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"BETWEEN THE LINES"

by
Steven L. Sears

**SEASON 4
EPISODE #15**

XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS

"Between The Lines"

Written by
Steven L. Sears

Directed by
Rick Jacobson

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Revised Pages: FULL SCRIPT

Executive Producers

Sam Raimi, Rob Tapert & R.J. Stewart

Renaissance Pictures
100 Universal City Plaza
Universal City, CA 91608
(818) 777-0088

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XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS

"Between The Lines"

CAST LIST

XENA
GABRIELLE

ALTI
SUHLEEMA
NAIYIMA
SHAKTI
ACKLIN
KELTA
SHIMLAI **
TIHLIM **
MARTYR
CAPTAIN
GENERAL
PRISONER **

(soo-LEE-ma)
(nye-YEE-ma)
(SHAK-tee)
(AK-lin)
(KEL-ta)
(shim-LYE)
(TEE-lim)

*

Referred to in Dialog:

ARMINESTRA
KHINDIN
DARSHAM

(ar-min-ESS-tra)
(KIN-din)
(DAR-sham)

** non-speaking

XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS

"Between The Lines"

SET LIST

INTERIORS:

NAIYIMA'S HOUSE - FRONT ROOM	SCENES # 2,7	*
- REAR ROOM	SCENES # 3,8,11,13	
RUINED HOUSE (FUTURE)	SCENES #20,23,26	
SHAKTI'S TENT (FUTURE)	SCENES #12,14	*
NAIYIMA'S RUINED HOUSE - REAR ROOM (FUTURE)	SCENE #15C	*

EXTERIORS:

VILLAGE	SCENES # 1,1A,1B,24,28, 29,31,33,33B,33D	*
NAIYIMA'S HOUSE	SCENE # 6	*
ROAD OUT OF VILLAGE	SCENE #35	
RUINED VILLAGE (FUTURE)	SCENES # 4,5,10,15,15B,17, 19,25,27,31A,33A,33C	
NEAR CORRAL (FUTURE)	SCENE #18	*
SHAKTI'S CAMP (FUTURE)	SCENE #30	*
WOODS NEAR VILLAGE	SCENE #15A	

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XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS

"Between The Lines"

CHRONOLOGY

DAY 1

SCENES # 1 - 3
SCENES # 6 - 8
SCENE #11
SCENE #13
SCENE #15A
SCENE #24
SCENES #28 - 29
SCENE #31

SCENE #33
SCENE #33B
SCENE #33D
SCENE #35

DAY 2 (FUTURE)

SCENES # 4 - 5
SCENE #10
SCENE #12
SCENES #14 - 15
SCENES #15B - 20

NIGHT 2 (FUTURE)

SCENE #23

DAY 3 (FUTURE)

SCENES #25 - 27
SCENE #30
SCENE #31A
SCENE #33A
SCENE #33C

*

*

XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS

"Between The Lines"

TEASER

OVER BLACK, WE SUPERIMPOSE:

"The mortal soul continues past life,
aspiring toward its full potential.
This is our Karma"

DISSOLVE TO:

OVER BLACK, SUPERIMPOSE:

From the Xena "Blue" Scroll
Author Unknown

DISSOLVE TO:

BLACK. THEN:

FADE IN:

1 EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

1

A village of Northern India. It would be like any other village in this area if it weren't for the festival atmosphere. Brightly-colored cloths wave in the breeze, mounted on tall poles. Ornaments hang through the middle courtyard. VILLAGERS are dressed brightly. And, yet, there is a somber air to the proceedings.

1A EXT. VILLAGE - DAY - CLOSE ON STORE FRONT

1A

We see GABRIELLE wearing a SARI, standing outside of a small, curtained booth. She seems impatient, but a little playful.

GABRIELLE

Come on, Xena. It's not like people will stare at you.

XENA'S VOICE

I'm not worried about that.

GABRIELLE

Come on. It's the latest rage here in India. You know, when in Rome...

(CONTINUED)

1A CONTINUED:

1A

Xena sticks her head out from the curtain and gives her a look.

GABRIELLE

Okay, different analogy. When you want to fly with the eagles...

Xena steps out from the curtain wearing a beautiful, multi-layered SARI of her own.

XENA

...you wear feathers. Not this.

GABRIELLE

Wow. That looks... I mean...
It says casual, it says sexy,
it says...

Xena takes a few steps. Then, she throws a high kick, a spinning kick, and a sweep, all in one motion. She nods.

GABRIELLE

It says a lot. Glad to see you're getting into the swing of things.

Xena pays the MERCHANT and they turn to walk away.

GABRIELLE

There's a lot to be said for immersing yourself into the culture of a new land.

Suddenly, a COMMOTION IS HEARD.

XENA

What's that?

And we go to:

1B EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

1B

The Villagers move back to make room for a PROCESSION. As they do, an ornate litter is being carried through the area. Behind the litter is a smaller one, more chairlike, with a figure in it. The figure is covered from head to toe in bright cloths and jewelry. Only her eyes are visible. The litter is placed near a PYRE near a LARGE TREE and the fire is lit. As the fire burns higher, the figure, NAIYIMA is brought down from the litter. A man, SUHLEEMA, walks forward. Naiyima is fidgety. Her eyes dart about in the sky, as if seeing things flying about. One of her hands (covered by the cloth) seems to be sketching lines in the air in front of her.

(CONTINUED)

1B CONTINUED:

1B

TWO OTHER MEN, uniformed and part of the MILITIA, step forward and drag her toward the fire and lift her over their heads. Their intent is obvious.

Suddenly, a familiar SCREAM is heard. XENA bounds into the courtyard and lands right in front of the Men with the girl.

XENA

What has this woman done?

SUHLEEMA

Naiyima's husband is dead.
She must join him.

GABRIELLE steps forward.

GABRIELLE

Has she been accused of killing
him?

SUHLEEMA

Her? She's a crazy woman, look at
her. Our custom has been passed
down and can only be changed by a
Darsham, an Enlightened one. Her
husband died, she must follow him.
That is the law.

XENA

Stupid law. And it's about to be
broken.

SUHLEEMA

This is not your affair. Go away,
woman, before you get hurt.

He motions to a MAN to take care of Xena. The large, burly
guy moves toward Xena to take her by the arm. She spins out
of his grasp, backhands him to the ground, and continues her
spin, causing the sari to unwind the top layers. Xena takes
the top cloth, spins it once to create a "rope," then snaps
it toward Naiyima. It wraps around her waist and pulls her
from the grasp of the Men. Xena snaps her toward Gabrielle,
who grabs her and pulls Naiyima toward a house. *

Meanwhile, the Men rush Xena. She dips the sari rope into a
barrel of water, then pulls it out and spins it, tightening
it tighter and tighter until it solidifies into a staff. As
the first Man passes her, she slaps him to the ground. She
spins to nail another Man.

(CONTINUED)

1B CONTINUED: 2

1B

ANOTHER MAN grabs up a spear and launches it at Xena. She grabs it in midair, spins, and JAMS IT SOLIDLY into the nearby tree. The Man rushes her with a sword. She ducks under the spear, pulls it back and releases it. It pops into the Man's face, knocking him down. Xena takes a quick look at the crowd, not just Militia but Villagers, and quickly rushes through the door after Gabrielle.

2 INT. NAIYIMA'S HOUSE - FRONT ROOM - DAY

2*

Xena comes in and slams the door behind her. Moving quickly, she blocks it with some furniture. Naiyima stands nearby, head rocking, fingers twitching (she is still covered).

NAIYIMA

Make move, sweet thing. Sweet.
No, no, mother sweet.

Gabrielle looks at Xena.

GABRIELLE

Too many of them?

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED:

2

XENA

Too many women and children.
They're bound to get hurt if we go
that way. Pile some more things up
here. I'm going to check things
out.

She heads past Naiyima toward a door. As she does, Xena gently moves Naiyima to the side. A BEAT as Naiyima reacts to Xena's touch. She stares at Xena, the closest we've seen to her focusing so far.

3 INT. NAIYIMA'S HOUSE - REAR ROOM - DAY

3*

Xena enters and looks around. There are bizarre line drawings all over the walls and tapestries hanging on the walls. Xena moves into the room and looks behind the tapestries.

XENA

No windows. Great.

She turns... and finds Naiyima has entered the room behind her. She closes the door and faces Xena.

XENA

I don't know what you're doing,
but...

Naiyima pulls the coverings over her head and drops them to the floor. The outfit underneath is modest, but reveals her arms, neck and legs: all covered with intricate lines and designs; Mehndi. Xena reacts. Naiyima raises her hands and puts her forearms together. She begins a rhythmic movement and, suddenly, the lines on her arms seem to SPIN OFF into the space around her. Before Xena can draw her sword, the lines ATTACK HER! She barely has time to move when the lines SLICE INTO HER, shattering her into a million, chakram-shaped fragments. They hesitate in the air, then, along with the floating lines, begin to rush back toward Naiyima. She lifts her arm to reveal a bare spot on her lower side. As the chakram fragments race toward it, the CAMERA joins them, racing toward that bare spot. As they hit, the frame EXPLODES into:

THE KARMIC TUNNEL

A CGI display of lights and vague images. Images of people, many people that we don't yet recognize, flash by quickly as if the fragments sail through them. Then, at the end of this tunnel, we can make out the figure of an old woman. She is clothed in a grey cloak and walks hunched with the aid of a walking stick. We can't quite make out her face.

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED:

3

We are RUSHING TOWARD HER. And, as we are just upon her, we:

SMASH CUT:

4 EXT. RUINED VILLAGE - DAY (FUTURE)

4

Xena's face comes up into frame. She looks confused. Her weapons are gone. All she holds is a walking stick. Her outfit is gone, replaced by a grey cloak. A quick look around here reveals a partially-destroyed village, obviously as a result of war. SEVERAL PEASANTS are defiantly sitting on the ground behind a stack of primitive weapons, old swords and the like. On the other side of them is a GROUP OF MEN armed with new swords and shiny shields. And one woman. One large, strong, imposing woman. This is KHINDIN. Khindin is speaking to Xena as if she knows her.

KHINDIN

All this talk is tiring, Arminestra. You wanted to negotiate, but I've heard nothing that appeals to me.

XENA

What?

Xena looks to the Peasants seated around her. They all look to her with expectant faces, as if waiting for her to do something. She looks at a tree nearby. Larger and taller, there is no mistaking that tree. It has an old spear sticking out of its side. Covered partially with bark and vines, it has been there for a long time. Still confused, Xena looks back to Khindin and freezes as she looks at:

A SHINY SHIELD

In the shield, she can see her reflection. Only it isn't her reflection. It's the reflection of an old woman. She touches her face to make sure. As she reacts, we:

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

5 EXT. RUINED VILLAGE - DAY (FUTURE) 5

As we left it, Xena is reacting to the fact that she is in another body.

KHINDIN

Is the great Peacemaker deaf as well?

XENA

Arminestra...?

A PAUSE as a young man, perhaps eighteen-years-old, walks up to Khindin carrying a jug of wine. His name is TIHLIM and the collar around his neck leaves no doubt as to this relationship. Khindin takes the jug and drinks from it, still staring at Xena. Stepping up behind Khindin is KELTA, another strong warrior. Xena takes a look again at the Peasants. They are staring, fearful, but defiant. The hero in her calls.

XENA

What is your business with these people?

KHINDIN

My business? My business is to own them, life and soul. The great "Peacemaker" wanted to talk me out of it, I decided to meet you, Arminestra.

(re: old weapons)

You made them put down their weapons, Arminestra. It doesn't move me. Any people who will not fight for themselves, deserve what they get. And that is me.

(to her Soldiers)

Kill the men. Capture the rest.

XENA

Wait a minute! You're not taking anyone.

Khindin looks to Kelta, a bit of surprise on her face.

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED:

5

KHINDIN

Well... the Mother of Peace has a backbone after all. Interesting. But I have an army. All you have are a handful of villagers and your message of "Peace". I think the odds are in my favor. Kelta!

Kelta moves forward. The Peasants all tense. Xena tenses as well, crouching for action.

Suddenly, a WHISTLING SOUND is heard. Everyone looks to the sky as FLAMING PROJECTILES come slamming into earth onto Khindin's Men. They scatter as HORSEMEN and MEN WEARING UNIFORMS come rushing into the area and attack. Khindin's Men react, striking back. In the background, ON A HORSE, we see SHAKTI, a handsome man, obviously a leader, as he rushes in and begins fighting. *

The Peasants start to move. Xena grabs up one of the old swords... and can't lift it! In fact, the weight pulls her back to the ground. Xena tries to hit a Soldier, but her fighting ability and her strength are not in this body. She turns to see Khindin about to kill a YOUNG MAN. She intervenes, grabbing Khindin's wrist. As if lightning has hit her, Xena staggers. Khindin looks to her with a glare. The CAMERA PUSHES IN on Khindin's eyes until we frame them tightly.

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED: 2

5

The Spiritual Connection is made suddenly. Then, the camera PULLS BACK and reveals... ALTI! Still dressed as Khindin, but Xena sees her differently now. Shocked, Xena releases her grip and drops to the ground.

XENA
Alti...? It can't be...

ALTI/KHINDIN
Xena! I knew I would find your soul eventually!

Alti/Khindin pulls her sword. At that moment, Shakti SCREAMS and rushes his horse at ALTI/KHINDIN, knocking her aside and grabbing up Xena in the process. As Khindin recovers, she turns back toward Xena. *

ALTI/KHINDIN
Crossbow!

Kelta tosses a crossbow to Khindin.

SHAKTI AND XENA *

as Shakti puts her down next to an old man named ACKLIN. *

SHAKTI
Take her to safety, Acklin. *

XENA
Who are you?

SHAKTI
Shakti. My army needs me. Go! *

And he spurs his horse back into the fray.

ACKLIN
Arminestra, come quickly!

And he grabs her and pulls her away. Meanwhile:

KHINDIN

has the bolt loaded on the crossbow and aims it... at Shakti as he runs through one of her Men and grabs up another peasant. She fires. The bolt hits Shakti in the shoulder. He hunches, but stays focused as he rides off. *

ON XENA

being hustled away around a burned-out house.

XENA
I have to go back.

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED: 3

5

ACKLIN

No! You're the only hope the
people have, Arminestra!

Xena looks over to see a broken mirror in the ground.
The reflection shows the old woman standing next to Acklin.

ACKLIN

Now come! Shakti risked much to
rescue you.

*

And he drags her away.

ON ALTI/KHINDIN

*

Standing among a few dead Soldiers, she surveys the scene
as Shakti's Men retreat. Alti/Khindin smiles.

*

*

ALTI/KHINDIN

The mighty Xena... in the body of
Arminestra, the Peacemaker. I have
her!

*

*

*

*

Off that:

*

CUT TO:

6 EXT. NAIYIMA'S HOUSE - DAY

6*

The Local Militia has gathered in front of the house, setting guard. They are all armed and it seems a siege is in progress. Suhleema paces back and forth. A fiery hothead, SHIMLAI, is trying vainly to remove the spear from the tree. Suhleema walks up to him.

SUHLEEMA

Leave it. The militia is forming.
We're going to take the house.

SHIMLAI

What about the Warrior and her friend?

SUHLEEMA

They had their chance to leave.

CUT TO:

7 INT. NAIYIMA'S HOUSE - FRONT ROOM - DAY

7*

Gabrielle is peeking out the window. In the background, Naiyima stands in the doorway. She rocks back and forth as she draws on a parchment in her hand.

GABRIELLE

I think something's happening out there. Xena!

No response.

GABRIELLE

Where is she?

Gabrielle looks back, but Naiyima holds up the parchment of artwork and waves it back and forth in front of Gabrielle's face without saying anything. Her eyes, though, are unfocused. Gabrielle glances at the artwork.

GABRIELLE

That's very nice. Xena!

She goes into:

8 INT. NAIYIMA'S HOUSE - REAR ROOM - DAY

8*

Gabrielle enters and looks around. Xena's gone. Gabrielle reacts. Naiyima follows Gabrielle in and stands in the doorway. Gabrielle notices her.

GABRIELLE

Where is the other woman? Xena?
Where is Xena? She came in here
with you.

She overarticulates, as if talking to a simpleton.
Which, by all appearances, is what she's doing.

NAIYIMA

Not to the thing. The straight
edge isn't. More than it is is
is is...

GABRIELLE

No, no... Xena!

NAIYIMA

Not to the is is is...

GABRIELLE

(thinking)

I have no idea what you're saying.
It's Persian to me.

At that moment, Gabrielle looks down and sees the exposed
wrists of Naiyima. The Mehndi lines are intricate,
beautiful. Naiyima pulls away and begins to dance around
the room.

NAIYIMA

Me in the Xena in the Xena in the
Xena...

GABRIELLE

Xena! Right! Tell me what
happened to Xena.

Now, Naiyima is near the door, blocking the way out.
She turns and raises her hands. And the lines JUMP AT
GABRIELLE! They race across the room and, just before
they hit her, we:

CUT TO:

9 OMITTED

9

10 EXT. RUINED VILLAGE - DAY (FUTURE)

10

Alti/Khindin stands over A PRISONER. He is bleeding from the gash she gave him, but not quite dead. Yet. Kelta stands behind her, as does Tihlim, who holds a bowl of water. Alti/Khindin's hands are bloody. The Prisoner looks up at her in fear.

ALTI/KHINDIN

Arminestra must have a place of hiding. Where is it? Where was she taken? I have to know!

He doesn't respond.

KELTA

He's willing to die to protect her. She's the reason you're here, you fool!

Alti/Khindin silences him with a wave of her hand. She leans to the Prisoner.

ALTI/KHINDIN

Fear... I can feel it within you. You see... there once was a powerful shamaness named Alti. Alti knew what was in the hearts of men. And women.

The Prisoner can't answer. He only stares with wide eyes.

ALTI/KHINDIN

Imagine all the pain in your life... all the moments of fear and pain... It's safe when you remember them. Alti can bring them back. But now she's learned that each life has many existences. And each contains their own... painful memories.

She touches the Prisoner. He stares at her and, suddenly, recoils in pain. Then, again. And again, as if an electric shock is pulsing through him. Alti/Khindin closes her eyes as if relishing the pain.

ALTI/KHINDIN

You're experiencing the torment of a thousand lifetimes, past and present. Now... talk to me... Tell me where my enemy is. Tell me about Xena...

(CONTINUED)

10 CONTINUED:

10

Kelta looks at her strangely. The Prisoner has no idea who she is talking about, but it doesn't matter. He is convulsing. Finally, he dies. A BEAT, then Alti/Khindin stands, turns, and washes her bloody hands in the bowl.

ALTI/KHINDIN
He didn't know.

(CONTINUED)

10 CONTINUED: 2

10

KELTA

Who is this Xena? I thought you wanted...

ALTI/KHINDIN

Xena is Arminestra, an old, old friend of mine. And once I capture her... once I make her power mine, I will have everything that has made her who she is. Timeless... And I will become the Destroyer of Nations!

*
*
*
*

Off that, we:

11 INT. NAIYIMA'S HOUSE - REAR ROOM - DAY

11*

Naiyima watches with amusement as Gabrielle DANCES with the lines. Unlike the attack on Xena, these lines are looping around Gabrielle's arms and legs, guiding her in her dance. She has a smile on her face as she has given in to the experience.

GABRIELLE

It's the most beautiful thing I've ever seen... felt... whatever!

NAIYIMA

It's the beauty of the universe. Each line has its place, each has a meaning, each drawing on the other to complete its totality.

GABRIELLE

How come I can understand you now?

NAIYIMA

You're in my world. The words you heard from my lips were another language. But there is so much more.

GABRIELLE

Like this?

NAIYIMA

Yes. The totality of the Universe is all tied together. Focus on just one, and you lose the others.
(beat)

Karma is a road to the truth. And your friend, Xena, is on that road right now.

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED:

11

Naiyima takes a moment, then lifts the cloth from her side to reveal the Mehndi designs. And there in the middle, is a Mehndi chakram. Gabrielle reacts.

NAIYIMA

There is a great evil in the future that has been hunting Xena's soul. It has found her. If it succeeds, Xena's Karmic cycle will end. And so will all the good of her future lives.

GABRIELLE

Who is her enemy?

NAIYIMA

I don't know. I had to send her there quickly, to defend herself. I was not able to tell her anything before she left.

GABRIELLE

Send me there.

NAIYIMA

I'm not sure that's wise...

GABRIELLE

This Karma you're talking about... can you see mine? Can you see how much Xena is a part of it?

Naiyima touches her face.

NAIYIMA

Yes... In many lives, past and future... You're right.

(then)

Very well. But if you are to go, I must give you the weapon that I couldn't give her. You must learn the Mehndi. It contains the truth. And it's the path home.

GABRIELLE

Teach me.

Off this, we:

CUT TO:

12 INT. SHAKTI'S TENT - DAY (FUTURE)

12*

Shakti is being tended to by Acklin. He has his shirt off and the arrow bolt still sticks through his shoulder, the tip emerging just below the collarbone. Acklin's hands dance around, as if not sure what to do next.

SHAKTI

Is there a problem, Acklin?
Break the tip and pull it out.

ACKLIN

It's not that easy. There could be damage to the lung. If I remove it...

XENA'S VOICE

Let me have a try at it.

They look up to see Xena. Rather, of course, they see Arminestra. Acklin moves toward her, trying to block her vision.

ACKLIN

Good Mother, this is not something for you to see. I said I would come and get you when --

XENA

I'm afraid I'm not much for waiting around. I've been checking out your army. Low numbers and even worse moral.

They look at her in amazement. She covers.

XENA

I've seen much of armies.
Any messenger of peace would.
Let me look at that.

Acklin doesn't want her to, but Shakti motions him aside. She examines it, then suddenly breaks off the tip.

XENA

It's nowhere near the lung.
But just in case...

She "pinches" the area around the wound.

XENA

That takes care of the bleeding...

She pulls the arrow through cleanly, no blood.

SHAKTI

Amazing...

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED:

12

XENA

Not done yet. Grit your teeth.

And she releases the pinch. Blood flows. Shakti GRUNTS with the return of the pain. Xena takes a wet rag from the bowl and begins washing the wound. *

XENA

Not many people can take a crossbow bolt through the shoulder and not lose their arm.

SHAKTI

Your abilities are... surprising, Arminestra. *

XENA

Consider it a thank you for saving my life.

SHAKTI

What man of peace wouldn't? You've ended wars throughout the subcontinent. But I'm afraid Khindin has no soul. And she's already won. I'll fight as long as I'm able, but I have to think about my people. *

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED: 2

12

XENA

Surrender and your people will be enslaved. And you'll be...

SHAKTI

Oh, I'll be executed, that's a given. But enslaved or not, at least my people will be alive. And as long as they are, there must be hope.

XENA

No, not with this one. Trust me, I've known her a long time.

Off that, we:

CUT TO:

13 INT. NAIYIMA'S HOUSE - REAR ROOM - DAY - CLOSE ON SKIN

13*

Bare skin except for a Mehndi line drawn across it. A BEAT, then a finger runs along the line, tracing it.

WIDER

Naiyima sits in a lotus position, her arms outstretched. Gabrielle's finger traces a line along Naiyima's neck to her shoulder.

GABRIELLE

I see it... yes, I understand.

NAIYIMA

Mehndi is the path to enlightenment. Feel them. Don't try to understand them. Accept.

Gabrielle nods her head. Naiyima stands and moves away from Gabrielle. She goes to the wall and, removing a brick, she pulls out a small box. She holds it so Gabrielle can see.

NAIYIMA

This is to create the Mehndi. Remember this.

And she replaces the box and the brick. Suddenly, the SOUND OF THE FRONT DOOR BEING BROKEN IN is heard.

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED:

13

NAIYIMA

You are ready. Tell Xena the
evil can only be destroyed here.
Where Xena is still powerful.

She raises her arms. She begins to move them... the lines
jump from them and race toward Gabrielle. She braces
herself as the lines hit her. A FLASH OF LIGHT as Gabrielle
is pulled toward Naiyima in a blur.

As she does, the door BREAKS OPEN and Suhleema, Shimlai and
the Soldiers rush in, swords ready. A FLASH OF LIGHT blinds
them for a second, but when it's gone, all they see is
Naiyima gesturing aimlessly. Gabrielle is gone.

KARMIC TUNNEL

Again, the images, the lights, the passing of Karmic souls.
We can barely make out an image at the end of this tunnel.
Then, suddenly:

SMASH CUT TO:

14 INT. SHAKTI'S TENT - DAY (FUTURE)

14*

Gabrielle is standing in front of a water bowl, topless,
a wound on her shoulder. She notices she is topless and
looks confused for a second, then:

ARMINESTRA'S VOICE

Are you okay?

Gabrielle turns and sees an old, grey-haired woman holding
bloody rags: Arminestra. Gabrielle doesn't see her as
Xena. And Xena doesn't see her any differently.

GABRIELLE

Yes... yes, I'm fine. I was
thinking of someone I need to find.
What... what were we talking about?

XENA

I was saying that Khindin won't
listen to you. She has powers that
need feeding. And they feed on
fear. She's more than a warrior.

GABRIELLE

A warrior? Khindin? Ah, yes.
You've met her.

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED:

14

XENA

She's trying to recreate her lost powers. I know it doesn't make sense to you, but I've figured that much out.

GABRIELLE

(searching)

Uh, huh... Is she still... uhm... still tall? Black hair? She has a particular scream when she attacks, doesn't she?

Xena reacts to the words. A BEAT, then she grabs Gabrielle's wrist and peers into her eyes. PUSH IN as the Spiritual Connection is made.

XENA

Gabrielle...

GABRIELLE

Xena! By the gods, is that you? Naiyima didn't tell me you'd look different!

XENA

We both do.

Xena gestures toward the mirror. Gabrielle sees Shakti peering back at her. *

XENA

Your name is Shakti. You're the leader of this land... *

GABRIELLE

Then this must be my Karma. My reincarnated soul.

(then)

It was Naiyima, the woman. She has some sort of power. She sent you here to defend your soul from some sort of evil. But I don't know what --

XENA

Alti. She was talking about Alti.

Gabrielle reacts in shock. Then:

GABRIELLE

But you killed her. Didn't that end it?

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED: 2

14

XENA

Alti's evil couldn't die. It moved on into its next life. And this one not only has her spirit, but the strength of a warrior. That's why the Mother of Peace has had no success with Khindin.

GABRIELLE

Mother of Peace?

XENA

Yeah, me. Ain't that a kick?
(then)

First things first. We have to free the people Khindin captured.

GABRIELLE

No. Naiyima told me that the Mehndi was the path. We have to use it to bring Khin... Alti back to our world. So that you can defeat her there. *

XENA

We capture her and her men will take revenge. We'll have to free them at the same time.

GABRIELLE

Xena, I'm sure your mind is as sharp as ever, but... how?

She indicates Xena's physical appearance. Xena looks in the mirror. The old woman, Arminestra, stares back at them.

XENA

That... is a really good question.

Off that, we:

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

15 EXT. RUINED VILLAGE - DAY (FUTURE)

15

Alti/Khindin is walking around with Kelta. She can barely contain her excitement.

ALTI/KHINDIN

I am so close to my goal! I knew one day I would discover the body of Xena's Karma! I've been searching for it, hoping beyond hope that I could take her powers! And, now, I've found it!

(then)

She couldn't have done it on her own. I have an enemy in the past and I don't know who it is.

KELTA

An Enlightened One. They are the protectors of the Karma. If they feel Arminestra is to be protected...

ALTI/KHINDIN

I don't care! Your petty beliefs mean nothing to me! Whoever it is, he sent Xena to stop me. It's a little too late for that.

She looks over the Peasants in the corral. They fear her, she can feel it.

ALTI/KHINDIN

I need a sacrifice. Her.

She points out a YOUNG GIRL. The Peasants start to CRY. Alti/Khindin feels the fear and LAUGHS as she heads over to her chair.

15A EXT. WOODS NEAR VILLAGE - DAY (FUTURE)

15A

As we find Xena, Gabrielle and a few of her Men, including Acklin:

XENA

Remember... signal first, then move toward the prisoners.

GABRIELLE

If this doesn't work... you know it all ends here. Us... our souls... everything.

XENA

It's our only choice. We just have to make it look convincing.

(beat)

Funny. In this world, you're the warrior. The hero.

GABRIELLE

Are you kidding? In this world, the Mother of Peace would be like a goddess to me. That's a hero.

Xena smiles.

XENA

Go. And be careful.

Gabrielle gives her a look like "Are you serious?", then heads off with her Men. Xena is left with Acklin.

ACKLIN

Good Mother... I'm afraid I don't understand a lot of this.

XENA

I'm with you there.

(then)

I need you to do me a favor. Go to the old village where Shakti rescued me. There is a house near the tree with the spear.

ACKLIN

Yes, I know the one.

XENA

Inside the second room, go to the south wall. Behind the third brick from the floor, you'll find a box. Bring it to me. Understand?

*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*

15A CONTINUED:

15A

ACKLIN

No, but I'll do what you want.

*

XENA

Good. Now go!

*

15B EXT. RUINED VILLAGE - DAY (FUTURE)

15B

Alti/Khindin looks down at the Young Girl with a smile.

ALTI/KHINDIN

Ah... fear. I want that fear.
I want the power inside you, the
power of your fear. The power of
your soul...

She touches a dagger's point to the Girl's arm. A trickle
of blood appears.

ALTI/KHINDIN

I can take it from you...

15B CONTINUED:

15B

XENA'S VOICE

The blood of an innocent gives power to no one. I should know.

Everyone reacts, startled as Xena walks calmly into the camp. Alti/Khindin smiles. One of Khindin's Men draws his sword.

ALTI/KHINDIN

No one touch her. She's here to plead for a life. This one. And those. Right, Xena?

XENA

Let this girl go, and I'll answer your question.

ALTI/KHINDIN

I posed a question?

XENA

Yes. You know why I'm here, but you can't figure out how. Or who sent me.

ALTI/KHINDIN

(beat)

Take this girl away... and get this old... frail lady a chair.

As Kelta moves, we:

CUT TO:

15C INT. NAIYIMA'S RUINED HOUSE - REAR ROOM (FUTURE)

15C*

As Acklin enters the room. He looks around the burnt, partial walls and heads toward one of them. Feeling tentatively, he finds a loose brick. Taking a rock, he hits it several times, knocking it free. Inside the wall, we find the small box Naiyima put there years ago. He looks at it, perhaps feeling its significance, then puts it under his robe and rushes out.

CUT TO:

16 OMITTED

16*

17 EXT. RUINED VILLAGE - DAY (FUTURE)

17

Xena is seated. The Girl is still on the ground between them. Alti/Khindin draws her sword.

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED:

17

ALTI/KHINDIN

We have so much to catch up on.
Last time I saw you... you were
killing me.

(beat)

You know what I'm after?

XENA

I can figure it out. Your soul
moved on, along with its evil.
You're looking for the spiritual
power you had before. And you've
found it. In the Karmic Cycle.

ALTI/KHINDIN

Very good. You're right. I was
shortsighted. The spiritual power
I was feeding on was nothing
compared to this! Every person
here has generations of power, just
waiting for me to take.
And do you know the key?

XENA

Fear.

ALTI/KHINDIN

Fear!

XENA

I know. It's like a heat radiating
from your victim. Fear is a flaw,
Alti. A subtle human flaw given to
us by the gods so they can exploit
us. You think it's wonderful to
have that power. But it's not.

ALTI/KHINDIN

It's not?

She reaches out and grabs Xena by the wrist, pulling her to
her feet and holding her tightly.

ALTI/KHINDIN

With the power fear gives me, I can
look into your mind for the truth.
Who sent you, Xena? Who? Who is
my enemy in the past? Is
it an Enlightened One? A Darsham?

Xena struggles. It looks strange, seeing her helpless in
Alti's grip.

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED: 2

17

Alti stares at Xena.

CLOSE ON XENA'S EYES

as it seems we can see into her mind. Suddenly:

CLIP - "SACRIFICE II" - XENA LOSING GABRIELLE.

CLIP - "A FAMILY AFFAIR" - XENA FINDING GABRIELLE.

CLIP - XENA TALKING TO GABRIELLE JUST MOMENTS AGO.

BACK TO SCENE

ALTI/KHINDIN

(realizing)

Your friend is... here?

Alti/Khindin turns to see:

18 EXT. RUINED VILLAGE - NEAR CORRAL - DAY (FUTURE)

18

Gabrielle and her Soldiers are in position. Half of them aim their arrows high. The other half are ready to rush the corral. Gabrielle screams:

GABRIELLE

Now!

And the Soldiers release their arrows. The others race for the corral.

19 EXT. RUINED VILLAGE - DAY (FUTURE)

19

As the arrows fly in, Alti/Khindin screams:

ALTI/KHINDIN

To arms!

And the battle is joined! Alti/Khindin leaps up, grabbing her sword, and attacks Shakti's Soldiers as they rush to release the Peasants. Gabrielle is at the head. She opens the corral as her Soldiers clash with Khindin's Men. *

In a bizarre twist, Xena yells to the Peasants while Gabrielle fights.

XENA

To the woods! Spread out!
Lose yourselves!

(CONTINUED)

19 CONTINUED:

19

The Peasants listen to her and rush the trees. Meanwhile, Alti/Khindin has just run through one of Shakti's Soldiers. Leaving the sword in his gut, she pulls up a crossbow and aims it at Gabrielle/Shakti. Xena sees her chance. She pulls the sword from the dying man and manages to lift it to strike at Alti/Khindin. *

ACKLIN'S VOICE

No!

Acklin is looking aghast at Xena.

ACKLIN

Good Mother! You can't kill!

Xena freezes. Alti/Khindin turns to see her. She kicks Xena in the gut, knocking her down and kicking the sword away. Turning toward Gabrielle, she reaches and makes the grabbing motion. Gabrielle flies across the courtyard and SLAMS into a wall. As Xena looks on in apparent shock, Alti/Khindin turns back to Acklin.

ALTI/KHINDIN

Thanks for the warning.

And she shoots Acklin, hitting him in the shoulder. As the man falls, we see the horror on Xena's face.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

20 INT. RUINED HOUSE - DAY (FUTURE)

20

Xena is in this house with Acklin. Acklin isn't dead, only wounded. Xena is tending him. Gabrielle lies in the corner, her head on a pillow.

XENA

Try to pull your shoulder forward. That'll take the pressure off the wound.

ACKLIN

I've never known such pain. I'm sorry, Sweet Mother. I thought you were going to kill.

XENA

I know. You were protecting my soul. Good thing you did or Armin... my Karma would have been destroyed.

*
*
*

ACKLIN

Good Mother, it can't be destroyed. But it can be made evil.

*
*
*
*

(re: wound)

Does this wound make me a warrior?

XENA

No. Shooting back makes you a warrior. Or a fool. It's hard to tell one from the other sometimes. Lift up.

She moves Acklin into a sitting position. Xena takes the small box from his robe. She smiles.

*
*

XENA

By the way... Good job.

*
*

ACKLIN

As you wished. Shakti... is he going to be all right?

*

XENA

Yeah. But I need her to come around quick. She has the secret to...

At that moment, Kelta enters the room. He takes a moment to look at them. Xena stares back. And, then, for a moment, Kelta drops his eyes. Perhaps something is there? Alti/Khindin enters. She smiles.

ALTI/KHINDIN

I am in awe, Xena. I truly am.
I see you found your friend.
Gabrielle, was it? When we last
talked, you thought she was dead.
But I knew better, didn't I?

She moves over to Gabrielle and puts her hand lightly on her forehead. Xena starts slightly, but Alti/Khindin ignores her.

ALTI/KHINDIN

Yes... she has a lot of power.
Her past lives have filled her.
Soon... that power... your power,
will be mine!

Xena charges her, but Kelta holds her (a little too gently, we might notice).

ALTI/KHINDIN

No, no. Not here. The people
still see you as Shakti and
Arminestra. They need to witness
the death of their heroes.
Tomorrow, you will join my tribute
to all those who stood against me.
On the stakes. Don't worry.
You'll die slow. Because I want
to feel every delicious moment
of your pain.

*
*
*
*
*
*

And she turns and exits, with Kelta following.

ACKLIN

That's it, then. Tomorrow...

He grimaces from the pain. Xena moves to him.

XENA

It's okay. Sleep.

She touches him on his temple and presses. His eyes close and he goes into a sleep. At that moment, a GROAN is heard. Xena moves to Gabrielle as she comes to.

GABRIELLE

Oh... did anyone get the number of that chariot?

(then)

Xena! Did it work? Are we...

XENA

Captured, yes. We have until morning to get ready. Alti will come for us then.

Xena hands her the small box. Inside is a quill and small ink vial.

*
*

GABRIELLE

Good, you got it. I hope... I hope I can remember everything Naiyima taught me.

*

XENA

She said it was the truth. Don't try to think. Just let it happen.

Gabrielle smiles.

GABRIELLE

Take off your cloak.

Xena removes her clothing, as we:

DISSOLVE TO:

21
THRU OMITTED
22

21
THRU
22

23 INT. RUINED HOUSE - NIGHT (FUTURE)

23

Xena and Gabrielle paint each other's bodies. We see SEVERAL SHOTS and ANGLES as the brush is dragged across bare skin, creating intricate designs. The MUSIC over this scene prevents us from hearing Gabrielle explaining the importance of the symbols. Then, at a certain point (all without dialogue), Gabrielle puts the fingers from both hands together, fingertip to fingertip, then pulls them quickly apart. Five strands of lines suspend in the air between her now-outstretched hands. Xena watches in amazement. Then delight. Mimicking the more subtle movements we saw Naiyima do, Gabrielle begins to play with the lines, sending them around the room, letting them run along her arm like a snake, and the like. She tosses a line around Xena and pulls her closer. Despite the seriousness of the situation, they LAUGH. The designs become more complicated as they stare at them. At one point, Xena reacts.

(CONTINUED)

23 CONTINUED:

23

XENA
There! Gabrielle, can you see it?
That's it!

GABRIELLE
It's the way back home.

XENA
For all of us.

From this, we:

CUT TO:

24 EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

24

The ceremony has begun. The fire has been lit. Naiyima is being led to the pedestal over the burning fire. Suhleema awaits her on the pedestal like an unwilling executioner.

SUHLEEMA
It's time...

CUT TO:

25 EXT. RUINED VILLAGE - DAY (FUTURE)

25

Alti/Khindin's Men are all lined up. Shakti's captured Soldiers are here as well. Alti/Khindin turns to Kelta. *

ALTI/KHINDIN
It's time.

Kelta nods and follows her toward the house. He waits outside while she goes in.

CUT TO:

26 INT. RUINED HOUSE - DAY (FUTURE)

26

Gabrielle and Xena face away from the entrance as Alti/Khindin enters.

ALTI/KHINDIN
It's judgement day. Today I realize what I was always meant to be. What you stopped me from becoming...

(CONTINUED)

26 CONTINUED:

26

Xena and Gabrielle turn and face her. They have Mehndi on them. At first, Alti/Khindin reacts. Then LAUGHS. Then, Gabrielle and Xena raise their arms into movements similar to Naiyima's. Their hands intertwine in this dance. Alti/Khindin is mesmerized.

Then, the lines JUMP FROM THEIR BODIES and rush toward Alti/Khindin. They grab her and pull her close. Xena and Gabrielle raise their hands toward each other. In each hand, we can see a distinctive design along the fingertips. It looks random until they join their hands, intertwining their fingers. The design becomes clear: a chakram. Behind their hands, a GLOW BEGINS. IT GROWS BRIGHTER as Alti/Khindin is propelled toward them...

27 EXT. RUINED VILLAGE - DAY (FUTURE)

27

Kelta is curious. A FLASH OF LIGHT is seen from within the house. Kelta turns when Khindin stumbles out of the doorway and to the ground. Arminestra and Shakti appear in the doorway, looking a bit confused. (NOTE: These are the real people, so we see them as who they are.) Kelta pulls them out.

KELTA

What did you do to her? What?

ARMINESTRA

We didn't do anything.

(then)

I can help... Please...

Kelta hesitates, then moves aside. Arminestra starts to check for Khindin's vital signs.

ARMINESTRA

She's not dead... Shakti, help me.

(a beat)

Shakti!

He kneels and begins to do a version of CPR on Khindin. Meanwhile:

28 EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

28

Suhleema stands next to Naiyima. As he looks away:

SUHLEEMA

So the gods have told us, so it must be done.

(CONTINUED)

28 CONTINUED:

28

And, with that, he pushes Naiyima into the burning fire. Suddenly, a FLASH OF LIGHT is seen and Xena leaps out of the fire, carrying Naiyima! Gabrielle jumps out beside her. (NOTE: Gabrielle and Xena still have Mehndi markings.) At first, the Villagers are surprised. Then Shimlai draws his sword and steps forward.

SUHLEEMA
Demons! Kill them! *

XENA
You've got bigger worries than us. *

Suddenly, an EXPLOSION in the middle of the fire knocks everyone to the ground. Xena protects Naiyima as she looks back to see a WHIRLWIND OF FIRE moving away from the pyre. It circles so quickly that it picks up dirt, mud, grime and begins to form a solid object.. a body. As the fire whirlwind dies down, we see its creation: Alti. She looks around, a smile on her face.

ALTI
Ah...! Another chance! You brought my soul here to defeat me, Xena.

She suddenly waves her hand. The sword flies out of Shimlai's hand. Another wave and he and his Men drop to the ground, writhing. Alti looks to Xena and begins to rise in the air.

ALTI
The problem is that you also brought back my powers!

With a wave of the hand, Xena, Gabrielle and Naiyima are knocked back. Off this, we:

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

29 EXT. VILLAGE - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

29

Alti is considering her next attack. Xena circles her warily.

ALTI

What's the matter, Xena? Having a problem fighting me in my spiritual state? Don't worry... I'm real! Formed from the evil of the earth!

She kicks Xena in the head.

ALTI

And I'm a much better fighter now than you ever dreamed!

Alti throws another kick. Xena dives to the ground, rolls to her feet and back-kicks at Alti. Alti grabs Xena's leg and twists. Xena does a horizontal spin and lands hard. Alti pounces... but Gabrielle jumps in between with a banner pole as a staff. She spins it toward Alti, but Alti straight-fists it and breaks it in half. Gabrielle reacts, trying to use the broken staff as chobos, but Alti grabs both of the sticks and, pulling them from Gabrielle, hits her on the face several times. Gabrielle goes sailing. Xena is still wobbly, on the ground.

Naiyima MOANS. Alti turns toward her.

ALTI

And you... you're the Darsham! I can feel it. I wanted your power, Xena... but her's... there's nothing that can compare to that! And I will have it!

She moves directly toward Naiyima. Xena kicks out and sweeps Alti's feet. Alti hits the ground as Xena kips to her feet and pulls her sword.

XENA

It's not that easy. Not with me here!

Xena leans forward, right into Alti's foot as it comes up. Her sword goes flying as Xena does a standing backflip onto her chest from the impact. Alti kips up and catches Xena's sword as it falls. Her eyes are blazing.

(CONTINUED)

29 CONTINUED:

29

ALTI
You'd be surprised just how
easy it is now!

Alti raises the sword. Gabrielle moves in again with a YELL and one of the Militia's spears. She deflects Alti's first strike. Then the second. The third catches Gabrielle under the arm. In shock, Gabrielle drops the spear. Alti brings her knee up into Gabrielle's face, knocking her back again. Xena stares at her friend as Alti slowly turns her attention to Xena.

ALTI
You... and your friend...
are just a side show.

And she turns toward Naiyima.

CUT TO:

30 EXT. SHAKTI'S CAMP - DAY (FUTURE)

30

All watch as Shakti continues to work on Khindin. Kelta can't believe it. Acklin comes up to stand next to Arminestra.

31 EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

31

Xena is still on the ground. Gabrielle is as well, staring at Xena, tears in her eyes from the pain. Alti is heading over to Naiyima. Xena starts to crawl toward Gabrielle but...

GABRIELLE
Xena... stop her...

Xena looks back at Alti, closes her eyes, and calls up the last reserves of energy from her depths. With THE YELL, she pops up and over Alti, landing behind her. She kicks Alti in the side of the head, knocking her toward the funeral pyre.

ALTI
Give up now, Xena. I'll not only
gain your power, but I'll burn with
the power of an Enlightened One!

XENA
Let me get you started on the
burning.

(CONTINUED)

31 CONTINUED:

31

And, with that, Xena does a sweep with her leg to the corner of the burning pyre, collapsing it and send the burning logs down toward Alti. Alti FLIES UP and over the fire. But Xena is already rolling. She grabs up a burning log and strikes, sending it into Alti's side. Alti SCREAMS with the pain. Xena moves in for the kill, but Alti GRABS XENA. Xena freezes... Alti's grip is inhuman. Alti stares into Xena's eyes with a smile.

ALTI/KHINDIN

I've got you now...

And Alti tightens her grip.

A31A OMITTED

A31A

31A EXT. RUINED VILLAGE - DAY (FUTURE)

31A

It doesn't look good for Khindin, but Arminestra is still struggling with her. As she tries, Kelta looks at her in amazement.

ACKLIN

If Khindin revives, she'll...

ARMINESTRA

I know what she'll do. I'm not a fool. Not like others.

(to Soldiers)

Don't you get it? Don't any of you get it? The real victory is love! It's peace! It's not this! This is just death. Even if you live, it's still a death of the spirit.

She returns to her endeavor as they watch.

32 OMITTED

32

33 EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

33

Xena is still in Alti's grip.

ALTI

Where do we start, Xena? Last time, I only showed you pain from this lifetime. Now I can choose from any of your lives. Want a peek at what's in front of you?

Xena reacts, as we see:

(CONTINUED)

33 CONTINUED:

33

CLIP - MEDIEVAL JOUSTING (STOCK FOOTAGE)

As a man in a suit of armor gets knocked off a horse by his attacker.

BACK TO SCENE

Xena reacts again, feeling the impact in her chest. Blood leaks out of her mouth.

ALTI

No, farther... farther away...

CLIP - AMERICAN CIVIL WAR (STOCK FOOTAGE)

As a line of Blue falters against a hail of gunfire at Gettysburg.

BACK TO SCENE

Xena takes the hits of many musket balls. Wounds open up on her as she twitches from the impacts.

ALTI

Lovely weapons! More pain... dig deep, Xena...

CLIP - VIETNAM MEDIVAC (STOCK FOOTAGE)

As wounded soldiers are being herded into a Huey under fire.

BACK TO SCENE

Xena tilts her head back and SCREAMS.

ALTI

Wonderful! Give me that pain!
That fear! Give it to me!

Xena looks up at her.

XENA

(weak)
You want it, you got it.

And Xena head-butts Alti. It's not as strong as it could be, but it breaks the grip. Xena falls to the ground. Alti recovers and moves forward again. Gabrielle reaches out and grabs Alti's ankle in a feeble attempt to stop her.

(CONTINUED)

33 CONTINUED: 2

33

ALTI

You... you're the one Xena was searching for.

(then)

Xena! I've been looking through your lives for your pain. And it's been here all along.

She reaches down and grabs Gabrielle's hair, pulling on it.

ALTI

Remember her destiny! I showed it to you. Now, I'm going to show it to her!

Xena SCREAMS.

CLIP - "ADVENTURES IN THE SIN TRADE II" - GABRIELLE CROSS SCENE:

Gabrielle looks toward Xena, speaks to her (this time, we can't hear her words) and the wood is put on her wrist. The hammer is raised and:

BACK TO SCENE

as Gabrielle SCREAMS in pain. Her body jerks from the impact of the hammer and nail. Again, she SCREAMS. Alti drags her upright, smiling at Xena. Blood begins pouring from Gabrielle's wrists.

Alti tilts her head toward the heavens, feeling the power surging into her from Gabrielle.

Xena raises up as best she can on her broken limbs. She pulls her chakram and throws it.

The chakram SLICES THROUGH GABRIELLE'S HAIR, dropping her to the ground. As Xena's arm is outstretched, she notices something. The Mehndi lines are GLOWING SLIGHTLY.

Naiyima begins to stir. She GROANS and tries to raise herself. Alti sees this.

ALTI

You're the one who sent them, Darsham. And now, you're going to die.

She moves toward Naiyima. Xena's lines are glowing BRIGHTER.

(CONTINUED)

33 CONTINUED: 3

33

XENA

Gabrielle! Naiyima's not Alti's enemy! It's the Mehndi! It's the truth!

Gabrielle looks to her, then to her own lines. They are also GLOWING. Gabrielle begins to move her hand, imitating the dance movements. Xena follows suit. As soon as they do, the LINES APPEAR, moving, snake-like, across the air.

Naiyima is standing. She stares at Alti blankly as Alti charges toward her. Suddenly, Alti is ensnared by the Mehndi lines! She backs up, trying to escape them. She dodges and ducks under them, but it's no good. They've caught her and hold her. She struggles. Now Xena and Gabrielle are trying to control the lines, holding onto them, being buffeted by Alti's struggling.

GABRIELLE

Xena! I can't keep this up forever!

XENA

Naiyima! Naiyima, tell us what to do! Tell us what the Mehndi need!

Naiyima looks at them, then starts DANCING! At first it looks like she is going back into her madness but, then, she lifts up her cloak and reveals a spot on her belly that is bare of markings. As she moves, we begin to see her stomach GLOW. Like a beacon of light, the glowing moves toward Alti. Alti SCREAMS as the light surrounds her and gets BRIGHTER. Xena and Gabrielle hold fast to the lines, pulling Alti closer to Naiyima. Several Villagers, including Suhleema, have returned and watch.

33A EXT. RUINED VILLAGE - DAY (FUTURE)

33A

Shakti is struggling with Khindin's life.

*

SHAKTI

*

I'm losing her... she's dying.

ARMINESTRA

(to Kelta)

Do you see? For all her glory, all her power, this is what awaits her! Death. Nothing glorious, nothing spectacular, just death!

33B EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

33B*

With a final pull, Alti is launched for Naiyima. Lines reach for her, grab her, and, with a SNAP OF LIGHT, pull her to Naiyima's stomach.

Suddenly, the LIGHT IS GONE. All that is left is Naiyima and an intricate design on her stomach: what's left of Alti's evil. As Naiyima lowers her cloak:

33C EXT. RUINED VILLAGE - DAY (FUTURE)

33C

Shakti slowly lowers Khindin to the ground.

*

SHAKTI

*

She's gone. She's dead.

With that, he stands and faces Kelta. The Men behind him are waiting for his order. A BEAT, then he yells over his shoulder:

KELTA

Break camp! We're leaving this land.

He starts to turn away, then turns back. He takes Arminestra's hand, kneels, and presses it to his forehead.

KELTA

Forgive us. We are foolish men.

With nothing more, he turns and walks away. Off that, we:

CUT TO:

33D EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

33D

The battle is over. Xena and Gabrielle lie broken and beaten. They crawl through their own pools of blood toward each other. As they embrace (to them, a final embrace) Naiyima walks over to them. The Villagers start to move closer. Suddenly, Suhleema prostrates himself before her.

SUHLEEMA

Please... Please, Enlightened One,
we didn't know! We didn't!

The rest of the village does the same. Naiyima ignores them all and kneels between Gabrielle and Xena. She begins a small hand movement that creates a GLOW. The Glow gets bigger until it surrounds the three of them in a protective cocoon.

NAIYIMA

Thank you, Xena. You destroyed
Alti at the one time in her karma
when she was the most powerful.

XENA

One time?

NAIYIMA

Oh, yes. Her soul is not
destroyed. It will return many
times. Filled with evil. But you
will always be there to meet it.
And you, Gabrielle. You two walk a
path together. Think of yourselves
as lines in the Mehndi. Separated,
but forever connected.

With that, she smiles and places a hand on each one of them. The light GLOWS BRIGHTER as their wounds begin to DISAPPEAR. Then, Naiyima stands, faces the heavens, and allows the Glow to surround her completely until we can't see her at all. The glowing ball of light moves upward slightly, then, suddenly, dissipates in all directions in a phosphorescent mist.

SILENCE. Xena and Gabrielle stand. Their wounds gone, they embrace. The Villagers begin to stand, confused and bewildered by what they just saw.

DISSOLVE TO:

35 EXT. ROAD OUT OF VILLAGE - DAY - CLOSE ON A FOOT

35

The foot is covered with Mehndi designs. One in particular, a large chakram design.

XENA'S VOICE

It's going to take some time to get used to.

WIDER

to include Xena and Gabrielle. It's Xena's foot we were looking at. Gabrielle's hair has now been trimmed.

GABRIELLE

I guess it's a day for changes.

Xena tousles Gabrielle's short hair.

XENA

Yeah. Like this. How does it feel?

GABRIELLE

Pretty good, actually. Although I would have liked to have had some word in it, thank you.

(beat)

It was like this in that vision.

XENA

I know. I've been thinking about that.

GABRIELLE

Well, let's not. Think about it, Xena. Alti was evil. Why would we believe anything she showed us?

XENA

I wish there was a way to know for sure.

Gabrielle looks at the Mehndi designs again.

GABRIELLE

The Mehndi contains the truth. If there there was a way to... you know...

She does a quick dance, but the lines don't appear.

(CONTINUED)

35 CONTINUED:

35

GABRIELLE

...do that again. Maybe we would know. Maybe Naiyima could have told us. Who do you think she was? I wish I could have asked her some questions about... I don't know... what it all means. Everything.

XENA

At least I have one answer. Gabrielle, think about it. My spirit... my Karma is to be a peacemaker. It's almost too good to hope for.

GABRIELLE

And mine is the leader of a nation. A beloved leader. A good-looking leader. A good-looking guy leader.

XENA

Now I'm wondering, how can I get closer to that? Closer to becoming that person?

GABRIELLE

She did say something else, though. Your karma and mine... she said they were intertwined.

*

Xena looks at her and smiles. She nods down the road.

(CONTINUED)

35 CONTINUED: 2

35

XENA

Maybe it's not the first time you
and I have walked down this road
together.

GABRIELLE

And, maybe, it won't be the last.

Xena looks down at her feet.

XENA

Wait. I know what's missing.
Hand me that quill.

She puts her foot up on a rock.

ANGLE - ON XENA'S FOOT

The round chakram design is prominent. Xena takes the quill
and draws a cross out from underneath it, making it into the
universal symbol for "woman."

BACK TO SCENE

Xena approves.

XENA

Like it?

GABRIELLE

Love it. It's a statement.

They LAUGH and head off, as we:

FADE OUT.

THE END

For information on the Official Xena:Warrior Princess™ Fan Club,
send a self-addressed, stamped business size envelope to:

Creation/Xena
100 West Broadway
Penthouse Suite 1200
Glendale, CA 91210

or e-mail your street address to: outback@primenet.com