



"ONE AGAINST AN ARMY"

**Story by
Gene O'Neill & Noreen Tobin**

**SEASON 3
EPISODE #13**

Prod. #V0413

XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS

"One Against An Army"

Written by
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Directed by
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Revised Pages: 34

Executive Producers

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SHOOTING DRAFT
Nov. 07, 1997
Rev. Nov. 07, 1997 - Pink
Rev. Nov. 19, 1997 - Blue
Rev. Nov. 21, 1997 - Yellow

Prod. #V0413

XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS

"One Against An Army"

CAST LIST

XENA
GABRIELLE

PHIDDIPIDES
DORIAN

Referred to in Dialog:

TRIPOLIS

(TRIP-a-liss)

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XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS

"One Against An Army"

SET LIST

INTERIORS:

LONG HOUSE
LONG HOUSE LOFT
PHYSICIAN'S HUT

EXTERIORS:

CLEARING IN WOODS
ROAD #1 - NEAR A WELL
- FURTHER DOWN THE ROAD
ROAD TO ATHENS
ROAD #2
PLAINS
SHALLOW STREAM
BLUFF
BASE OF BLUFF
VILLAGE OF TRIPOLIS
PHYSICIAN'S HUT
LONG HOUSE
LONG HOUSE ROOF
HILL NEAR LONG HOUSE

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XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS

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CHRONOLOGY

DAY 1
NIGHT 1

SCENES # 1 - 17
SCENES #18 - 22
#24 - 25

DAY 2

SCENES #26 - 39

DAY 3 (DREAM)

SCENE #23

XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS

"One Against An Army"

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 EXT. CLEARING IN THE WOODS - DAY - CLOSE ON GABRIELLE

1

She does some deep breathing exercises to relax. Her face then takes on a steely resolve. She lets rip a Xena-like WAR CRY and goes tearing full out towards...

HER STAFF

It's braced horizontally between two trees like a parallel bar. She doesn't hesitate. Bounding off a rock, she grabs the staff and somersaults over it. She lands and does a Kerri Strug. Ta-da!

Xena stands watching, bemused.

XENA

So now can we head to Thessaly, before you hurt yourself?

GABRIELLE

No, wait. See, I've worked out the mechanics. Speed, trajectory, and finally, the arc of the spin.

XENA

Good. What's the point?

GABRIELLE

Your flip. Basically, I've broken it down into its relatively simple steps.

XENA

Really? Which foot do I start on?

GABRIELLE

(a half beat)

Don't confuse me. This time, no staff. Watch.

She removes it. Xena places a hand on Gabrielle's arm.

XENA

Gabrielle, before I ever tried the flip without the staff, I did 300 attempts with it.

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED:

1

GABRIELLE
Slow learner, eh? I had that problem
with basket weaving.

XENA
It's the right foot. But I'd rather
you didn't.

GABRIELLE
If I fail, it's not going to kill me,
is it? Let me do this.

Xena acquiesces. Gabrielle does the WHOOP, takes a running
start, hits the rock, and vaults high into the air.

XENA
(to herself)
Wrong foot.

Gabrielle comes down with a thud. WHOMP, flat on her back.
Xena winces.

XENA
Well, you had nice trajectory.

GABRIELLE
(hoarse)
...Thanks.

CUT TO:

2 EXT. ROAD #1 - NEAR A WELL - DAY

2

Gabrielle walks determinedly along, covering as best she
can that she's obviously limping. Xena follows with Argo
trailing behind her.

XENA
At least get on Argo.

GABRIELLE
I'm telling you, my ankle's fine.

XENA
C'mon, give me a look at it. Don't
let pride get in the way. You tried
something and you failed. That
happens.

GABRIELLE
What pride? It's nothing serious.

Before Gabrielle can object, Xena quickly bends down and
touches her ankle with one finger.

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED:

2

Gabrielle HOWLS in anguish and drops to the ground, writhing in pain.

XENA

Good thing it's not serious.

Xena starts tugging at Gabrielle's boot.

GABRIELLE

Ow! I mean, that doesn't hurt.

Xena can't get the boot off.

XENA

Already too swollen.

GABRIELLE

I'll walk it off.

Gabrielle gets up and starts to limp off. Xena follows.

XENA

I'm not going to say you were wrong to try the flip...

GABRIELLE

You'll work it in.

XENA

...but don't take any more unnecessary chances.

Gabrielle waves a hand and continues walking. Suddenly, Xena stops and pulls her chakram.

XENA

Gabrielle, look out! Hit the dirt!

Gabrielle doesn't even glance around. Instinctively, she dives flat out. As she is in mid-air, Xena flings her chakram right at Gabrielle. It catches her boot and slices it cleanly down the side.

GABRIELLE

lies on the ground, looking at the shredded leather.

GABRIELLE

Why did you do that?

XENA

A theory I want to try for sprains.
Elevation and ice cold water.

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED: 2

2

GABRIELLE

But I'm not even thirsty. And now you
owe me a really nice pair of boots.

As Xena helps her over to the well, a runner approaches,
PHIDDIPIDES. He stops, breathing heavily.

PHIDDIPIDES

(between gasps)

Run for your lives...

XENA

What's going on?

PHIDDIPIDES

A huge army... landed two nights ago in
a fleet of tall ships... Foreign.
Laid waste to our troops at Marathon...
They're headed this way... a force
march for Athens.

Gabrielle looks at Xena who pulls up the well bucket full of
water.

XENA

Tall ships. Three masts?

PHIDDIPIDES

Yes.

XENA

Double row of oarsmen?

PHIDDIPIDES

That's right.

*

A grave look comes over Xena.

XENA

Persians.

Xena offers Phiddipides a drink.

GABRIELLE

You fought these guys before?

XENA

Gabrielle, over that mountain is the
most ruthless army ever to pick up
weapons. If they reach Athens, Greece
is lost.

GABRIELLE

What are we going to do?

(CONTINUED)

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2 CONTINUED: 3

2

XENA

Stop 'em.

CUT TO:

3 EXT. PLAINS - DAY - STOCK FOOTAGE FROM "SPARTACUS"

3

A LONG SHOT of the winding PERSIAN ARMY on the move.
A frightening swarm.

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

4 EXT. ROAD #1 - DAY

4

Xena wraps Gabrielle's ankle while Phiddipides thirstily drinks another ladle of water.

GABRIELLE

The Spartans were fighting at Marathon along side the other Greeks? That's a first.

PHIDDIPIDES

Unfortunately, they were slaughtered. They fought bravely but they were so outnumbered, they never had a chance.

XENA

The Persians will move through the land like man-eating locusts. We have to move quickly.

*

Xena helps Gabrielle onto Argo.

PHIDDIPIDES

I've never seen such an attack. The sky was so thick with arrows, you couldn't see the sun.

XENA

Then we'll have to fight in the shade. Somebody'd better warn the Athenians. Phiddipides, can you run to Athens and tell them about Marathon?

PHIDDIPIDES

Yes.

GABRIELLE

That's over twenty-six miles.

PHIDDIPIDES

I can do it.

XENA

Good. Pace yourself. A run like that could kill you. Meanwhile, I'll try and slow them down.

Phiddipides runs off as Xena props up Gabrielle's bandaged foot on the saddle, "elevating" it.

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED:

4

GABRIELLE

Slowing down an army. Isn't that
something you practice about 300 times
before you try it?

Xena gives Gabrielle a grim look.

XENA

(re: ankle)

Keep this elevated.

She leads Argo off.

CUT TO:

5 EXT. ROAD TO ATHENS - DAY - STOCK FOOTAGE FROM "SPARTACUS"

5

The Persian army on the move, relentless. They do look
unstoppable.

CUT TO:

6 EXT. FURTHER DOWN ROAD #1 - DAY

6

Xena, her mind elsewhere, determinedly leads Gabrielle on
Argo.

GABRIELLE

Fine, say it. We'd move a lot faster
if I hadn't tried that.

XENA

(absently)

Tried what?

GABRIELLE

The flip.

XENA

(realizing)

No... The pass.

GABRIELLE

The pass?

XENA

The pass at Thermopylae. That's the
answer.

GABRIELLE

Of course it is. What's the question?

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED:

6

XENA

That's the shortest route from Marathon. The Persians will go through there, so it'll be a good place to stop them.

GABRIELLE

Two against an army?

XENA

No, an army against the landslide that we cause, sealing it off.

GABRIELLE

Oh! Great idea. But I'm slowing you down. Leave me and ride on ahead. Start your landslide, I'll wait here.

XENA

No, I expect Persian advance scouts ahead of the infantry. They'd find you.

GABRIELLE

This stupid ankle. Why did I try that flip?

XENA

If that's the worst thing that happens today, I'll be thrilled.

CUT TO:

7 EXT. SHALLOW STREAM - DAY

7

Xena and Gabrielle (on Argo) cross the stream, moving quickly.

GABRIELLE

What about that thing you did in China? That... power you had. You could destroy their whole army with that.

*
*
*
*
*

XENA

I wish I could still call it up. But that took a purity of essence that... Well, it's gone now.

*
*
*
*

GABRIELLE

Then I'm sure it's occurred to you that the landslide will only delay them.

*
*

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED:

7

A vigilant Xena continually scans the woods and road ahead.

XENA

You mean, the Persians will merely go
around the mountain and continue on to
Athens.

GABRIELLE

Well, the thought crossed my mind.

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED: 2

7

XENA

That's when we have them right where we want them.

GABRIELLE

(nods)

Ah! ...Where?

XENA

In Tripolis, a village on the eastern side of the pass, there's a secret armory I used to keep in the area. If we're lucky, the weapons are still there. We'll be ready for them.

*

GABRIELLE

We? As in you and me? The two of us?

XENA

You, me, and the Tripolis militia.

GABRIELLE

(relieved)

Oh, that "we."

DORIAN, a handsome soldier of about 30, in a torn and bloody uniform, drops from a tree brandishing a sword. He thrusts the tip of it at Xena, who calmly sizes him up.

DORIAN

Give up the horse, or the last thing you see will be your heart in my hand.

XENA

I don't give my heart to just anybody. You've been following us for the last half hour. All that time for this move?

He presses the sword at her throat.

DORIAN

Help her down, or I will.

Xena "gives up."

XENA

Okay, okay. You're obviously pressed for time.

She turns to go to Gabrielle, then quickly whirls and FLIPS over Dorian, lands behind him, and pulls her sword.

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED: 3

7

GABRIELLE
(to herself)
Right foot first.

As Dorian turns around, Xena quickly disarms him, flipping his blade out of his hand. A kick to the stomach sends him sprawling.

XENA
He's a Spartan by his clothes, unless
he stole them from some real warrior.

DORIAN
I am a Spartan. I fought at
Marathon. When my commander saw
we were losing, he sent me to find
a fallback position. Unfortunately,
my horse came up lame, and I had to
kill him.

GABRIELLE
(to Xena)
Don't get any ideas.

DORIAN
I wanted your horse to finish my
mission -- and get this treated.

He turns to reveal an ugly slash that goes from his left shoulder down to the lower right of his back.

GABRIELLE
That looks pretty bad.

Xena examines it.

XENA
It's only a flesh wound. I can dress
it.

Xena extends a hand and pulls him up.

XENA
Did you get that running from battle?

DORIAN
Spartans don't run.

XENA
I know. They fight to the death.

She picks up his sword.

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED: 3

7

XENA
Not a nick on it.
(tosses it to Gabrielle)
You're a deserter, aren't you?

DORIAN
No! I swear on my father's life...

XENA
So you're a coward and a liar.
Your father must be proud.

Dorian suddenly drops the charade.

DORIAN
(anguished)
All right... all right, I admit it...
I ran. I abandoned my people to
slaughter. I'm a disgrace to my
homeland.

GABRIELLE
Everyone feels fear.

XENA
But we don't all run. If we did,
there'd be no home left to run to.
Here's an opportunity to redeem
yourself. Join us.

DORIAN
Join you? Against that army. What
good can the three of us possibly do?

GABRIELLE
Xena has a plan to stop them.

DORIAN
You do?

XENA
Yeah. And you'll fit into it nicely.

CUT TO:

8 EXT. BLUFF - DAY

8

From above, a stealthy PERSIAN SOLDIER observes our trio
walking below. He crawls back to join FIVE OTHERS.

CUT TO:

9 EXT. BASE OF BLUFF - DAY

9

Xena leads Argo with Gabrielle astride. Dorian walks next to Gabrielle, his wound now bandaged.

GABRIELLE

What village in Sparta are you from, Dorian?

DORIAN

Mesoa. The most beautiful village in the Peloponese.

XENA

It's famous for that waterfall.
(to Gabrielle)
Seventy feet high.

DORIAN

Yes. I pray that I one day see that waterfall again, and my wife and son Zacharus. I wonder what he'll think of me when he discovers his father is a coward?

*

*

GABRIELLE

You can change. He doesn't have to know about the one time you failed.

DORIAN

But what if I "fail" again? Xena, you still haven't told me your plan to stop the Persians.

Xena suddenly stops, taking in something ahead.

XENA

(absently)
Haven't I?

She casually turns as Dorian walks forward, oblivious.

XENA

(whispers to Argo)
Take Gabrielle into the woods and stay there.

GABRIELLE

(low)
What? Did you see something?

XENA

A glint of sunlight on steel up ahead -- the advance party I've been expecting.

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED:

9

GABRIELLE

But I can still fight...

Xena pulls Dorian's sword from a sheath on Argo. With a look to Dorian:

XENA

(to Gabrielle)

Don't argue. I'll explain later.

(to Argo)

Go, girl.

As Argo gallops off, Xena tosses the weapon to a surprised Dorian.

XENA

Get ready for a fight, Spartan.

Dorian turns and sees the six Persian Soldiers jump down from the rocks up ahead. He freezes, apparently from fear. Xena runs to engage the Persians. She fires her chakram on the fly and takes out three Soldiers.

DORIAN

is still frozen like the Tin Woodsman.

ON GABRIELLE

reaching safety in the woods. She glances back and sees Dorian's dilemma. Concerned, she grabs on overhanging branch, pulls herself off Argo and drops herself to the ground, carefully avoiding putting pressure on her bad leg.

ON XENA

who takes out a Persian with a flying kick. Then she pulls out her sword and turns to face the two remaining.

GABRIELLE

reaches Dorian who's still "frozen."

GABRIELLE

Dorian!

ON XENA

fighting with the duo. They're very good.

ON A FELLED SOLDIER

The one who was kicked to the ground now rises and bolts.

ON GABRIELLE

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED: 2

9

GABRIELLE
Dorian, snap out of it. Either fight,
or take refuge in the woods.

She tries to grab onto him.

ON THE FLEEING PERSIAN

He halts, puts an arrow to his bow, and turns.

ON XENA

seeing this as she swordfights with the two Soldiers.

XENA
Gabrielle, look out!

ON GABRIELLE

who finally succeeds in pulling the dazed Dorian toward the woods.

ON THE ARROW

whistling toward them. The arrow THUDS into Gabrielle's shoulder.

XENA

quickly finishes off the two Soldiers.

XENA
Gabrielle!

CUT TO:

10 EXT. BASE OF BLUFF - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

10

Xena bends over Gabrielle, who sits with the arrow lodged in the back of her shoulder. Dorian hovers, mortified.

DORIAN
This was my fault... my fault.

Xena silences him with a look.

XENA
Do something useful. Build a fire.

He quickly moves to gather wood.

GABRIELLE
Don't worry, it's not that bad.

(CONTINUED)

10 CONTINUED:

10

XENA

This is gonna hurt. I can't give you
the pinch because it's too close to
your lung.

Gabrielle nods, grits her teeth. Xena pushes the arrow
until it protrudes out the other side. It does hurt, but
Gabrielle bites the bullet. Then Xena snaps off the back
half and pulls the tip end out through the front.

GABRIELLE

That was easy. Hardly felt a thing.

Xena holds the arrowhead under her nose and sniffs. Her
eyes betray her.

GABRIELLE

What is it, Xena?

XENA

Poison.

A beat.

*
*
*
*

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

11 EXT. ROAD #2 - DAY

11

A small fire now burns. Xena pulls out a flaming stick and blows on it. It glows red.

XENA

Ready?

GABRIELLE

Go ahead.

Xena thrusts it into her wound, cauterizing it. Gabrielle groans, but fights the pain. Dorian has a hard time watching this.

DORIAN

Will that get the poison out?

Xena rises and quickly goes through some nearby shrubbery. She picks up the odd leaf, a root, a piece of bark, etc.

XENA

No, it's already started moving through her body.

As Xena moves off to get a bowl, Dorian hovers over the stricken Gabrielle.

DORIAN

If only I had taken that arrow.
Why did you come back for me?

GABRIELLE

I wanted you to see that waterfall
in Mesoa again. And your little boy
Zacharus.

Dorian nods gratefully, then goes to Xena who pours water into the bowl with some crushed leaves.

DORIAN

I'm sorry I froze. Guess I came up
short again. Can we still execute your
plan?

XENA

Don't worry about my plan.

GABRIELLE

Dorian's right to be concerned, Xena.
Shouldn't you leave me and go on?

*

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED:

11

*

Xena applies the field poultice.

XENA

Their advance scouts travel a day
ahead of the main force, so we still
have time.

*

GABRIELLE

How bad is this poison? Be honest with
me, Xena.

XENA

(confident)

It didn't hit a major artery. This
poultice will delay the effect until
we get to Tripolis and treat it with
serum. By tomorrow, you'll be trying
flips again... with the staff.

CUT TO:

12 EXT. ROAD #2 - DAY

12

Xena walks along with Dorian. Gabrielle rides on Argo
behind them.

DORIAN

If she dies...

XENA

She won't.

DORIAN

...I'm sure you'll hate me for freezing
up like that. You'll blame me for the
rest of your life.

XENA

How I feel about you doesn't matter.
You're the one who has to live with
yourself. After today, I'll never see
you again, one way or the other.

DORIAN

But with Gabrielle hurt, doesn't this
change your plans?

XENA

Yeah, it does. And now I'm counting
on you more than ever to come through.

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED:

12

She fixes him with a steely gaze. Dorian blinks, not sure that he's up to it. They stop walking. Argo and Gabrielle catch up.

XENA
With her injury, we'll move slower.
Dorian, you'll have to run on ahead
to Tripolis.

DORIAN
Anything to help.

GABRIELLE
But first, don't we need to...?

XENA
Gabrielle, try and stay still.
(to Dorian)
Tell the head of the militia there to
get his men ready to meet me. There's
been a landslide at the pass at
Thermopylae.

GABRIELLE
(confused)
Xena?

Xena silences her with a look.

DORIAN
The pass is blocked? Then there's
hope. You didn't tell me that.

XENA
Better get moving. It's risky.
There may be more Persian scouts ahead.

Dorian gratefully grabs Xena's hand with both of his.

DORIAN
Thanks for giving me another chance.
I'll see you later -- with help.

He clasps Gabrielle's hand.

DORIAN
This time no amount of fear will keep
me from doing my duty.

GABRIELLE
Make your son proud. And be careful.

Dorian nods, emboldened, and runs off.

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED: 2

12

GABRIELLE
Incredible. You turned him around.
But one thing I don't understand.
There is no landslide at the pass.

XENA
And there's no waterfall at Mesoa.

GABRIELLE
...What?

XENA
Spartans from the age of eight carry a
wooden stake, constantly squeezing it
to harden both of their hands. When I
helped him up this morning, I noticed
he had only a few callouses on his
sword hand. He's no Spartan.

*
*

GABRIELLE
Then where's he from?

XENA
Persia. He's a spy.

GABRIELLE
But his wound?

XENA
One of his fellow Persians gave him
that to make his story more convincing.
Now he's rushing back to tell them
there's been a landslide.

She helps Gabrielle up.

GABRIELLE
So we don't even have to start one.
The army will be diverted anyway.

XENA
Right into us and the militia. Now,
let's go on to Tripolis and get you
treated.

CUT TO:

13 EXT. VILLAGE OF TRIPOLIS - DAY

13

Or what's left of it. Razed. Only a few huts are not
demolished.

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED:

13

GABRIELLE
Everyone's fled.

Approaching on Argo, Gabrielle looks fearfully at Xena, wondering if she has a plan B, and COUGHS WEAKLY. Xena notes this as her eyes scan the wreckage, fervently searching.

XENA
The militia razed their own town before they left. They didn't want to leave anything behind for the Persians.
(sees something)
There!

XENA'S POV:

A hut with the sign of an ASCLEPIUS on the door.

GABRIELLE
(hopeful)
The physician's hut.

Xena sprints for it.

CUT TO:

14 INT. PHYSICIAN'S HUT - DAY

14

Xena rushes in and is dismayed to find total disarray. Chairs and tables are overturned. Bottles, jars, and vials smashed -- but there are a few still remaining. She races about looking over the various whole decanters, frantically rejecting the "wrong" ones. Xena tears open a cabinet.

HER POV:

There it is! The serum -- in a whole decanter! She reaches in for it.

CUT TO:

15 EXT. PHYSICIAN'S HUT - DAY

15

Gabrielle approaches slowly, using her staff as a crutch, breathless in anticipation.

Xena comes slowly out. In her hands, the large decanter. But before Gabrielle can react, Xena lifts the neck. It comes away in her hands, one giant, jagged shard atop a jagged base. Empty.

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED:

15

GABRIELLE

No serum... No militia... They say bad things come in threes. How about your Armory?

XENA

We're not staying. We're going on to Thessaly after all. They'll have medicine there. We'll take back roads.

GABRIELLE

But your plan... Dorian will have told the Persians about Thermopylae, and they'll be heading this way. You promised to slow them down, so let's take care of that first.

XENA

No. First the serum. We can probably make it back here in time to --

GABRIELLE

You know we can't make it back here in time to slow down the Persians. If we can't do some damage to them while the Athenians are moving up, then Athens will fall... and Amphipolis and Poteidaia. How long can I last?

XENA

You have a day or so. Maybe.

GABRIELLE

Then we stand and fight now. Tomorrow we go to Thessaly. It's a chance we have to take.

XENA

(suddenly alert)

Horses... Persian cavalry. An advance patrol.

She grabs Gabrielle and takes her into the Long House.

CUT TO:

16 EXT. VILLAGE OF TRIPOLIS - DAY

16

TWENTY PERSIAN HORSEMEN ride toward the village. They halt, then break up into separate patrols.

CUT TO:

17 INT. LONG HOUSE - DAY

17

Sparsely furnished. Xena drags Gabrielle in and sets her on a makeshift bed. This place looks damaged, but not destroyed. Quickly, Xena goes to the few windows and blocks them. She looks through a crack in one of the windows. She ducks down as the SOUND of HOOVES passes outside.

GABRIELLE

The rest of the army must be really close... aren't we going to get to the armory?

XENA

We just did.

And, with that, Xena reaches down and PULLS UP A FLOORBOARD. Underneath is a large space with crates and bundles. Xena pulls out a large spear, inspects it.

XENA

Not too shabby for three years. I hid them here in case I ever had another army. I never thought I'd need them again.

GABRIELLE

I didn't know I qualified as an army.

She smiles, then COUGHS.

XENA

Save your strength. The advance cavalry means they're camped nearby. Things are going to get pretty hot tomorrow morning.

Xena places the spear carefully back into it's hiding place, then goes to Gabrielle.

GABRIELLE

Xena... In case the poison starts spreading faster, I do have a last request.

XENA

(a little sharp)

You can tell me about it later. Years from now. When we're old and gray.

Xena unwraps the bandage.

GABRIELLE

You have to promise me something. After you've slowed down the Persians, you'll save yourself. Don't let me be a burden to you.

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED:

17

XENA
I can't promise that.

GABRIELLE
We're all going to die eventually.
I accept that.

XENA
But not today.

Gabrielle looks at her, on the verge of tears, but holds them back. She swallows, a lump in her throat, and nods "yes."

XENA
I know you're scared, Gabrielle.
Lie still and try to rest.

CUT TO:

18 EXT. LONG HOUSE - NIGHT
Establishing.

18

19 EXT. HILL NEAR LONG HOUSE - NIGHT

19

A grim Xena walks up the hill and looks down on the valley below.

HER POV: STOCK FOOTAGE FROM "SPARTACUS"
The lively Persian encampment. Big.

CUT TO:

20 INT. LONG HOUSE - NIGHT

20

Xena enters with more plants and roots to find Gabrielle sitting up. Xena takes note of it.

XENA
Are you all right? Why are you sitting up?

GABRIELLE
I was just uncomfortable on my back.

Xena moves to her and touches Gabrielle's lip. She inspects her finger. Satisfied, she starts to crush the plants and make another poultice.

(CONTINUED)

20 CONTINUED:

20

GABRIELLE

The Persians are out there, aren't they?

XENA

(calm)

Yeah.

Xena takes off Gabrielle's bloodied bandage.

GABRIELLE

How many campfires?

XENA

Maybe thirty or forty.

GABRIELLE

(considering)

Ten men or so per fire... Good. For a minute there, I thought we were in trouble. And we do have the element of surprise in our favor.

XENA

(grunts at this)

It's the main calvary, their best warriors.

GABRIELLE

Like you said, we just have to delay them, right? Bloody their noses.

*
*

XENA

Let me worry about their noses. I've got to figure out where to hide you until after the battle.

Xena applies the poultice. Gabrielle smiles at her.

GABRIELLE

I guess I'm going to miss the fun after all. You know, it has occurred to me that this is all a clever diversion so that I'll forget about the boots.

Xena almost smiles. But then, Gabrielle doubles over in pain. Her COUGHING becomes worse. Xena quickly leans Gabrielle's head back.

GABRIELLE

My chest... it feels so heavy...

As Gabrielle leans her head back, Xena notices stains on the white sheet. Blood. Fresh blood.

(CONTINUED)

20 CONTINUED: 2

20

XENA

Blood...

Xena takes an edge of the sheet and wipes Gabrielle's lips.
More blood.

GABRIELLE

What is it...?

XENA

The arrow must have nicked your lung.
The poison...

*

A beat as this registers. Then:

GABRIELLE

I just ran out of time, didn't I?

Xena can't even answer, as we:

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

21 INT. LONG HOUSE - NIGHT - LATER

21

Gabrielle is near the corner, curled up in her bloody blanket. Xena is moving around the room, searching for the right sizes of wood to make a litter from. She finds a long board and starts to tie it to another piece of wood. Gabrielle rouses herself and watches for a moment.

GABRIELLE

Doesn't look like a weapon to me.

XENA

It's not. It's a litter. I'm putting you on it and we're getting out of here.

GABRIELLE

Why? What about the Persians? Did they pull back?

Xena doesn't answer. She just continues to work.

GABRIELLE

Xena... you can't leave. Not if they're still out there. You're the only one who can...

XENA

Quiet, Gabrielle. Rest. Everything will be okay in the morning.

GABRIELLE

No it won't. I know what you're doing. And you can't. If you don't hold them up here...

XENA

I'm not going to let you die! I can still get you to Thessaly and the antidote.

GABRIELLE

And then what? What happens to Athens? What's my life worth then?

*

XENA

First things first.

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED:

21

GABRIELLE

And the first thing is the greater good. You taught me that, Xena. You taught me that there are things worth dying for. Things that hold a higher meaning than our own existence.

XENA

Not your existence.

GABRIELLE

Why not? Because I'm your friend?

XENA

Yes!

GABRIELLE

Then honor my memory. But we both know that I'm right. That this is right!

Xena can't answer. She looks away from Gabrielle, tears in her eyes. The frustration of their situation evident.

*

*

Gabrielle takes Xena's hand.

*

GABRIELLE

And promise me... promise me you won't leave this battle because of me.

Xena doesn't answer. Off this:

DISSOLVE TO:

22 INT. LONG HOUSE - NIGHT - LATER

22

From the floorboard Xena removes an armload of weapons. Many more are already strategically placed around the room. She glances over her shoulder at Gabrielle, fitfully asleep. Then she stokes a fire under a pot of boiling oil.

Thinking, Xena takes a pot and sets it on a crate. Sitting opposite it, she concentrates.

(CONTINUED)

22 CONTINUED:

22

Focusing on the pot, she tries to bring up the power she called upon in China. But... nothing. She closes her eyes, then tries again. Again, nothing. Angrily she kicks the pot against the wall. As it shatters...

GABRIELLE

(feverish)

Help me...

Xena turns and rushes to her.

XENA

I'm here.

She dips a cloth in water and wipes Gabrielle's face and neck. Gabrielle talks in her troubled sleep.

GABRIELLE

(struggling)

Xena's dying... have to get her to Mount Nestor... Mount Nestor...

XENA

It's alright, Gabrielle. Rest.

GABRIELLE

(tries to rise)

No, no... I can't... can't sleep. I've got to save her.

XENA

You did, Gabrielle. You made it.

GABRIELLE

This is not her time to die.

XENA

(deeply moved)

You saved me -- many times.

Gabrielle's eyes blink, then open. She sees Xena and seems to relax.

GABRIELLE

Xena...

XENA

Yes.

Gabrielle grows calm. Then...

GABRIELLE

...You've got to... take me with you. Teach me everything you know. You can't leave me here.

(CONTINUED)

22 CONTINUED: 2

22

Xena realizes that, in Gabrielle's mind, they're back at their first meeting. Xena cradles her in her arms.

XENA

I'm not going anywhere.

GABRIELLE

Please, let me go with you. I've studied the stars... spoken with philosophers... and I have the gift of prophecy. I could be very valuable to you.

XENA

More than you'll ever know.

GABRIELLE

(sleepily)

Take me with you. I want so much...
to be like you...

*

Gabrielle's eyes close as she drifts off.

XENA

And I want to be like you.

CUT TO:

23 INT. LONG HOUSE - MORNING (DREAM)

23

Xena SLAMS the door shut and bars it. The SOUND wakes Gabrielle. She HEARS the THUNDEROUS ROAR of Persian HORSE HOOVES and WHINNIES. They're coming! SOLDIERS SHOUT outside as the charge begins. A BATTERING RAM hits against the door. Gabrielle watches as Warriors come flying through the window.

XENA

with her sword, battles wave after wave. She's a tornado, unleashed. Gabrielle, from her bed, observes hay falling from the ceiling. Then a SWORD slices through. A Soldier cuts a hole in the roof and drops down, unseen by Xena. He's a six-foot-two BEHEMOTH with a double-bladed sword.

GABRIELLE

(cries out)

Xena!

But the DIN and CLASH OF BATTLE drown her out. The hulking Persian grabs Xena from behind by the hair -- and O.J.'s her quickly with a SLIT ACROSS THE NECK. She falls, dead. Gabrielle SCREAMS.

24 INT. LONG HOUSE - NIGHT

24

Suddenly, Gabrielle sits up with a start. She's sweating, feverish, breathing hard. She looks around, collects herself. The ceiling is whole. The room is quiet, unchanged.

Xena lays next to her, asleep. Gabrielle realizes it was a dream. She lays back down and strokes Xena's hair. Gabrielle's eyes are wide, fearful of her dream.

DISSOLVE TO:

25 INT. LONG HOUSE - NIGHT

25

Gabrielle's face, asleep, peaceful. Now the fever has broken. Her eyes flutter open.

HER POV:

Xena paces like a caged panther, looking for an answer to their dilemma.

GABRIELLE

Xena...

XENA

We're leaving.

GABRIELLE

But I thought we agreed...

XENA

I changed my mind!

GABRIELLE

There's no other way.

XENA

There's got to be a way. I am going to get us out of this.

GABRIELLE

It's too late... for me.

XENA

No. I don't accept defeat. There are always choices.

She goes to the door, opens it, and gazes out into the darkness.

*
*

*
*

*
*

*
*

*

*

XENA

You were right about the greater good,
Gabrielle. But who's to say what that
really is? I'm finished paying for my
past mistakes. My responsibility now
is to help you.

She starts to pick up Gabrielle in her arms, but Gabrielle
fights her.

GABRIELLE

No... No!

*

XENA

Don't argue with me...

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED:

25

GABRIELLE

And don't you argue with me! I know
I'm going to die! I accept it! Why
can't you?

This is the realization that Xena's been fighting.

XENA

Because... I don't want to live without
you.

GABRIELLE

I'll always be with you, you know that.
Long ago, I accepted the consequences
of our life together... that it might
one day come to this. And it has.
I'm not afraid.

Xena takes a deep breath, exhales and touches Gabrielle's
face.

XENA

You've always said I was the brave one.
And look at you now.

(then)

If this is our destiny, then we'll see
it out together. Even in death... I'll
never leave you, Gabrielle.

Off that, we:

CUT TO:

26 EXT. LONG HOUSE - SUNRISE

26

Xena takes the bridle off Argo. Her saddle already lies on
the ground. Xena gives Argo a hug.

XENA

Run as far away as you can. And don't
stop for any local stallions. And
don't... don't ever come back to
this spot.

Argo bristles at leaving.

XENA

No. You can't help us now. Go.

Argo doesn't budge. She nuzzles Xena's neck. Xena pats her
tenderly, then pulls away.

XENA

Do as I say. Go!

(CONTINUED)

26 CONTINUED:

26

Argo rears up, then takes off. Xena sadly watches her.

CUT TO:

27 INT. LONG HOUSE - LATER

27

Xena uses her whip to drag the large POT OF BOILING OIL across the floor. As she does so, she glances at Gabrielle -- who stares blankly, mouth slightly agape. A death mask? Suddenly, blood trickles from her mouth. Xena rushes to her.

XENA

Gabrielle...

...who rouses from her reverie. She COUGHS.

GABRIELLE

(blinking her eyes)

Still here. I think. Strange.

The pain... I can't say it's stopped.

I seem to have moved beyond it.

*
*

*

Xena prepares a new dressing.

XENA

Here, it's ready. Turn over.

Gabrielle stops her with a hand.

GABRIELLE

Don't bother with that. No more
delaying. Please... I can't fight, or
be of any help. And worrying about me
will only distract you...

Xena strokes her face. An emotional wave washes over her.

XENA

(gently)

But you're my source, Gabrielle. When
I can reach down and do more than I'm
capable of, it's because of you.
Don't you know that by now?

Gabrielle looks at her, also on the brink of emotion. Then:

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED:

27

XENA

So let's both see this through
together, okay?

Gabrielle nods "yes."

CUT TO:

28 INT. LONG HOUSE - LOFT - DAY

28

Xena carries a now ashen Gabrielle up to the loft. Her
breathing is shallower. Gabrielle looks down into the Long
House.

GABRIELLE

This will give me a better view.

XENA

I'm going to put the boiling oil there,
near the ladder. The moment they start
up here, tip it. Push it on them.

GABRIELLE

But you'll be down there...

XENA

If they're coming up the ladder, it
means they got past me. And if they
got past me, it's because...

She doesn't finish it. Xena turns away.

GABRIELLE

Xena. Watch your back for a big guy
with a double-bladed sword.

XENA

What?

GABRIELLE

In my dream, he came through the roof
and then he... Well, be careful.

XENA

Always looking out for me.

GABRIELLE

Always.

Xena hugs her. The embrace of all time.

CLOSE ON EACH FACE, knowing that this is their last moment
together.

(CONTINUED)

28 CONTINUED:

28

GABRIELLE
Xena... what happened in China...

*
*

Xena puts a silencing finger on Gabrielle's lips.

*

XENA
...is in the past. Right now I want
to enjoy being here with you... my
best friend...
(still hugging)
...my family. I love you.

*
*
*
*
*

GABRIELLE
I love you, too. Good-bye, Xena.

XENA
Until the other side. We'll be
together then.

She stops and listens.

XENA
They're coming...

29 EXT. PLAINS - DAY

29

A PERSIAN HORSEMAN comes riding over the hilltop in the
distance... followed by TWO... followed by FOUR... by SIX...
by EIGHT. Here come the riders from hell.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

- 30 INT. LONG HOUSE - DAY 30
Xena stares out the loft window. Her face betrays nothing.
- 31 EXT. PLAINS - DAY - XENA'S POV 31
The Persians, still a ways off but getting closer, riding hard, fast, and inexorably forward like a swarm of red warrior ants, devouring everything in their path.
- 32 INT. LONG HOUSE - DAY - ON GABRIELLE 32
Seeing the Persians, her face ashen. Xena turns to head down the ladder. *
*
*
GABRIELLE
Careful of those poison arrows. *
- 33 EXT. PLAINS - DAY - ON THE HORSEMEN 33
Relentless. More and more thunder over the hill.
- 34 INT. LONG HOUSE - DAY - ON XENA 34
A trace of a smile on her lips as she leaps down from the loft. She strides to the open door and lets out her WAR CRY... which REVERBERATES on the hillside like some vocal slap in the face, momentarily stunning, stopping the Persians. Then...
- 35 EXT. LONG HOUSE - DAY 35
A HUGE VOLLEY OF ARROWS floods the skies, en route to the Long House.

36 INT. LONG HOUSE - DAY - ON XENA

36

who slams the door as A HUNDRED ARROWS THUNK into it and the walls. She bars the entrance. The windows are already shuttered shut. Xena moves quickly, efficiently, no fear, checking her prepared defenses.

ON GABRIELLE

She HEARS the SOLDIERS' CRIES that she heard in her dream, loud and fast approaching. Dread fills her.

HER POV -- THE DOOR

A battering ram obviously blasts at it. It shudders, but doesn't give. More of the dream's portents.

ON THE WINDOW

being similarly pounded.

ON XENA

very still, holding her chakram.

THE WINDOW

suddenly gives. Then another. THREE SOLDIERS push through each one. Xena lets the CHAKRAM FLY. It races low and slices through ROPES that hold back some BATTLE AXES positioned under the windows. They rise up catapult-like into the first wave. A half dozen Soldiers go down. Others rush over their fallen comrades like inanimate obstacles.

As they come in, several fall through the rug-covered but "open" TRAP DOOR.

XENA

grabs a hot poker from the fireplace and blows a FLAMETHROWER STREAM at one window, then another, then another. FLAMING PERSIANS scramble back.

ON GABRIELLE

watching the door as it gives, just like in her dream. She can't believe this.

ON THE DOOR

It bursts, shatters, and SOLDIERS stream in.

ON XENA

She whirls her chakram. It SPINS THROUGH THE ROOM, knocking heads, and returns to her hands where it's immediately redeployed again and again in a deadly juggling act.

(CONTINUED)

36 CONTINUED:

36

ON GABRIELLE looking with fear and apprehension toward...
THE CEILING OVER XENA. There is a faint trickle of falling
hay.

ON XENA who picks up a 7 ft. CHAIN OF DEATH (a heavy mother
studded with knives and throwing stars) and begins whirling
it, a human weed-whacker -- and these boys are getting
whacked. They're either ducking or dying.

ON GABRIELLE

horrified as she sees...

A DOUBLE-BLADED SWORD

pierce through the ceiling.

GABRIELLE
(hoarsely)

Xena...

But she can't be heard over the DIN, just like in her
nightmare. She drags herself toward the edge of the loft.

GABRIELLE
(whispers)
Look out.

Xena "hears" this with a sixth sense -- just as that same
BEHEMOTH (from the dream) leaps through the hole in the
ceiling onto Xena, grabs her by the hair, and jerks her
head back.

GABRIELLE
No!!

The other Soldiers fall back to watch the kill shot. But
Xena flips backwards over him, and quickly has a garrote
around his throat. She jerks hard. He stumbles, pitching
forward.

Xena leaps up on his shoulders as he's going down and grabs
the rim of the hole in the ceiling.

ON GABRIELLE

vastly relieved. She rolls over toward the pot of BOILING
OIL placed near the edge of the loft.

She tries, but she can't budge the pot.

The Soldiers, momentarily stunned by Behemoth's death, now
react to Xena and rush to grab her boots and pull her back
down.

(CONTINUED)

36 CONTINUED: 2

36

GABRIELLE sees the Soldiers pull hard on Xena, who can't hold onto the ceiling much longer. Finally, with the last of her strength, Gabrielle TIPS OVER THE VAT OF OIL. SLOW MOTION as the hot liquid falls over the edge, sending a wave at those guys who are grabbing at Xena's legs. They SCREAM and release her. Xena disappears through the hole in the roof.

GABRIELLE collapses, spent.

CUT TO:

37 EXT. LONG HOUSE - ROOF - DAY

37

Xena barely emerges and draws her sword when TWENTY GUYS from outside below scramble up onto the roof. She turns slowly around, twirling, spinning her weapon as they encircle her. She smiles.

Then they fall upon her, or try to, as she spins and slashes, ducks and leaps, seemingly untouchable. Some she gives a taste of steel, others are kicked off the roof.

Suddenly, a BLADE SLICES a glancing blow at her left arm and draws blood, enraging her even more. Then Xena sees something through the hole in the roof, inside the house.

HER POV

A PERSIAN climbs up to the loft and Gabrielle. He turns and looks at Xena. It's DORIAN. He smiles.

CUT TO:

38 INT. LONG HOUSE - DAY

38

In the loft, Gabrielle notes him, too, and weakly picks up her staff.

HER POV -- blurry and dim. The lights are going out. Dorian wields a knife. His face has changed -- now evil.

DORIAN

Told you I'd be back -- with help.

Xena drops through the ceiling opening like a shot and as she does, kicks Dorian. He falls out of the loft.

ON GABRIELLE

She gives Xena a strangely serene smile, exhales, and then falls back, her eyes closed.

(CONTINUED)

38 CONTINUED:

38

ON XENA

horrified, but no time to react as other Soldiers come rushing in the door. She runs and flips off the wall into their midst, fiercely fighting on. But she takes another glancing SLASH to her leg. Then a THWACK to the head that drops her to her knees.

THE SOLDIERS

close in for the kill. Xena's bought it. Weak, bloodied, battered, and exhausted, she falls to the floor. But then... her eyes suddenly burn brightly with a new, fiercer intensity as she sees...

DORIAN

Regrouping with some other men. Xena SCREAMS and launches herself at the Soldiers, knocking them this way and that, until she gets to Dorian. He puts up a feeble defense as Xena knocks him to the ground. She grabs his neck and, suddenly, a PERSIAN ARROW flies right at her. She GRABS IT in midflight. She takes a BEAT, then gets an idea. Sniffing the tip, she smiles. Then, she GRINDS THE ARROW into Dorian's shoulder. He reacts in pain and horror.

XENA

Poison! Just like Gabrielle. Only I'm going to make sure you die quicker. In more pain!

She lets him go and he falls to the ground. More Soldiers fall upon her, and as she fights:

DORIAN

realizes the predicament he is in. He starts to drag himself with purpose... toward something...

BACK TO SCENE

as Xena watches him, a grim smile on her face.

XENA

That's it... crawl! Crawl for your life!

He ignores her until he reaches a downed Soldier with several waterbags around his arm. Dorian searches through them desperately until he finds one particular bag. He pours the liquid down his throat and over his wound. Xena SCREAMS with joy. She's found the antidote! Dorian led her right to it. She rolls over and sweep-kicks the legs out from under the advancing sword-raised Executioners. She gets to Dorian and, looking down at him:

(CONTINUED)

38 CONTINUED: 2

38

XENA
Feeling better now that you've found
your medicine?

He glares at her, then pulls a dagger and lunges. She pivots, grabbing his elbow and sending him around in a circle as another rushing Soldier skewers him with his sword. Xena then grabs the sword from the man and kills. Picking up the antidote bag, she turns to the remaining men with a new purpose. And she attacks with a renewed frenzy. The Persians start to fall back to the door. That is, those that don't fall down. Finally, she leaps from the loft and confronts the only THREE still there. She whirls around.

XENA
(hot)
Come on!

But the trio suddenly drop their weapons in surrender.

XENA
Go home. There are thousands more like
me.

They run out of the Long House.

CUT TO:

39 INT. LONG HOUSE - LATER

39

Xena scrambles up to the loft and the still form of Gabrielle. She carries the water bag and pours it over the wound. Then she desperately tries to get Gabrielle to drink it. But... the time has passed.

XENA
Gabrielle, if you can hear me, come
back. I need you.

She rubs the serum on Gabrielle's lips.

XENA
Please... I need you... with me.

A beat while an eternity passes. Then Gabrielle's eyes flicker open. Xena lets out a huge SIGH of relief.

GABRIELLE
Are we dead?

Xena hugs her.

XENA
No. Drink this.

(CONTINUED)

39 CONTINUED:

39

Gabrielle quaffs the serum, then weakly raises up on her elbow. She sees the destruction below.

GABRIELLE

I thought you said those guys were tough.

XENA

Guess I caught them on an off day.

Gabrielle notices Xena's wounds.

GABRIELLE

You're hurt.

XENA

I'm going to be fine. You rest. We'll head out in a few hours.

Gabrielle smiles and lays back. Then, she grabs Xena's arm.

GABRIELLE

Xena...

Xena leans in to her.

XENA

Yes?

GABRIELLE

When we get to Thessaly... you still owe me a new pair of boots.

And she smiles. Xena gives a little LAUGH and hugs her friend.

FADE OUT.

THE END