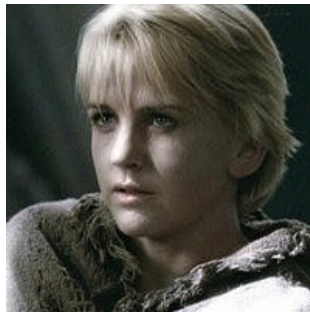
Enlightened One,
your schedule....

GIRL

Did you get a new
message, Enlightened One?
I thought you said you....

GABRIELLE

(clearly)
Eve.

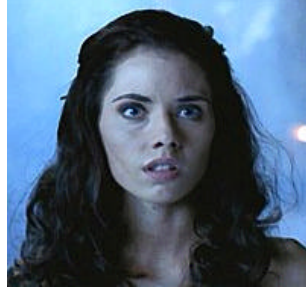


In all the noise and activity, Eve suddenly looks up and past them across the room. Her eyes meet Gabrielle's.

The babbling fades to silence, and everyone looks at Eve, then, uncertainly, they turn to look at Gabrielle.

EVE

With that question,
I should have known.



FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. HEDELON CITY MAIN TEMPLE - INNER CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

Gabrielle stands her ground, but after a moment, Eve ducks from between her entourage and heads over to Gabrielle hastily. Gabrielle walks forward to intercept her.

EVE

Gabrielle.

Eve embraces Gabrielle wholeheartedly. Gabrielle is a trifle surprised, but she responds in kind, giving Eve a warm hug in return.

GABRIELLE

It's been a long time.



Gabrielle looks over Eve's shoulder, to see the entourage staring at them wide eyed. Gabrielle smiles at them, a little amused.

EVE

It has.

They part. Eve puts her hands on Gabrielle's shoulders and just looks at her briefly.

GABRIELLE

We need to talk.

EVE

Absolutely.

(turning)

Would you all excuse
us, please?

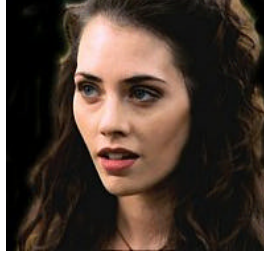
Uncertainly, the entourage turns and starts to leave. They are obviously unwilling, and they watch Gabrielle with doubtful suspicion.

The door finally closes and they are alone. Eve leads Gabrielle over to a seat and sits next to her.

EVE

(cont'd)

I can't believe you're here.



GABRIELLE

Well....

EVE

When I heard, I tried to find you. I
searched for months but no
one knew where you went.

For a moment, Gabrielle has to really think hard about what Eve is talking about. Then she realizes, and lifts her hand to her face, as she comprehends this is more of a sensitive chat than she had bargained for right off.

GABRIELLE

I didn't know you... would have heard.

Eve puts a hand on Gabrielle's shoulder.

EVE

I was coming back from Chin.
Of course I heard... I was....
(pausing)
There were so many things
I never got to tell her.

Gabrielle leans forward and rests her elbows on her knees.

GABRIELLE

Eve....

EVE

I was so proud of her. But I was
worried about you. I knew she
did the right thing but....

Eve pauses, and touches Gabrielle's shoulder again.

EVE

(cont'd)

I know what she meant to you.

Gabrielle's eyes gaze off into the distance.

GABRIELLE

(softly)

Do you?

(to Eve)

One thing I've learned in my life with
your mother, Eve. It's almost
never as simple as it seems.



Eve looks a little puzzled.

EVE

I guess that's true about life
in general, isn't it?

(looking around)

I started off running a
soup kitchen here.

Gabrielle also looks around, appreciating the irony.

GABRIELLE

I started off just getting water
for my mother's fish soup.

(sighing)

Eve, there's something
I have to tell you.

Eve takes Gabrielle's hand.

EVE

I think we both have
things we can share.

GABRIELLE

(a touch of dark humor)

Mm. One more than you imagine
we do. Your mother's alive.

Eve stares at Gabrielle in shock.

GABRIELLE

(cont'd)

And we're not here for a family reunion.

CUT TO:

EXT. HEDELON CITY DOCKYARD PRISON - DAY

Xena lands in the shadows on one side of the inner courtyard of the prison. She presses herself against the wall, and watches as two men run past carrying poles. They run to the gates, and meet the two guards there. All four men start talking excitedly.

Xena slips past them without a sound. She walks over to where the workers are and hides behind a stack of boxes, watching them.



The man nearest to Xena is building a crate out of wood. On the sides are painted the crowned sun sigil. As he finishes one box, he adds it to the stack Xena is hiding behind.

The man pauses and wipes his brow. He is visibly tired and covered in sawdust and general grime.

GUARD

Get back to work!

PRISONER

Listen you....

The guard walks over and smacks the man in the back of the head with his pole.

GUARD

Shut up! Next time you'll think
twice of cheating the one who listens!

PRISONER

I didn't cheat anyone!
That was all my money!

The guard hits him again.

GUARD

Haven't you heard of the sharing?
Nothing's all yours. We'll take our share
one way or the other. This is the other.

The prisoner goes back to his task, glowering at the guard. The guard goes to stand next to the stack of boxes, leaning against them not an arm's length from Xena.

The prisoner loses his grip on a piece of wood and it falls to the floor. The guard goes to smack him with the pole again, but finds his hands empty.

He turns and looks around, then looks on the ground, trying to find his pole.

GUARD
(cont'd)
Hey!



The prisoner looks up, and sees the guard searching. He stops working to watch. The guard unstacks all the boxes, stacking them in a pile right next to where they were. Xena kneels as he pulls the boxes off, then quickly switches to the other stack, and stands up as he puts the last box in place. He still cannot see her. She is holding the pole.

The guard turns around in a circle, then scratches his head. Suddenly, the pole appears between his legs, moving rapidly upward.

The guard screams as it impacts, and drops to his knees. The pole clatters to a halt next to him and lies there, apparently having attacked the guard by itself.

The prisoners watch in fascination.

PRISONER
Hey. Sure you paid your taxes? Maybe
the high pooh-bah heard you didn't.

The prisoners all laugh. Xena glides through the shadows and through an archway leading further into the prison, disappearing from view.

CUT TO:

INT. HEDELON CITY MAIN TEMPLE - INNER CHAMBER - DAY

Gabrielle is sitting on the low bench near the door. Eve is faced away from her, staring at the far wall.

EVE
I can't believe it.

Gabrielle stands and walks over to her. She puts a hand on Eve's back.

GABRIELLE

It's been a long, hard road. We didn't know you came back to these parts.

Eve turns to face her.

EVE

Have you been back long?

GABRIELLE

(sighing)

We've been a lot of places.



EVE

The monk I spoke to was so sure of what happened.

(pausing)

But I should have known she'd find a way out of it.

GABRIELLE

That's not exactly....

EVE

Where is she? Here? In the city?

A knock interrupts them. Eve looks at the door, and it opens to reveal a young man in a robe like hers, and sandals.

ACOLYTE

Enlightened One, the hospice is asking for you to come and speak to the sick, to give them hope.

Eve hesitates. Gabrielle touches her arm.

GABRIELLE

Go on. It'll give you a chance to think, anyway.

EVE

Why don't you come with me? You know the message I'm trying to spread here... probably better than I do.

The acolyte looks scandalized. Gabrielle just appears thoughtful.

GABRIELLE

(murmuring)

I hope so.

(louder)

All right.

Eve seems to collect herself.

EVE

Then you can take me wherever she is. I need to talk to her.

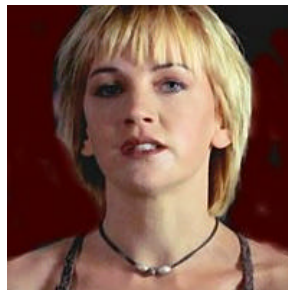


Gabrielle nods, as she follows Eve from the room.

GABRIELLE

(under her breath)

If she doesn't find us first.



CUT TO:

INT. HEDELON CITY DOCKYARD PRISON - DAY

Xena slinks along the corridor, seeming to blend in with the shadows. There are windows spaced every so often high on the walls, but the majority of illumination comes from candles in sconces.

There are barred doors also evenly spaced. Xena peers into one of them.

Inside a man is sitting dressed in rags. He has a plain wood pallet to sleep on, and that is about it. The room is otherwise empty, save for a wooden board with the crowned sun symbol.

XENA

Hey.

The man looks up, startled.

MALE PRISONER

Who... who is it? What do you want?

It's not time for me to work yet, is it?

XENA

No. C'mere.

The man looks around, then gets up off the pallet and limps over to the door. He wraps his hands around the bars and peers through, jerking back in surprise when he sees Xena.

MALE PRISONER

Oh! You're a woman!

XENA

(drolly)

Thanks for noticing.

What are you in here for?

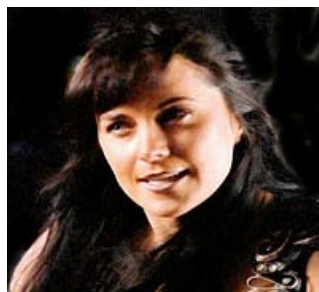
The man looks suspicious.

MALE PRISONER

Why are you asking? If you're in here, and not locked up, you know what we're all here for.

XENA

Pretend I'm stupid.



The prisoner looks at her very skeptically.

MALE PRISONER

I came here to sell my woven goods.
They wanted half of what I took
in. I refused. Here I am.

XENA

Half?

MALE PRISONER

That's right. I would have made less than
it cost me to make the goods. So I tried to
run for it, but they caught me. Now I have
two moons of hard labor, and no dinars.
Next time, I'll know better.

XENA

Not sell here?

MALE PRISONER

No. Join the temple. I hear if you get
in good with them, you get a cut,
instead of having to pay.

Footsteps approach. Xena steps back from the door and presses herself into a dark corner. Three men in robes walk past briskly, coming so close they brush Xena with the fabric of the garments they are wearing.

ROBED MAN

I think those guards had too much ale,
thinking they saw someone jump the
fence. Who'd want to get IN a lock house?

SECOND ROBED MAN

Yeah. We'll need another one if this
keeps up. That was a great idea of
Branton's to scam everyone for
fifty percent. Either they pay....

ROBED MAN

Or they pay twice!

The men laugh, and keep walking. Xena watches them go.

MALE PRISONER

They say this is supposed to give
us something to believe in again.
(laughing darkly)
Yeah. Gimme Ares any day.

Xena reacts to the name, then she looks at the prisoner.

XENA

Careful what you ask for.



Xena turns and walks away. Unexpectedly, two men appear at the end of the corridor and spot her.

GUARD

Hey! You there!

Instead of running, Xena stands in the middle of the corridor, and puts her hands on her hips.

XENA

You talking to me?

GUARD

Yeah! Don't move!

XENA

Wouldn't think of it.

SECOND GUARD

Get her!

Xena gleefully meets the two guards, grabbing the pole from one's hands and knocking the second's weapon free with it. She twirls the pole and rotates at the same time, smacking both men with either end repeatedly.

XENA

Yah!

Xena ends with the pole under her arm, and both men on the ground in a heap.

MALE PRISONER

Wow. I don't think that prophet woman's gonna like you.

XENA

She better like me. I'm her mother.



It is quiet for a few seconds, then a thunder of footsteps is heard, and a whole contingent of guards round the corner, and head towards Xena.

XENA

(cont'd)

Everybody's gotta get into the act.

Xena picks up the second guards pole and heads for the oncoming men, letting out her battle yell at full volume.

CUT TO:

INT. HEDELON CITY TEMPLE HOSPICE - LATE AFTERNOON

Gabrielle kneels beside a wounded boy. She had a piece of linen over her shoulder, and she has just finished changing a bandage on his leg. She smiles at the boy, and he smiles back at her shyly.

GABRIELLE

How'd you do this?

BOY

I was bringing my mama some herbs and a wagon went over me.

GABRIELLE

Wow. I bet that hurt.

BOY

Yeah. A little.

(looking at leg)

You did that really fast. Can you do it all the time? Those other guys take too long and it hurts.

Gabrielle ruffles the boy's hair.

GABRIELLE

I get a lot more practice
than they do, I bet.



Eve comes over and kneels at Gabrielle's side. The boy looks at Eve with a mixture of awe and apprehension.

EVE

Well, Evan... I see you
got taken care of.

EVAN

Yes, ma'am. This lady's nice.

Eve looks at Gabrielle.

EVE

Yes, she is. I bet if you asked her,
she'd even tell you a story.

EVAN

(to Gabrielle)
Wouldja?

Gabrielle smiles at the boy.

GABRIELLE

Sure. Just give me a
few minutes, okay?

Gabrielle gets up to dispose of the old bandaging. Eve comes to stand next to her, and they look out over the hospice. There are pallets spread across the room in an orderly fashion, and robed attendants go from one to the other, comforting the men and women lying there.

Gabrielle notices that two or three guards slip into the room and take up positions near the wall unobtrusively. They watch Eve closely, but Eve does not seem to be aware.

EVE

(sighing)
Just so many people
need so many things.

Gabrielle folds her arms, and gives Eve a quick, sideways look.

GABRIELLE

How did you get started with this, Eve? I know you went to Chin to spread Eli's teaching, but....

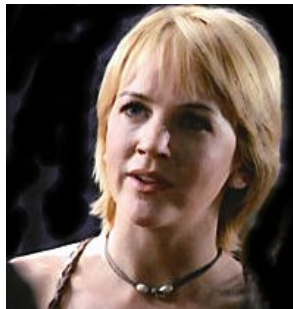
EVE

I didn't get far. His message... it was just too different. I got knocked around a lot.

Eve's expression is dispassionate.

GABRIELLE

So you came back here?



EVE

I knew there was a void here.

Gabrielle's eyes narrow slightly.

GABRIELLE

The old gods were gone.

Eve nods.

EVE

People were looking for something to believe in. I gave that to them.

She looks at Gabrielle.

EVE

(cont'd)

I'm proud of that.

Gabrielle looks troubled. She reviews the hospice for several moments in silence. She is about to answer, when two more guards rush in, look around wildly, spot Eve, and hurry over to them.

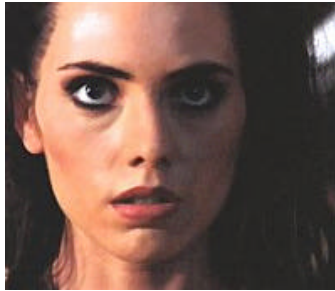
GUARD

Enlightened One, please. There is some disturbance in the city. We must get you back to the temple.

EVE

(frowning)

What kind of disturbance?
What's going on?



GUARD

I... I don't know. I was just told to come get you and bring you back... please, Enlightened One....

EVE

(reluctantly)

All right. Gabrielle....

Gabrielle has a pretty good idea what the disturbance is, and is not overly concerned for Eve's safety just yet.

GABRIELLE

I've got a story to deliver. I'll be there soon as I'm done.

Eve looks disturbed, but nods, and then follows the guards from the hospice. Gabrielle watches her go. Several of the patients nearby are watching her curiously. Gabrielle goes back over to Evan's side and sits down on the stool next to him.

CUT TO:

INT. HEDELON CITY MAIN TEMPLE - EVE'S CHAMBERS

Eve's chambers are austere and plain. There is a simple small bed on one side, a washing bowl and towel on a wooden table on the other, and some small personal effects scattered all over.

Eve enters, followed by a man in the uniform of a guard.

EVE

Mercanius, I don't understand what this is all about. Are you telling me there are people attacking the city? Why?

MERCANIUS

Enlightened One, I cannot say. Just know that some of your faithful followers were viciously attacked down by the waterfront, and we have not yet caught the ones who did it. It is your safety that concerns us.

EVE

Mine? Why?

MERCANIUS

(warily)

We, ah... it was just felt that it was your vision... your message... that was being attacked.

EVE

That's ridiculous. Someone probably got into too much ale, and it's nothing. Mercanius, please leave me. If it makes you feel better, I'll stay here until evening service.

MERCANIUS

I will post one of my men out side your door, Enlightened One.

EVE

No, you won't. Now just leave. Please.

Mercanius leaves. Eve sits down on her bed and stares at the opposite wall, her expression troubled.

EVE

(cont'd)

Everything's just going sideways all of a sudden. I can't explain it.

Xena steps out from behind the simple wooden linen press against the wall.

XENA

I bet I can.



FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. HEDELON CITY MAIN TEMPLE - EVE'S CHAMBERS - CONTINUOUS

Eve jumps up and faces Xena.

EVE

Mother....

Eve and Xena look at each other briefly, then Eve advances and they clasp hands.

XENA

(quietly)

Hello, Eve.



Eve seems a bit nervous.

EVE

Gabrielle was here.
She told me you were....

XENA

Here with her?
That surprises you?

EVE

Alive.

Xena looks away briefly, then back at Eve's face.

XENA

I guess you heard.

Eve releases Xena's hands and steps back, then walks slowly over to her washing table and stands, her back to Xena.

EVE

It was all over the Far East.
I couldn't help but hear.

She turns again, and faces Xena.

EVE

(cont'd)

I was on the road and I got taken... in...
by some traveling monks. They told me.

XENA

Ah.

EVE

As a matter of fact, being your daughter
got me out of a bad situation with them.

(looking down)

Funny how things turn out.
They admired your sacrifice.

She looks directly at Xena.

EVE

(cont'd)

So did I.

Xena stares at her.

XENA

There was nothing to admire.



EVE

I realize that now.
You tricked them.

(beat)

Why?

CUT TO:

INT. HEDELON CITY TEMPLE HOSPICE - LATE AFTERNOON

Gabrielle is just getting up from the stool next to Evan's bedside. The patients on the surrounding pallets are all turned on their beds to listen to her, and there are many smiles as she waves goodbye.

EVAN

That was a great story!

One of the healers has also been listening. He comes up to Gabrielle.

HEALER

It was indeed. You're new here,
aren't you? I saw you speaking
with the Enlightened One.

GABRIELLE

That's right. So you like stories?

HEALER

Very much so. We don't get that many,
and cherish the ones that we do hear.

Gabrielle and the healer slowly walk down the rows of pallets.

GABRIELLE

Well, I know that sometimes when
you're trying to teach a new way,
that old stories aren't that welcome.

HEALER

(laughing)

That must be some other way, then,
storyteller. Our way is one of love and
acceptance of others and curiosity
about the world. We love hearing
tales of other people and places.

Gabrielle looks very thoughtful.

GABRIELLE

That's good to know.



HEALER

Will you be staying, then? I saw you
have healing skills as well. We
certainly need all who wish to serve.

Gabrielle clasps the man on the shoulder.

GABRIELLE

I don't know. But if I can
come back to help, I will.

The healer walks Gabrielle to the door and watches her leave. Another older healer comes up beside him and they stand together.

CUT TO:

**INT. HEDELON CITY MAIN TEMPLE - EVE'S CHAMBERS –
LATE AFTERNOON - CONTINUOUS**

Xena and Eve are squared off, facing each other across Eve's small sleeping room.

XENA

I didn't trick anyone.



EVE

Someone tricked someone.
They think you died, mother.

XENA

I did.

Eve stares at Xena.

XENA

(cont'd)

But that's a lot of accusations coming from
someone who's fleeing everyone in sight.

EVE

What?

A soft knock sounds at the door. Eve glances at the door, but ignores it.

EVE

(cont'd)

I don't know what you're talking about.
I've spent the last few years thinking you
were dead, and now you show up here....

Another knock.

EVE

(cont'd)

(loudly)

Leave me!

XENA

(same time)

Come!

The door opens and Gabrielle's head appears, followed by the rest of her. She looks at Xena, looks at Eve, and sighs.

GABRIELLE

(to Xena)

Thought I heard your voice in here.

(pausing)

Am I interrupting something?

EVE

Yes.

GABRIELLE

Good. Xena, can I talk to you for a minute, before this gets out of hand?



XENA

Nothing's out of hand. I just spent the last few hours checking out the holy dungeons.

EVE

What?

GABRIELLE

And I've spent a few hours working in Eve's hospice.

She looks Xena in the eye.

GABRIELLE

(cont'd)

We're getting a very
mixed message here.

Xena searches Gabrielle's face, then she looks over at Eve.

XENA

Maybe we are. Or maybe Eve can
explain why her soldiers are forcing
men to work because they
can't afford her taxes.

Eve's jaw actually drops.

EVE

My WHAT? Mother, you've gone insane.
That's really what happened in Japa, isn't
it? You didn't die. You just went mad.

Gabrielle turns and faces Eve.

GABRIELLE

No.

(sighing)

She died.

There is a small period of silence.

GABRIELLE

(cont'd)

And she's not crazy, Eve.



Eve slowly sits down.

EVE

Then maybe I am. If she died, maybe
you're both a hallucination. I've
had a few of those lately.

Xena and Gabrielle exchange looks.

GABRIELLE

Maybe we should start
from the beginning.

Xena sits down on the ground with her back to the wall. She crosses her ankles and folds her arms. Her expression is somewhat dour.

Gabrielle looks at her in question. After a moment of silence from Xena, Gabrielle sighs again.

GABRIELLE

(cont'd)

Maybe I should start at the
beginning. You need to
understand why we're here.

Eve looks at her. She folds her hands together in an attitude of waiting.

CUT TO:

EXT. HEDELON CITY DOCKYARDS - EARLY EVENING

Several guards stand outside the prison. Four men with robes stand next to them. The guards are pretty beaten up... they sport bandages everywhere, and one is using a crutch.

LEAD MAN IN ROBE

Now, are you sure
of what you saw?

CRIPPLED GUARD

Sir, like I said. It was one woman.
But boy, was it a woman!

SECOND GUARD

That's right, and the scum in the
lockdown she was standing at
swore she said she was the
speaker woman's mother.

LEAD MAN IN ROBE

This could be trouble, if it's true.
Let's go talk to that prisoner.

The crippled guard leads them off towards the prison.

CUT TO:

INT. HEDELON CITY MAIN TEMPLE - EVE'S CHAMBERS

Gabrielle is now sitting on the ground next to Xena. Eve is seated across from them, also on the ground.

EVE
(*shaking head*)
I just can't believe it.

GABRIELLE
Well....

XENA
Can't believe what we saw exists?



Eve gets up and paces.

EVE
I can't believe it has anything to do with me. With what I'm doing here.

Xena also gets up.

XENA
Then come with me. I'll show you.

EVE
I don't have to see. I know the people around me. They're not like that.

Eve and Xena face off again.

XENA
That's what you want to believe.

EVE
(*hotly*)
They aren't! Gabrielle, you saw them. Do you think they're criminals and scam artists?

Gabrielle is still seated against the wall. She has wrapped her arms around her knees and is simply watching mother and daughter.

GABRIELLE
No.

Xena gives Gabrielle an outraged look.

GABRIELLE

(cont'd)

But I know what I saw in that town, and it was just as real.

EVE

(yelling)

Those people weren't a part of this!



XENA

(sarcastically)

So they coincidentally ran here to your city and use your symbol because...?

Eve is frustrated. Xena is frustrated. Gabrielle appears mostly tired.

GABRIELLE

Eve!

Both Eve and Xena stare at Gabrielle.

GABRIELLE

(cont'd)

I know what Xena saw was real too.

EVE

(angrily)

I don't believe it! It's not real!
You're making it all up, mother!
Just because this isn't your way of....

Gabrielle gets up and joins Xena.

GABRIELLE

(yelling back)

Eve, your mother has the
imagination of a warthog!!!!



She pauses, ignores Xena's glare.

GABRIELLE

(cont'd)

She didn't make it up.
I didn't make it up. You
need to see the truth.

Eve stares at them.

EVE

All right. Fine. I'll go, but I'm
telling you, you're wrong.

XENA

Good. Prove me wrong. Let's go.

Xena starts for the door.

EVE

I have a service I
have to be at....

XENA

Gabrielle'll cover for you.
C'mon. The sooner we
get this done the better.

Gabrielle puts her hands on her hips.

GABRIELLE

Wait a minute. I don't know
what to do in that thing....

XENA

(drolly)

You're the one with the
imagination. Use it.

(to eve)

Coming?



Eve hesitates. She looks at Gabrielle, who smiles, shrugs, and nods. With visible reluctance, Eve follows Xena out of the room.

CUT TO:

INT. HEDELON CITY MAIN TEMPLE - INNER CHAMBER - EVENING

Eve's acolytes are all gathered together, speaking softly. They look up as the door opens, somewhat surprised and disappointed not to see Eve entering.

Gabrielle slips in and walks over to the group.

GABRIELLE

Hi.

The little blond girl Gabrielle first met stands up.

GIRL

What have you done with
the Enlightened One?

GABRIELLE

I haven't done anything with her.
She's... meditating right now.
She asked me to sit in for her.

The group looks at Gabrielle with deep, deep suspicion.

GIRL

(indignantly)

You're new here. How do
you know anything about
what the message is?

Gabrielle settles on the floor next to them.

GABRIELLE

Well, funny you should ask me that. See, I've known Eve for a really long time, and I know where she got her message from.

(pausing)

Want to hear the story?



Everyone is still very suspicious, but they are also intrigued. Slowly, they gather around Gabrielle.

CUT TO:

EXT. HEDELON CITY DOCKYARDS ROOFTOPS - NIGHT

Xena and Eve creep along the rooftop. They settle on the edge, peering over to see the prison gate.

There are at least six guards on the gate now, and more scattered over the walls. They are now armed with swords and crossbows instead of poles.

Eve looks at the prison.

EVE

Anyone can copy that symbol.
It doesn't mean anything.

Xena gives her a sideways look, then settles down to watch. A wagon rolls up to the gates and is admitted.

XENA

That's probably to take
the prisoner's work
projects to market.

Eve crawls up next to Xena and they lie shoulder to shoulder. Xena watches the gates, Eve watches Xena.

EVE

Did you really die?



XENA

Yes.

Eve reflects on this briefly, looking out across the open space before she looks back at Xena.

EVE

To put those souls at rest?

XENA

Yes.



Eve nods to herself.

EVE

So, what changed? The monks told me you...

Xena looks over at Eve.

XENA

Being dead bored the hell out of me.

Xena looks back at the gates. Eve shakes her head and falls silent. After a few minutes, the gates open and the wagon rolls out, filled with crates. The symbol is very visible in the torchlight. Xena looks at Eve. Eve looks uncomfortable.

EVE

It's still just a symbol.

Xena rolls her eyes.

XENA

All right. Let's wait for the gates to close, then we'll get in there. You wanna see first hand? No problem.

Xena and Eve creep over to the far side of the roof, and climb down the wall to the road. They are hidden by the shadows.

XENA

(cont'd)

When that next wagon comes up, jump on.

Eve remains silent, waiting at Xena's shoulder. The next wagon appears at the top of the street and heads for the gates. Xena tenses as it comes closer. Eve gathers her robes and prepares to jump also. At the last moment before the wagon comes up to them, Xena turns her head.

XENA

(cont'd)

I left my heart and half my soul behind, and I had to come back for it.



The wagon comes even with them, and Xena bolts for it. Eve is caught speechless for a second, then runs after her. They catch up to the wagon and swing themselves onboard just as it reaches the gates.

The gates open, and the wagon rolls inside. The gates slam shut after it.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. HEDELON CITY DOCKYARD PRISON - NIGHT

The wagon rolls to a halt inside the prison courtyard. Eve and Xena jump out as a group of men approach from the other side. They open the back of the wagon and start loading boxes in.

Xena and Eve hide in the shadows.

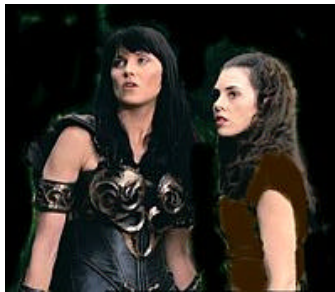
EVE

I don't recognize any of them.

Xena watches the men.

XENA

You have any idea
what they're doing?



EVE

(shaking head)
No. What's in the boxes?
You know, don't you?

XENA

Stuff to sell at market.

Eve watches the men.

EVE

Maybe they're just making a living.
(eying Xena)
I know that's not the
first thing you'd think of.

Xena's eyes narrow.

XENA

Nope. Gabrielle's the honest
wage earner in **this** family.

Xena gives Eve a pointed look. Eve looks briefly away. Then she looks back.

EVE

Sorry. I know you're trying to
do what you thinks right.
(pausing)
And I'm glad you're still around.

XENA

(sighing)
You're doing what you
thinks right too....

Three men in robes enter the courtyard. Eve lets out a just audible gasp.

XENA

(cont'd)
Recognize em? Or are
you going to tell me
anyone can grab a robe?

EVE

(softly)
No. I know them.

Eve moves towards the men, taking the lead now. Xena slinks along behind her until they are just in back of where the men stand talking.

ROBED MAN

Hurry up. I want to get this
stuff out of here in case
someone thinks to come looking.

WAGON LOADER

What's the hurry? You're not
scared of that big monster woman
the guards saw, are you?

Eve looks at Xena. Xena looks vaguely amused.

ROBED MAN

No. I just don't want any more
mistakes. We're moving the
prisoners outside the city, too.

Eve now looks pretty upset.

WAGON LOADER

Get better work out of em, I bet.

ROBED MAN

We're jacking up the taxes too. Had a whole bunch of yokels show up here this afternoon hearing about....

(affected voice)

The Message.

Eve's hands tense. Xena merely watches her. The men all laugh. The robed men turn and walk out, passing within inches of where Eve and Xena are.

Eve and Xena fade back into the shadows.

CUT TO:

INT. HEDELON CITY TEMPLE - INNER CHAMBER - NIGHT

Gabrielle sits surrounded by acolytes. San is there, as is the blond girl. They seem to have reconciled themselves to Gabrielle's presence, and appear relaxed and interested.

GABRIELLE

So, that's the story. I'm glad to see that Eve is spreading Eli's message to so many people. It's a good one.

SAN

Gabrielle, how do you know so much of what happened? You're not any older than we are.

GABRIELLE

(wryly)

You'll just have to take my word for it.

(looking up)

I'll see if the mediation's over.

Be right back.



Gabrielle gets up and leaves. Behind her, the acolytes gather together and whisper.

CUT TO:

EXT. HEDELON CITY MAIN TEMPLE - NIGHT

The robed men who have just left the prison walk towards a back entrance to the temple. Xena and Eve follow them.

ROBED MAN

Let's get a drink while they're
all up studying their navels.

His two companions laugh. They open a hidden door and slip inside. Xena and Eve pause as the door closes quickly behind the men and they are caught outside.

XENA

You need to see more?

EVE

(quietly)
No.

Xena puts a hand on Eve's shoulder.

EVE

(cont'd)

How can something as good as
his teachings go so bad, mother?

Xena nods towards the front of the temple .

XENA

I don't know.
(pointing)
Let's go inside.



Xena and Eve walk towards the entrance. Behind them, the hidden door slides open and two men look out, watching them leave.

CUT TO:

INT. HEDELON CITY TEMPLE - CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Gabrielle walks down the corridor towards Eve's chambers. She hears voices coming, and ducks into a small alcove. Two men walks slowly towards her.

ROBED MAN

I told you they followed us. We
can't take any more chances.

SECOND ROBED MAN

What can we do? You
know those crowds suck
up every word she says.

ROBED MAN

They'd follow anybody.
(laughing)
We just have to give them
another Enlightened One.

The men turn down a side hallway and disappear. Gabrielle pops out of the alcove and races to the corner, looking around it to see if she can spot the men.

GABRIELLE

Damn it.

The men have disappeared from view. Gabrielle turns and races for Eve's chambers.

CUT TO:

INT. HEDELON CITY TEMPLE - EVE'S CHAMBERS - NIGHT

Gabrielle enters. The room is still empty. Disturbed, Gabrielle sits down on the edge of the bed to wait.

GABRIELLE

Why can't it ever be
simple with us?

(musing)

It used to be just scrungy
warlords every week. Then
it was armies. Then it was
gods. Then it was ghosts.

(sighing)

Now we can't even stop for a
festival without getting involved
with the fate of the world.
Boy that gets old sometimes.

Gabrielle leans her elbows on her knees and props her chin on her fists.

The outer door opens, and Xena and Eve enter. They both look grim. Eve goes to her prayer table and sits down, staring pensively at the floor.

XENA

I see you survived the sermon.

GABRIELLE

Did you see what you
needed to, Eve?



Eve nods. Xena sits down on the bed next to Gabrielle.

XENA

They know something's up. They
were moving their slave goods out.

GABRIELLE

I know. They're also planning
on a change of prophet.

Eve looks up at her in surprise.

EVE

What?

GABRIELLE

(steadily)

I heard two of your helpers discussing
how to replace you with
someone less dangerous.

EVE

(hotly)

I'm not dangerous!
I realize these men....

(sighing)

I know they've been taking
advantage of people, but....

XENA

(flatly)

Eve, you know better than that.

Eve falls silent.

XENA

(cont'd)

These bastards know a good thing
when they see it. We've got to....

Eve gets up.

EVE

I have to decide
what to do about it.

She turns and speaks firmly.

EVE

(cont'd)

And I need time to think. Alone.

Xena gets up. Gabrielle joins her.

XENA

All right.



Eve seems to regret being somewhat rude.

EVE

There's another room beyond that door.
You can get some rest if you want.

(hesitating)

I just have a lot to consider.

Xena and Gabrielle walk to the door.

XENA

Don't think too long. The longer
they have to plan, the tougher
it'll be to stop them.

Xena opens the door and walks through. Gabrielle gives Eve a worried look, but follows.

Eve sits down on her bed. She stares at her folded hands for a few moments. Then a knock comes at the outer door.

EVE

Yes?

The door opens, and the little blond girl looks in.

EVE

(cont'd)

Hello, Amber.

Encouraged, the girl enters.

AMBER

That new woman said you were meditating, Enlightened One. I didn't want to bother you, but I knew you'd had no supper.

EVE

(quietly)

I'm not hungry, thanks.

(thinking)

But you know what you could do for me?

AMBER

Anything, you know I will.

EVE

Tell everyone that tomorrow I want to have the biggest listening ever. I have a new message to give you.

The girl's eyes light up.

AMBER

Oh! I will! I'll tell everyone!

The girl runs out. Eve hitches herself back and sits against the wall, appearing very thoughtful.

CUT TO:

INT. HEDELON CITY TEMPLE - GUEST CHAMBER - NIGHT

The guest chamber is even more austere than Eve's. There is a pallet roughly large enough to hold a small goat, one chair, and a table. Xena and Gabrielle have chosen to sit on the floor instead, which has a woven reed mat on it.

Gabrielle has produced a pita sandwich from somewhere, and she is sharing it with Xena, along with the contents of a furry waterskin.

XENA

I think I was too rough on her.



GABRIELLE

(thinking)

Sometimes you see your goal so clearly, you don't have much patience with people who don't.

They are both silent, thinking of other times.

XENA

I could have given her the benefit of the doubt.

(pausing)

But I don't tend to do that either.

Gabrielle breaks her half of the sandwich in half and gives it to Xena.

GABRIELLE

It's a lot to absorb, Xena. She's really done some good things here, and now she has to face the fact that those good things have been so twisted.

(sighing)

That's hard. But I think she just needs some space.

Xena nods.

XENA

You're right. Tomorrow we'll figure out how to save the sheep and boot the wolves.

Gabrielle snuggles up against Xena and they put their arms around each other.

CUT TO:

INT. HEDELON CITY TEMPLE - EVE'S CHAMBERS - LATE NIGHT

Eve is standing, her hands clasped, her eyes closed in meditation.

After a moment of silence, she opens her eyes and goes to the inner door, opening it carefully. She looks through the open doorway.

Inside, Xena is seated against the wall, apparently dozing. Gabrielle is curled up sound asleep in Xena's arms.

Eve stands there just looking at them for a little while. Then she slowly closes the door again, and leans against it.



CUT TO:

INT. HEDELON CITY TEMPLE - MAIN CHAMBERS - MORNING

There is an air of great excitement. Many of the acolytes stand in small clusters, talking together.

Xena and Gabrielle enter and look around.

XENA

Where is she?



Gabrielle points to the door leading into the worship area of the temple.

GABRIELLE

That's a good bet.

Xena and Gabrielle walk to the large, closed doors. Xena takes hold of the handles and hauls the doors open, striding through them into the main worship hall. The crowd of acolytes stops and stares in shock.

Gabrielle follows Xena, closing the doors after them with a little smile for the crowd.

CUT TO:

INT. HEDELON CITY TEMPLE - WORSHIP HALL - MORNING

Eve is standing near the raised platform at one end of the hall. It has a high ceiling, and is gracefully, if austere, decorated.

Eve turns as Xena and Gabrielle enter. She stands near the platform and waits as they approach.

EVE

Good morning.
I'm glad you found me.

Xena had been about to say something. Now, she pauses and apparently changes her mind. Gabrielle steps up to the dialog box instead.

GABRIELLE

San just told me you're
calling a big meeting.

Eve nods.

EVE

That's right. I intend on sharing
with everyone what we... What
I found out yesterday.

XENA

(warily)

That could be dangerous if word
gets out that's what you're doing.

Eve nods again.

EVE

Yes.

(briefly smiling)

I made sure it got out.

A knock at the door sounds very loud inside the room. The door opens, and Amber sticks her head in.

AMBER

Enlightened One, I have
done as you asked. The
messages are posted.

EVE

(smiling)

Thanks, Amber.

Amber leaves. Eve turns and goes back to the platform, walking up onto it and arranging some draping.

XENA

(flatly)

You're making yourself a target.

Gabrielle crosses behind Xena and stands near the back wall, where the crowned sun sigil is carved in wood and mounted on the stone.

EVE

We both know people need to
see the truth. Just hearing it
isn't enough sometimes.

XENA

Are you expecting your faithful
to rise up in outrage?

(wryly)

What if they're in on it?



Eve seems disturbed. She fiddles with the draping again.

EVE

That's my chance to take. I'm putting
my message... the values I've
chosen to teach, on the line.

XENA

These guys have a lot a stake.
They might not care who gets hurt.

(pausing)

Or killed.

EVE

I'm aware of that. But someone
has to stop this, and I started it.

Eve walks off the platform and heads for a side door.

XENA

Eve....

Eve turns.

EVE

You're not going to lecture
me on putting myself in the
line of fire, are you, Mother?

Xena's jaw clicks shut.

EVE

(cont'd)

I'm glad. I know you
understand what I'm doing.

Eve walks through the side door. Xena looks at Gabrielle. Gabrielle merely turns and follows Eve. After a second, Xena also follows.

CUT TO:

EXT. HEDELON CITY TEMPLE STEPS - DAY

Two of the robed men meet on the steps.

ROBED MAN

Did you hear? Did you
see those posters?

SECOND ROBED MAN

Relax. I've got it covered.

ROBED MAN

With all those worshippers
in there? What about
that monster woman?

SECOND ROBED MAN

(smiling)

I told you. Relax.

The two men climb up the steps and enter the temple.

CUT TO:

INT. HEDELON CITY TEMPLE INNER CHAMBER - DAY

Eve enters. She gets halfway across the room when Gabrielle and Xena enter after her.

GABRIELLE

Eve.

Eve stops, but does not turn.

EVE

I'm sorry. I need some
time to prepare what
I'm going to say.

XENA

You can't just go up
there and start throwing
accusations, Eve. At
least let's talk about....

EVE

No.

Eve turns and goes to Xena. She reaches out and takes her hands.

EVE

(cont'd)

Mother, please. This is
my choice. I'm willing to
accept the consequences,
just like you were.

GABRIELLE

Right or wrong?



Both Eve and Xena look at Gabrielle. Gabrielle walks back to the door into the temple and goes through it, slamming the door after her with a loud bang.

Xena and Eve stare at the closed door briefly.



Then they return their attention to each other.

XENA

She'll be all right.

Xena and Eve walk over to the bench seats and sit down.

EVE

It's ironic, isn't it? When I first met you after growing up, I was busy killing the person I've become today.

XENA

Is that what this is about? You trying to make up for that?

Eve shrugs.

XENA

(cont'd)

Free advice. It doesn't work.

Eve gets up. She runs her hands through her hair.

EVE

I wanted to teach people about getting along. About how to live together, and help their neighbors.

(beat)

About love. Eli's kind of love.

She turns towards Xena.

EVE

(cont'd)

I've been talking about love for almost two years now. But when I see you and Gabrielle, I wonder if he ever understood what love really is.

Xena considers.

XENA

(smiling)

I think he understood the concept.
The reality's something else altogether.

Eve sits down next to Xena.

EVE

Enough to give up your
own redemption for?

XENA

Enough to be my redemption. So
don't take too many chances, Eve.
You never know when you might
come around a corner and find what
you're searching for right next to you.

Eve nods, but it is clear she's not really buying into the words.

EVE

Mother, I want you to promise me that no
matter what happens, you won't interfere.

XENA

Eve....

EVE

Promise me. This is my destiny. Let
me take it wherever it goes.

Xena stands. Eve stands as well. Xena puts her hands on Eve's shoulders.

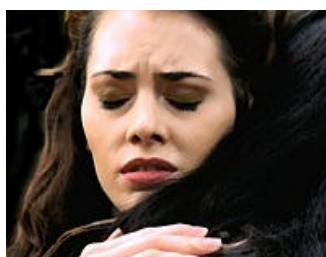
XENA

All right.

Eve appears relieved. Xena hesitates, then pulls Eve into a hug. Eve returns the hug wholeheartedly.

EVE

When this ends, we'll go have some
ale and talk. I really have missed you.



XENA

Lousy as this whole thing is,
I'm glad it lead us here.



They break apart, and Eve smiles.

EVE

You can wait here.
I'm going to go, um....

XENA

Go on. She loves you too.

Eve leaves, much relieved. Xena sighs, and sits down. Her eyes roam around the interior of the room, and she appears apprehensive.



CUT TO:

INT HEDELON CITY TEMPLE WORSHIP HALL - DAY

Outside the door, a loud hum of conversation now can be heard. There is an air of excitement that penetrates into the worship hall.

Eve enters, looking around, and spots Gabrielle talking to Amber. She hurries across the room to where they are standing.

AMBER

Enlightened One, everyone is coming.
It's so full outside, you can hardly
move. Can I open the doors?

EVE

Soon, Amber. Can you make sure
the outer doors are all wide open?
It's getting warm in here.

AMBER
Of course!
(*smiling*)
I'll be right back.

Amber scampers off. Gabrielle watches her leave. Then Gabrielle turns towards Eve.

GABRIELLE
Sorry.



EVE
Don't be. It's kind of nice having people
around who worry about me but don't
treat me like a mud and wattle statuette.

GABRIELLE
Mm. I hear being on a pedestal can
really put a kink in your neck.

Eve smiles. She clasps Gabrielle's arm, and they briefly embrace.

EVE
Do you really think this is the
wrong thing to do?

GABRIELLE
To be honest, we did something kind
of like it back at that village.

Eve laughs softly.

GABRIELLE
(*cont'd*)
But that was different.

EVE
Because it was you.

GABRIELLE
(*smiling*)
Something like that.
It is what we do.

EVE

(thoughtfully)

It's good to know you're
out there doing it.

The noise of the crowd grows, and the doors start to open.

GABRIELLE

Xena still back in there?

EVE

I made her promise not
to get involved.

Gabrielle gives Eve a pat on the side, and then she turns and heads for the inner door. At the entry, she turns.

GABRIELLE

Good luck.

Eve lifts her hand and waves, then she stands to one side as the doors open and the crowd starts pouring in.

CUT TO:

INT. HEDELON CITY TEMPLE - INNER CHAMBER - MOMENTS LATER

Gabrielle enters. Xena is seated on the bench. Gabrielle walks over and sits down next to her.

XENA

She make you promise?

GABRIELLE

No. Still has a thing
or two to learn.

Xena grunts.

XENA

I think that cute smile of
yours just fools everyone.



Gabrielle lets her head rest against Xena's shoulder.

GABRIELLE

Hope her plan works.

XENA

(sighing)

It's no crazier than some
of ours have been.

Gabrielle takes Xena's hand and holds it.

CUT TO:

INT. HEDELON CITY TEMPLE WORSHIP HALL - DAY

Eve stands on the platform, looking out over the crowd. The room is packed, but Eve searches the faces in front of her and sees a number who appear more watchful than eager.

The light from the windows set high up in the roof of the temple hall falls on the platform, outlining Eve as she waits. People are still entering in the back.

Amber approaches Eve, and kneels near the front of the platform, offering her a handful of flowers.

EVE

Ah... thanks. What
are these for?

AMBER

No reason. I just thought
they were pretty and
that you'd like them.

Eve sniffs the flowers and smiles.

EVE

They are, and I do.

Amber gets up and backs away to stand in the front line of acolytes.

The vast room is now overflowing. Eve steps back with her flowers, and prepares to start talking.

CUT TO:

INT. HEDELON CITY TEMPLE INNER CHAMBER - DAY

Xena and Gabrielle sit listening. Through the wall, they hear Eve start to speak.

EVE

(V.O.)

My friends. Thank you for coming to
listen to this new message I spoke of.

(pausing)

It is not a good message. It is not
warm, and it does not speak of
love or kindness or sharing.

A low murmur is heard through the door.

EVE

(V.O., cont'd)

It is instead a message of cruelty.
It is a message of thievery and hurt,
and worse, it is a message that all of
this has been visited on those around us.

VOICE

(V.O.)

No! Here?

EVE

Here. And elsewhere.
(louder, almost growling)
And in MY NAME.

Gabrielle squeezes Xena's hand.

GABRIELLE

(whispering)

She sounded just like you, there.

Xena manages a smile.

MALE VOICE

(V.O.)

Wait! I have heard another message!

Murmurs.

MALE VOICE

(V.O.)

(cont'd)

I have heard that demons have
come, and forced their own
cause here! Through you!

VOICE

(V.O.)

What?

MALE VOICE

(V.O.)

Strangers have come! We have
all seen them! We must stop
the demons! Now!

Xena and Gabrielle quickly stand up.

XENA

I think we've just been involved.

GABRIELLE

I think you're right. But
even if we weren't....

XENA

She'll just have to forgive me.

Xena and Gabrielle race for the door.

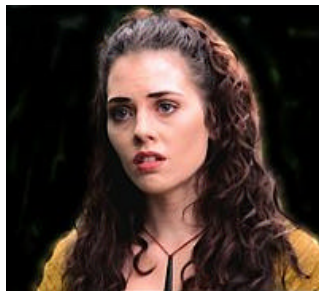
CUT TO:

INT HEDELON CITY TEMPLE WORSHIP HALL - SAME TIME

The room is in chaos. Groups of people are shoving their way forward towards Eve. Some acolytes have been pushed to the ground. Eve is trying to yell over the din.

EVE

No! No! Listen to me!



MALE VOICE

Don't listen to her!
It's the demons voice!

Xena and Gabrielle enter. They start fighting their way towards the stage.

AMBER

No! They aren't demons!
You're the demons!

Amber scrambles up onto the platform with Eve. She points into the crowd.

AMBER

(cont'd)

Look! There! He's got....

EVE

(desperately)

Listen to me! All of you! They've
taken our goodness, and used it
to steal money from our neighbors!
Look around you! Look!

MALE VOICE

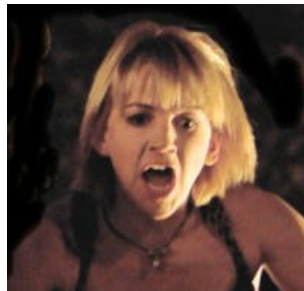
Demons! There! You see!!! Hurry!

Xena reaches the edge of the platform. Eve spots her, and for a split second a look of utter relief covers her face. Xena sees it.

Gabrielle grapples with a large man just in front of her. She spots a weapon under his robe.

GABRIELLE

Xena!



Xena starts to turn. She stops and whirls as she hears a crossbow being cocked even through the crowd. She searches frantically.

AMBER

Eve! Look! He's....

A man in the crowd has raised a crossbow. He points it at Amber and releases the trigger.

MALE VOICE

Stupid girl!

Eve sees it coming. With a lunge, she grabs Amber and turns as the arrow reaches them.

The arrow takes Eve in the back, piercing her through.

She starts to fall.

The archer falls as well, Xena's dagger buried in his heart just a moment too late.

Eve sags in Amber's arms, and they collapse to the ground. Xena is there in an instant. There is blood everywhere. Xena gently rolls Eve over, but it is too late.

Eve is dead.

Gabrielle comes to Xena's side and kneels, holding on to Xena.

AMBER

(quavering)

She was right.

(sniffling)

There are demons among us...
out there. With bows.

Her voice breaks.

AMBER

(cont'd)

Killing our dream.

The crowd has been stunned motionless. Now they look around. Men begin to draw weapons from underneath their robes.

AMBER

(cont'd)

(yelling)

Don't let them!

Amber leaps up, her robes drenched in Eve's blood. She rushes at the closest armed man and leaps at him in utter anger.

In a sudden, shocking motion the acolytes turn on the rogues in their midst. In the close quarters, the men cannot use the weapons, and it turns into a huge melee.

But on the platform, ignoring the crowd and the fight, Xena takes Eve's hand and clasps it, her expression profoundly sad.

Gabrielle puts her arms around Xena and simply holds her.

The acolytes send up a yell of triumph as they start to drive the rogues to the ground.

For Xena and Gabrielle, the sound is an empty one.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FOUR

TAG

FADE IN:

EXT. HEDELON CITY TEMPLE STEPS - MORNING

Gabrielle sits with Amber on the steps. The front of the temple is draped in white. Amber still wears her bloodstained robes.

AMBER

It's like that story you told us, isn't it?
When Eli had to die, to make sure
his dream stayed alive?

GABRIELLE

(sadly)

People shouldn't have to die, Amber.

AMBER

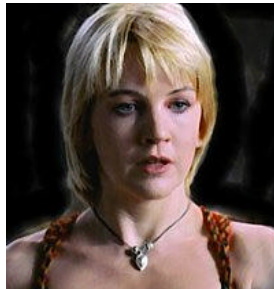
But we never would have woken
up, to drive the evil out of
our midst otherwise.

GABRIELLE

Maybe. But I can't help mourning
the loss of a friend.

(softer)

A child.



AMBER

(very thoughtfully)

I'm glad I gave her those flowers.
I think you were right, she liked them.

Gabrielle looks up, to see Xena coming down the street with Argo II. She stands.

GABRIELLE

I hope you keep her ideas going.

AMBER

We will. We're going to send out teachers.
It was Eve's great dream to do that once

they were ready. They'll make sure the right message is heard this time.

Gabrielle clasps Amber's shoulder.

GABRIELLE

Good luck.

AMBER

Why don't you stay with us?
You could help. You know
the teachings like she did.

Gabrielle watches Xena come closer to them.

GABRIELLE

Because my ears hear
a different voice now.

Gabrielle steps down and joins Xena as she passes. They walk side by side down the street, towards the far gates.

CUT TO:

EXT FOREST GLADE - EVENING

Xena and Gabrielle sit next to their campfire. The sun has just gone down, and it is getting dark. The air is cool, and the stars are just coming out overhead.

They are both very quiet. The fire's crackling is the only sound for a while. Finally, Xena takes a sip of what is in her mug while Gabrielle continues to stare into the flames.



XENA

You know, I don't even
know how I should feel.

GABRIELLE

Hm? What do you mean?



XENA

Should I be crying?
Screaming? Angry?
(sighing)
I'm not.

GABRIELLE

Xena....

XENA

I'm just numb.
(looking around)
Maybe it's happened to me so many
times in my life, I've just gotten
accustomed to the horror of it.

Gabrielle puts her cup down and puts her arms around Xena, rubbing her back with one hand. Her expression is heartsick.

GABRIELLE

I think it's just shock. I feel like that too.
Like I can't believe it happened.

Xena seems a little comforted by that. She rests her head against Gabrielle's.

XENA

Yeah. I think you're right.

Xena tips her head back and looks up at the stars.

XENA

(cont'd)

Maybe she was right. Maybe
this was her destiny.

Gabrielle also looks up.

GABRIELLE

Maybe.

They both lean against each other, as they stare into the flames.

FADE OUT.

DISCLAIMER

No real live religions were harmed in the making of this motion picture,
but the moral rectitude of humanity in general did take a few dings.