

XENA

WARRIOR PRINCESS

Athens City Academy of the Performing Bards

BY

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Episode #11

Prod. #76916

XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS

"Athens City Academy Of The Performing Bards"

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SHOOTING DRAFT
September 27, 1995

Prod. #76916

XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS

"Athens City Academy Of The Performing Arts"

CAST LIST

XENA
GABRIELLE

ORION
POLONIUS
TWICKENHAM
EURIPIDES
STALLONUS
KELLOS
DOCENIUS
GASTACIUS
DRUNK

(TWICK-en-um)

XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS

"Athens City Academy Of The Performing Bards"

SET LIST

INTERIORS:

TAVERN
PERFORMANCE HALL
BACKSTAGE AREA
GABRIELLE'S ROOM

EXTERIORS:

ACADEMY
ACADEMY/REGISTRAR'S TABLE
NEAR ACADEMY
COUNTRY ROAD

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XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS

"Athens City Academy Of The Performing Bards"

CHRONOLOGY

DAY 1	SCENES # 1 - 9
NIGHT 1	SCENE #10
DAY 2	SCENES #11 - 12
NIGHT 2	SCENE #13
DAY 3	SCENES #14 - 23

XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS

"Athens City Academy Of The Performing Bards"

TEASER

FADE IN:

CLIP - ACTION SCENE - NIGHT

A choice selection of a battle scene with Xena fighting a group of warriors at night. At a particularly dramatic point, the SCENE FREEZES! Over this, we HEAR:

DRUNK'S VOICE

Wait, wait, wait... hold on just a moment here...

1 INT. TAVERN - DAY

1

Gabrielle is standing in front of a table, arms outstretched as if she has just been interrupted in the middle of telling a great story... which she has. The DRUNK sits on a stool nearby. Several other people are paying close attention to this marvelous tale.

GABRIELLE

It's not polite to interrupt a Bard when she's relating a heroic tale.

DRUNK

You said it was day.

GABRIELLE

Excuse me?

DRUNK

It was morning when this Xena got loose, so it must be day. Not night.

A beat as Gabrielle assesses this, then nods.

GABRIELLE

Very well. Day.

She takes a deep breath to continue the story and we are into:

CLIP - ACTION SCENE - DAY

Picking a similar scene from another show where Xena fights warriors in daylight. In this clip, she vanquishes the foes and wins. As she turns toward camera and FREEZES, we HEAR APPLAUSE. And we are back in:

2 INT. TAVERN - DAY

2

Gabrielle is frozen, arms wide out, as she has wrapped up her story. She takes a beat, then bows to the applause. As the crowd breaks up, they put a few dinars on the table in front of her. Even the drunk is touched.

DRUNK

I've never heard a story so... I've never heard a story...

(realizing)

I don't think I've ever heard a story.

He hands her another dinar and wobbles away.

ORION'S VOICE

He's right, you know. You're really good.

Gabrielle turns and finds a small, unassuming young man we will come to call ORION. Gabrielle smiles.

ORION

Who trained you?

GABRIELLE

Trained me? No one. Not in the classical sense. I just like stories.

ORION

Then you're going to the competition?

GABRIELLE

What competition?

ORION

(amazed)

Why, the Bard competition! For the Athens City Academy Of The Performing Bards! Only the top four contestants will get an invitation.

(beat)

I'm... hoping I'll be one of them.

POLONIUS, age 45, approaches.

GABRIELLE

(brightening)

You tell stories, too?

POLONIUS

Yes, he does. And he doesn't have time to waste telling them here.

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED:

2

ORION

Dad! She's great! I was just telling
her she should sign up for the tryouts.

POLONIUS

It's not nice to give someone false
hope, son.

(to Gabrielle)

I'm sure your story was cute.

GABRIELLE

Cute?

POLONIUS

But the Academy only takes talented
individuals. The roster is already
filled. And, besides, being a Bard is
not for young ladies. Stories about
housework aren't popular.

(to Orion)

Come.

With a fretful look at Gabrielle, Orion allows himself to be
led out by his father. Gabrielle stares at Polonius, a bit
of anger in her eyes.

GABRIELLE

Stories about housework... cute...

At that moment, Xena walks up to Gabrielle.

XENA

I just talked to a man from Caramus.
There's a Cyclops stealing cattle from
the local farmers. We can be there by
tomorrow morning. I guess I don't have
to ask if you're interested.

She smiles, but Gabrielle is distracted. Then:

GABRIELLE

How far is it to Athens?

Off Xena's look, we:

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

3 INT. TAVERN - DAY

3

A little bit later, Xena is sitting opposite Gabrielle. Gabrielle leans on the table, intent on what she is saying to Xena.

GABRIELLE

I have always wanted the opportunity to study at the Academy. I might finally have my chance.

XENA

Are you sure it isn't just to show up this guy's father?

GABRIELLE

Okay, so he irks me a bit. But this is the Academy! Am I supposed to pass up my shot at a dream come true?

XENA

No one should pass up their dreams.
(then)
How long would you be there?

GABRIELLE

Maybe four... five years.

A long beat as they look at each other.

GABRIELLE

Maybe less... if I study real hard.
You'd hardly notice I was missing.

XENA

Even if I had an army around me... I'd still notice you were missing.
(then)
Do you want some company? At least as far as Athens?

GABRIELLE

I do. But I don't. I mean, there's that Cyclops problem in Caramus you have to take care of. And...
(pause)
...well, in case I don't get in...

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED:

3

XENA

(smiling)

You'll get in, Gabrielle. You're good at telling stories. And you're a good person.

(then)

I really only remember one story... told to me when I was young by a person I can't recall. It was about two orphans who decided to search the world for their families. The story was about all the adventures they had and how they kept searching. What I remember most was the ending...

Gabrielle picks up the story in her Bard style.

GABRIELLE

"And when the first man reached the end of his journey, he found himself at the beginning. The family he had sought had traveled the world with him. The only family he had ever known, and ever needed, was standing right beside him." I know the story.

A beat, then Xena stands and touches Gabrielle on the shoulder.

XENA

Thank you for being my family.

(then)

Now, go find your dream.

With that, Xena exits. Gabrielle sits there, tears in her eyes. Off this, we:

DISSOLVE TO:

CLIP - TWICKENHAM'S GREEK MOVIE

A warrior jumps over a rope to attack another warrior. He stops in mid-flight. The scene freezes and repeats, as if stuttering.

*
*

TWICKENHAM'S VOICE

He j-j-j-j... He j-j-jumps o-over the r-r-rope.

*
*

4 EXT. ACADEMY - DAY

4

A relatively inexpensive building. The scene outside of it, though, should resemble a scene from registration day at a University.

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED:

4

There is a table with four lines in front of it and kids walking about or standing in groups. From the arm gestures, we can tell a few of the kids are showing off their styles. At the moment, we are on Orion and TWICKENHAM. Twickenham is trying to finish his story, but an obvious impediment exists.

TWICKENHAM

I h-hope I d-d-d-don't d-do this when I g-g-et up to t-t-talk.

ORION

Just calm down. If it bothers other people, let it be their problem. Storytelling isn't diction, it's the story.

Twickenham thinks about this. Orion looks over to see Gabrielle. She walks up and looks at the crowd. With a big smile, he rushes over to her.

ORION

You made it! That's great!

GABRIELLE

I just thought I'd give it a look. A lot of people here.

ORION

Yeah. Some of the competition is really good. That guy over there... that's Euripides. He tells a great story, if you can stay awake long enough.

EURIPIDES is pontificating to some people who, lacking a watch, are looking at the sun to check the time.

ORION

And Stallonus... there's no way to fall asleep with his stories.

STALLONUS is physically acting out one of the great battle scenes to some other kids. He jabs and stabs with an imaginary sword. Then, in his zeal, mimes a pierced heart and a flip onto his back into the midst of death.

GABRIELLE

You know, we never got to proper introductions. My name is Gabrielle.

ORION

Gabrielle... I like the sound of it. I hate my name.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED: 2

4

ORION (cont'd)
I'm going to change it to something
dramatic. Something heroic. How's
this...? "Draco!"

GABRIELLE
Draco?

Orion nods.

GABRIELLE
No, no. Not Draco. He's a villain.
Believe me, I've met Draco. Draco had
an Army! When he came to my village...

Gabrielle goes into Bard mode as she spreads her arms and
tells a story (NOTE: Bard mode means an intense storytelling
style, not an exaggerated performance):

CLIP - "SINS OF THE PAST" - DRACO KILLS LIEUTENANT; TALKS
WITH XENA; BATTLE ON HEADS.

ON GABRIELLE

still in Bard mode, arms outstretched.

GABRIELLE
...he departed, never to stain the
grounds of my village with his presence
again!

A beat, the applause. We REVEAL:

A CROWD

has formed around Gabrielle while she was telling her story.
They are all applauding, some of the kids looking a bit
worried because of the competition. Orion has a big grin on
his face. Gabrielle bows. Everyone disperses until it is,
once again, Gabrielle and Orion.

ORION
So, Draco's out. I have to have
something.

GABRIELLE
(beat)
Orion. There's a heroic name.

ORION
Orion... I like it!

They both smile to each other, as we go to:

5 EXT. ACADEMY - REGISTRAR'S TABLE - DAY

5

Gabrielle is behind Euripides as the Registrar, named KELLOS (female), sits at the table. There are folded parchments on the table. Gabrielle's back is to us and it looks as if she is busy doing something.

KELLOS

And your name...?

EURIPIDES

An appellation does not illuminate the foreboding mysteries of one's ethereal essence.

KELLOS

Was your name in there some place?

EURIPIDES

(rolling "r"s)

Euripides.

She looks through the folded parchments until she finds one. Pulls it and opens it.

KELLOS

Yes. Euripides. You're lodging in the Hall of Zeus, room twelve.

EURIPIDES

Fortuitous. Twelve... the blessing of the Zodiac. It bodes well.

He walks away. Gabrielle turns and steps up, fumbling with the front of her blouse as if something irritates her there...

GABRIELLE

Gabrielle.

Kellos looks through the parchments. As expected, nothing.

GABRIELLE

It's got to be here.

Gabrielle lifts up the parchment on the end, causing them all to lift and flip, like playing cards. The parchments at the other end of the stack flip off the table. Kellos reaches to get them.

GABRIELLE

Oh! I'm sorry!

And, with Kellos leaning down, Gabrielle pulls a parchment from the front of her blouse and slips it into the stack. Kellos replaces the fallen parchments and looks again. She pulls the parchment Gabrielle just placed.

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED:

5

KELLOS

Here it is. Gabrielle. Well... this is very strange. They forgot to list your lodging.

GABRIELLE

They did? I specifically asked for the double bed with a view.

KELLOS

For the time being, you'll have to take the spare room in the Hall of Zeus.

GABRIELLE

All artists suffer for their art.

And she walks away with a grin.

CUT TO:

6 INT. PERFORMANCE HALL - DAY

6

The Academy performance hall. All the student hopefuls are gathered here. Standing at the podium is DOCENIUS, the head of the audition panel. Middle-aged and greying. Orion and Gabrielle sit together.

DOCENIUS

For the next few days, your lives will be given over to the Muse. At the end of that time, four will be chosen from this group to continue on.

(beat)

Great storytelling... it comes from our observation of life. How does one relate the mysteries and surprises of life as an intriguing story?

Gabrielle looks over and sees a SWARTHY MAN leaning against the wall. Suspicious, she starts to lean forward, as if going somewhere. Orion notices, and whispers to Gabrielle.

ORION

What's the matter?

GABRIELLE

It's nothing. I'm beginning to think like a friend of mine. I mean, what could happen here?

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED:

6

DOCENIUS

Ahem! Please? As I was saying, how
can we translate an event into a
riveting, engaging story? That is
the goal of the Bard!

And, with that, the Swarthy Man leaps to the stage, draws a
sword from under his cloak, and RUNS DOCENIUS THROUGH! As
Docenius falls, the Swarthy Man runs to the end of the stage
and out a window. Panic! The whole room reacts in shock.
Gabrielle reacts with the knowledge that she knew...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

7 INT. PERFORMANCE HALL - DAY

7

Mere moments from when we left off. Bedlam. Students standing, shouting, people all over the place. Gabrielle rushes up to the stage to help Docenius.

DOCENIUS

That's enough! Calm down! Everyone settle down!

Docenius stands up! Gabrielle is on the stage near him. The students stare in disbelief as he goes on.

DOCENIUS

What you just saw was an event. Now, how can you make it into a story?

GABRIELLE

But that was a cheat!

DOCENIUS

Excuse me, young lady?

GABRIELLE

That wasn't an event. It was a manipulation. The real story would have been if you were really dead. Because most people think of death as the end. When in fact... death can be the beginning of a wonderful tale!

And she goes into Bard mode to relate:

CLIP - "DEATH IN CHAINS" - TOXEUS "KILLED" BY XENA - HE SITS UP "UNDEAD."

GABRIELLE'S VOICE

And Death, mighty as she was, had been captured by Sisyphus! She was held in chains...

CLIP - CELESTA CAPTURED BY SISYPHUS

GABRIELLE'S VOICE

The inevitable battle between the living and the already dead. The goal: Death's freedom or capture. To the victor went eternity!

CLIP - XENA AND SISYPHUS BATTLE TOXEUS - DEATH FREED

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED:

7

GABRIELLE'S VOICE

And, as Death was freed...

BACK TO SCENE - PERFORMANCE HALL

as Gabrielle wraps up her story.

GABRIELLE

...so died the evil that was Toxeus.
And we learn not to fear death, but
accept it as a part of life.

(then)

See? There wasn't a moral to you
faking your death except that...

She stops and notices:

A STUNNED AUDIENCE

Slack-jawed students and teachers alike. A beat, then they
all applaud loudly. Docenius, however, is stiff. Gabrielle
curtsies in an embarrassed way and skitters off stage.
Orion greets her with a wide grin. But watching this is:

POLONIUS

and he doesn't look too happy.

CUT TO:

8 EXT. ACADEMY - DAY

8

Everyone is leaving. Gabrielle is getting congratulations
from them all. Orion walks with her.

ORION

You were great! Can we talk later
about storytelling?

GABRIELLE

(brightening)

I think I'd like that.

Polonius calls from a little way away.

POLONIUS

Son! Come here!

Orion reluctantly goes to his father.

POLONIUS

She's the competition. You remember
what I told you? Keep to yourself.

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED:

8

Gabrielle shakes her head as she watches them walk away.
Then Twickenham walks up.

TWICKENHAM

G-G-Gabrielle? C-can I talk to y-you?

GABRIELLE

Sure, Twickenham.

TWICKENHAM

C-could you help m-me with my
s-s-stutter?

GABRIELLE

Your stutter? Listen, Twickenham. If
it bothers other people, then it's
their problem, not yours. The point
isn't diction, it's to tell a good
story.

TWICKENHAM

That's what Orion said.

GABRIELLE

He did? Well... that's interesting.

CUT TO:

9 EXT. ACADEMY - NIGHT

9

To establish that night has, indeed, fallen:

CLIP - A TERRIFIC FIGHT AT NIGHT

From "Hercules Unchained," Steve Reeves is swinging his
chains and knocking people out. There are a lot of people
trying to kill each other; not much here except senseless
violence. We focus on Hercules swinging his chains, then
we freeze and HEAR:

*
*
*

GABRIELLE'S VOICE

Okay, but what's the moral?

And we go into:

10 INT. GABRIELLE'S ROOM - NIGHT

10

Stallonus swings a cloth as if it's a chain. He's acting
out the action. Twickenham, Euripides and Gabrielle watch.

*
*

(CONTINUED)

10 CONTINUED:

10

STALLONUS

Moral? Well... the moral is that Actilius is going to kill all the bad guys! What, that's not enough?

GABRIELLE

It's a little... empty. Not that it wasn't exciting! Whew, I mean, you had me going when he tore the chains out of the wall. But, when I tell a story, I like to have a nice ending. You know... sap up the wrap up.

*
*

EURIPIDES

Even if you twist the Muse's melodious song of truth into a deceptive Siren's call?

GABRIELLE

Do you always talk like that?

TWICKENHAM

I-I t-told him y-you said y-you knew X-Xena. H-he doesn't b-believe you.

Euripides pulls himself up to his full 5'3" height.

EURIPIDES

There are stories of the Warrior Princess that are so cold as to chill the heart. I relate such a tale as told to me by a witness to the woe and suffering.

*

And we go into a:

CLIP - FROM HERC/XENA SHOW - XENA SEDUCING IOLAUS; XENA PLANNING TO USE IOLAUS TO KILL HERC.

*

*

BACK TO SCENE - GABRIELLE'S ROOM

EURIPIDES

That is the story of the killer known as Xena!

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*
*

Euripides is done. A beat, then Stallonus leaps forward.

STALLONUS

You know what I heard about her?

CLIPS - XENA ACTION

(CONTINUED)

10 CONTINUED: 2

10

Stallonus' story is quick. As is his style, this is all action; hacking; slashing; kicking; etc. When we come out of it:

BACK TO SCENE - GABRIELLE'S ROOM

Stallonus is, once again; in a battle position as if he has just stabbed someone. As he settles, Gabrielle steps forward.

GABRIELLE

Okay. I can't argue with all that. It's true. But it's only half the story...

(Bard mode)

Inside of us all is a yearning to do good... be good... and it was the same with the Warrior Princess...

CLIP - XENA/HERC - XENA SAVES THE BABY

GABRIELLE'S VOICE

The child should have meant nothing... but it was the beginning for Xena...

CLIP - XENA RELUCTANT TO ATTACK VILLAGERS

GABRIELLE'S VOICE

But the past is a harsh and unwilling mistress to change. Her own men put her through a Gauntlet of Death!

CLIP - THE GAUNTLET SCENE

GABRIELLE'S VOICE

But, now that good had taken root, its will to survive was too great. Her destiny now was to fight for the innocent. And that's what she's done.

CLIP - XENA FIGHTING VILLAINS

BACK TO SCENE - GABRIELLE'S ROOM

Now, the room is filled with students who have drifted in.

(CONTINUED)

10 CONTINUED: 3

10

GABRIELLE

Now. If that's enough discussion about
my friend, I'd like to get some sleep.

They all get up and start to go, disappointed there won't be
an encore. Euripides turns to say something, but Gabrielle
holds up a finger. Euripides nods and exits. A beat, then:

GABRIELLE

I wonder what adventure Xena's into
now?

We hold a beat on her, then she moves to her bed.

CUT TO:

11 EXT. NEAR ACADEMY - DAY

11

Orion and Gabrielle. Orion is staring at Gabrielle as he
tells his story.

ORION

And the mightiest sword could not
cleave the metal of righteousness. He
went on... to find love and passion
with the wife he knew so well, and yet
knew not.

(then)

How was that?

GABRIELLE

I couldn't see it. I'm sorry, but I
couldn't see anything.

ORION

It used to be so easy! Why can't I do
it anymore? I've been telling stories
since I was five.

GABRIELLE

Why do you stare at me when you tell
your story?

ORION

So I can judge your reaction. My dad
wants me to be able to adjust my story
if I see the slightest hint of boredom
or distraction.

(then)

When I was little, I didn't look at
anybody. I used to close my eyes and
try to actually see the story take
place.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED:

11

ORION (cont'd)

I didn't care whether the audience
liked my story. Only whether I did.

GABRIELLE

If you don't like it, nobody else will.

ORION

I guess. My dad says I can like it
after I'm in the Academy. First
things first. He's right, of course.

GABRIELLE

He is? Why do you say that?

ORION

My dad never had a lot when he was
growing up. He was born a carpenter
into a carpenter's family. He really
is good at it. He can work wood like
other people... well, like you work
words. When he would come home and
rest, I used to tell him my stories. I
think he liked that.

(beat)

He means well. He just wants me to
have better than him.

GABRIELLE

As a Bard?

ORION

Bards can make good money. And... as
good as he was at woodworking, I don't
think he ever really loved it. The
idea that his son might grow up to do
something he loves means a lot to him.

GABRIELLE

Even if the son has to be miserable to
get there?

Orion doesn't answer. At that moment, Kellos walks up.

KELLOS

Gabrielle. We need to speak to you.

Off their questioning look:

CUT TO:

12 INT. PERFORMANCE HALL - DAY

12

Gabrielle stands before Kellos and Docenius who are seated with stern looks on their faces.

DOCENIUS

I'm afraid it has come to our attention
that you are not supposed to be here.

GABRIELLE

(weakly)

But... I have a room.

DOCENIUS

I didn't say you weren't clever.
Polonius.

Polonius steps forward. He doesn't even look at Gabrielle.

POLONIUS

My son and I ran into this young lady
in a tavern. She didn't know about the
Academy until my son told her.

KELLOS

You couldn't have been registered at
that time. And my records don't show a
"Gabrielle" anywhere.

DOCENIUS

Pack up your things and leave. This
meeting is closed.

And they all rise and exit. Polonius finally gives one look
to Gabrielle... then drops his eyes and exits, leaving
Gabrielle alone.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

13 INT. GABRIELLE'S ROOM - NIGHT

13

Gabrielle is packing to leave. Orion, Twickenham, Stallonus and Euripides sit around watching her. They look sad. Gabrielle looks up at them.

GABRIELLE

Hey, what's with the long faces? It's not the end of the world. I got a place to go.

Euripides leaps to his feet.

EURIPIDES

Oh, bravery comes forth from your valiant heart like sap from a wounded oak.

GABRIELLE

Thanks, Euripides. That's sweet. I think.

ORION

I can't believe my father did this. I'm so sorry, Gabrielle.

GABRIELLE

Orion, it's not your fault.

TWICKENHAM

G-g-good-b-b-byes a-a-a --

EURIPIDES

What Twickenham is trying to say is that separation tears the heart's core like the fearsome blade of Ajax tore the ligaments of --

TWICKENHAM

No! I'm s-s-saying g-g-good-b-byes are h-h-hard.

GABRIELLE

Yeah, they are. And we were just getting to know each other. It seems like that happens a lot to me.

STALLONUS

What do you mean?

GABRIELLE

Well, like when I met Hercules' best friend, Iolaus.

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED:

13

CLIP - "PROMETHEUS" - GABRIELLE MEETING IOLAUS

GABRIELLE'S VOICE
I liked him right away. I didn't know
if I'd ever see him again, but he
showed up at just the right time.

CLIP - "PROMETHEUS" - XENA AND GABRIELLE IN BARN.
HERCULES AND IOLAUS SHOW UP, FIGHT WITH HERA'S WARRIORS

GABRIELLE'S VOICE
It turns out we had a lot in common.

CLIP - "PROMETHEUS" - IOLAUS AND GABRIELLE WALK AND TALK

GABRIELLE'S VOICE
When he was hurt we really opened up to
each other.

CLIP - "PROMETHEUS" - GABRIELLE TELLING IOLAUS THE STORY
IN THE TUNNEL

GABRIELLE'S VOICE
And then we had to say good-bye.

CLIP - "PROMETHEUS" - GABRIELLE AND IOLAUS SAYING GOOD-BYE
RESUME SCENE - GABRIELLE'S ROOM

We come out of the clip to find everyone staring at
Gabrielle. The absurdity of her not being able to compete
is even clearer now.

GABRIELLE
Anyway, it's time for me to say it
again.

TWICKENHAM
W-w-wait.

He signals the others to come with him. They step out of
the room and discuss something together. Gabrielle looks
puzzled. After a moment, they all file in.

GABRIELLE
What?

EURIPIDES
Your farewell is not reciprocated. The
morning dew must not touch the
curvature of your fleeing soles. Our
revery has brought us --

STALLONUS
Stay through tomorrow's competition.

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED: 2

13

ORION

Please.

As a confused Gabrielle studies their faces, we:

CUT TO:

14 INT. PERFORMANCE HALL - DAY

14

Twickenham, Orion, Stallonus and Euripides sit in the hall with the other contestants. Gabrielle stands at the back of the hall. Polonius sits at the rear of the auditorium. Docenius enters with GASTACIUS, a man in his late fifties who carries the wisdom of the ages.

DOCENIUS

(to the competitors)

For today's round of competition we're honored to have acting as senior judge, the great Bard, Gastacius.

Gastacius gives the competitors a nod. He takes a seat in the front row.

DOCENIUS

Twickenham... the stage, please.

Twickenham walks up to the stage. He pauses.

DOCENIUS

Twickenham. Is there a problem?

Twickenham looks to his friends. They all nod. Gabrielle is confused.

TWICKENHAM

N-n-n-n-n-n-n-no!

Twickenham folds his arms in a defiant gesture.

TWICKENHAM

(no stuttering)

I won't do it! None of us are performing unless Gabrielle is allowed to compete.

His friends stare; no stutter!

DOCENIUS

Gabrielle cheated her way into the competition. She's been disqualified.

Twickenham doesn't budge.

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED:

14

DOCENIUS

You do know you can be disqualified for this, too.

Euripides stands up.

EURIPIDES

Then we shall all join the army of the dispossessed. The Muses' call shall not play lord over my soul's higher self.

GABRIELLE

(shocked)

What are you doing?

ORION

(standing)

None of us will compete unless Gabrielle is reinstated.

STALLONUS

(standing)

Believe it. We mean business.

ON GABRIELLE

She steps forward. Gastacius eyes her with great interest.

GABRIELLE

(to the competitors)

You can't do this. Not for me!

(to Docenius)

They don't mean it. Let me talk to them.

An enraged Docenius is about to say something when Gastacius taps him on the arm. Docenius leans over and Gastacius whispers something into his ear.

DOCENIUS

Gastacius says he'd like to see the girl perform.

(to Gabrielle)

When you're ready.

Gabrielle walks on stage and, after throwing a smile at Orion, begins her story.

GABRIELLE

I'm a little on the spot. I wasn't expecting this. Then again, I wasn't expecting to find a baby in a stream, but...

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED: 2

14

CLIP - "CRADLE OF HOPE" - GABRIELLE AND XENA DISCOVERING
THE BABY

GABRIELLE'S VOICE

But returning the baby to it's home
wasn't going to be that easy.

CLIP - "CRADLE OF HOPE" - IN THE TAVERN OF THE
FIRE-BREATHING FIGHT

GABRIELLE'S VOICE

The child was quite courageous in the
face of danger.

CLIP - "CRADLE OF HOPE" - THE BABY FIGHT

GABRIELLE'S VOICE

In the end, goodness won out and the
child landed in safe hands.

CLIP - "CRADLE OF HOPE" - PANDORA HOLDING THE BABY.

RESUME SCENE - PERFORMING HALL

We come out of the clip onto Gastacius' solemn face.
Docenius looks at him for his opinion. Gastacius stands and
looks at our little group with a sound face.

GASTACIUS

What you have done here is madness.

(then; to Docenius)

It's madness that this young woman was
ever left out of this competition. She
must be allowed in. Art will not take
second place to rules and regulations.

As the competitors roar their approval and Polonius sizzles,
we:

CUT TO:

15 INT. BACKSTAGE AREA - DAY

15

Gabrielle and the other competitors watch Orion finish his
performance.

ORION

And so Atlas holds on his mighty
shoulders the earth for all eternity.

He leaves the stage and walks up to Gabrielle. Polonius can
be seen approaching in the b.g.

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED:

15

GABRIELLE

That was good.

ORION

(unconvinced)

Was it really?

POLONIUS

No. It was terrible.

(getting in Orion's face)

Start at the beginning. Right now.

ORION

(sigh)

I sing of Atlas, greatest of Titans --

He throws a look at Gabrielle. Polonius taps him hard on the forehead.

POLONIUS

What did I tell you? Keep your eyes on me. Start again.

ORION

I sing of Atlas, the greatest Titan.

POLONIUS

Greatest of Titans. Come on.

(taps him again on the forehead)

Focus, focus. Read your audience and get the words right.

GABRIELLE

He'd do better if you'd just let him be himself.

POLONIUS

Don't listen to her. She wants you to lose. Now do it again.

ORION

I sing of Atlas, the greatest of Titans.

POLONIUS

(grabbing him roughly alongside his head)

This isn't a game! Come on! Give me a performance!

ORION

(breaks away)

Stop it.

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED: 2

15

He runs away. Polonius glares at Gabrielle and follows him.

CUT TO:

CLIP OF GLORIOUSLY BAD AND BLOODY ACTION.

as a warrior wrestles with a cheesy monster:

* *

16 INT. GABRIELLE'S ROOM - DAY

16

Stallonus is wrestling with thin air. At one point he swings around so hard, he loses his balance and does a header. Gabrielle, Euripides and Twickenham run for cover as Stallonus crashes to the ground.

*
*
*
*

GABRIELLE
I think if you had a little more
character stuff and a little less
action you might actually live through
the competition.

There's a knock on the door. Gabrielle opens the door. A seething Polonius stands outside.

POLONIUS
You won.

GABRIELLE
What are you talking about?

POLONIUS
Orion has quit the competition and left
for home. I hope you're happy with
yourself.

Off Gabrielle's troubled look:

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

17 EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

17

A depressed Orion wanders aimlessly down the road. Gabrielle comes running around a turn in the road and catches up to Orion.

GABRIELLE

Orion!

ORION

Leave me alone.

GABRIELLE

Orion. You can't give up.

ORION

Didn't you tell me if it isn't fun, don't do it? It's not fun for me anymore.

GABRIELLE

Then make it fun again.

ORION

That's easy for you to say. It's been so long since I've told a story my way, I don't know if I can. Or if my father would let me.

GABRIELLE

Your father loves you. You said it yourself. He wants the best for you. He's just a little confused on how to do it. And I'll bet he misses the good stories you used to tell just as much as you do.

Orion stops and thinks. Then:

ORION

Okay. How?

GABRIELLE

Stop focusing on the destination. The journey is the fun part.

ORION

What do you mean?

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED:

17

GABRIELLE

It's what I learned from travelling with Xena. Every day is a new adventure, a new challenge. You have to look forward to that. Your father has you thinking only of winning, but you'll never get there unless you enjoy the process. You understand?

On Orion's thoughtful look, we:

CUT TO:

18 EXT. ACADEMY - DAY

18

Polonius comes out carrying a satchel and starts going down the road. He stops when he sees:

ORION in the road ahead. Orion approaches his father. We can actually see a glint of happiness on his father's face.

ORION

I'm going to compete in the finals.
But I want to do it my way and in my own style.

POLONIUS

(softening)

Son... I don't want to see you lose.

ORION

If that happens, fine. But I'm going to enjoy every second of my loss. You mean well, Father, but you're too worried about the destination.

POLONIUS

Am I supposed to understand any of this?

ORION

It'd be nice if you could. But if you don't, I'm not gonna let that stop me from being myself.

He walks toward the Academy.

POLONIUS

Orion, listen.

Orion wheels around and points a forceful finger at Polonius.

(CONTINUED)

18 CONTINUED:

18

ORION

I'm gonna do it my way, Father, and
that's final.

Orion enters the Academy, leaving a thoughtful Polonius
behind.

CUT TO:

19 INT. PERFORMANCE HALL - DAY

19

Gabrielle steps out onto the stage. This is the final
competition.

GABRIELLE

This is the story of two friends. They
met each other in the hardest of
times.

CLIP - FROM THE TEASER OF "SINS OF THE PAST"

GABRIELLE'S VOICE

They learned how to care for each
other.

CLIP - "SINS OF THE PAST" - MAUSOLEUM SCENE

GABRIELLE'S VOICE

Soon, they became a great team.

CLIP - "CHARIOTS OF WAR" - THE ENTIRE CHARIOT RACE

GABRIELLE'S VOICE

And together they learned life's
mysteries.

CLIP - "DREAMWORKER" - THE TAG

We come out of the clip onto:

GABRIELLE. She's obviously moved.

ON THE JUDGES

They're blown away by her performance.

20 INT. BACKSTAGE AREA - DAY

20

The other competitors congratulate Gabrielle on her
performance.

TWICKENHAM

G-g-good job.

(CONTINUED)

20 CONTINUED:

20

STALLONUS
That was fantastic.

EURIPIDES
The cadence of your words played havoc
with the fallen visage of my yearning
spirit.
(off Gabrielle's look)
I liked it a lot.

GABRIELLE
Thanks.

She notices Orion pacing nervously, getting ready for his
performance. She walks up to him.

ORION
You did great.

GABRIELLE
You will, too. Remember what you told
me? You used to close your eyes and
see the story come to life. See it
again, Orion.

ORION
(smiling)
I intend to.

He nods and walks out onto:

21 INT. PERFORMANCE HALL - STAGE - DAY

21

Orion takes stage center. He looks out at the audience and
then throws a glance at Gabrielle, who gives him an
encouraging nod. Orion throws another look at the audience
and then closes his eyes.

ORION
I sing of Spartacus, rebel gladiator.
ON GABRIELLE AND EURIPIDES
as they watch from backstage.

EURIPIDES
Has he shielded his orbs?

GABRIELLE
Yep.

ON ORION
as he tells his tale with his eyes closed.

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED:

21

CLIP - "SPARTACUS" - (TO BE CHOSEN)

INTERCUT WITH:

GABRIELLE

looking on proudly.

CUT TO:

22 EXT. ACADEMY - DAY

22

Gabrielle and Orion come out of the Academy. She's carrying her satchel.

ORION

I wish you were going to stay.

GABRIELLE

It wasn't meant to be.

(extending her hand)

Congratulations. See if you can get Euripides to relax a little.

ORION

(laughs)

I'll do what I can. Stallonus and Twickenham don't seem too disappointed.

GABRIELLE

Stallonus is more suited for the Olympics. But Twickenham... I was so glad to see him get in. Even Gastacius said it; "It's story, not diction."

A beat, then Orion leans forward and kisses Gabrielle gently on the cheek.

ORION

Gabrielle, thanks. You taught me how to be myself. I'll never forget it.

GABRIELLE

(hugs him)

Good-bye...

(then)

Say... what is your real name? In case you get all famous and that.

ORION

(sigh)

Homer. But Gastacius wants to call me "The Blind Bard" because I close my eyes.

(CONTINUED)

22 CONTINUED:

22

GABRIELLE
Homer? Homer... I like that.
Good-bye, Homer.

ORION
Good-bye, Gabrielle.

She walks away. Orion watches her leave. He turns as Polonius walks up to him.

POLONIUS
Son... are you happy?

ORION
Yes, Dad. Thanks for asking. Thanks
for caring.

They both smile at each other.

CUT TO:

23 EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

23

Xena walks along, leading her horse. Gabrielle steps out of some bushes and walks along beside her as if nothing's happened. Xena throws her a surprised look.

XENA
Well, who won?

GABRIELLE
I did.

XENA
Then what are you doing here?

GABRIELLE
I know this is going to sound stupid
and rash, but... I realized that while
they're telling adventures you and I
can be living them.

XENA
Well, it's good to have you back.

The sound of voices draws their attention to a group of TWENTY RUFFIANS who appear in the road ahead. They see Gabrielle and Xena and draw their weapons. Xena draws her sword and gets ready for action. Gabrielle grins.

GABRIELLE
This is gonna make a great story.

FADE OUT.

THE END