

Xena: Warrior Princess - Subtext Virtual Season 7



Production #V718 - Promised Land

Virtual Airdate - May 22, 2002

WRITTEN BY

Susanne Beck

PRODUCED BY

Carol Stephens

DIRECTED BY

Denise Byrd

SCREENGRABS

Judi Mair

ARTWORK

Lucia

TITLE GRAPHIC

Linda (Calli)

TEASER

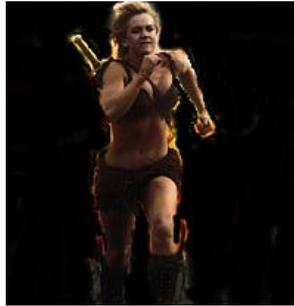
FADE IN:

EXT. AMAZON TERRITORY- NIGHT

GABRIELLE is leading the AMAZONS, who are running for their lives. XENA keeps pace with the slowest of the runners, urging her on with silent gestures and flashing eyes.

The large ARMY, now split in two and herding the Amazons toward the top of a high SEA CLIFF, can be heard in the distance, tromping through the unfamiliar forest at the edge of the Amazon Territory.

Gabrielle angles toward the right, still running full out. The rest of the group follows her without hesitation.



At the edge of the cliff, Gabrielle stops. Amazons, breathing hard, gather around her, and stare down at the narrow strip of beach far below which gives way to a dark, calm sea bisected by the light of the full moon shining brightly above.

The silhouettes of two large SHIPS sit anchored in deep water.

Gabrielle hurriedly pushes aside the thick grasses growing at the edge of the cliff, revealing a narrow, rocky and very steep trail that leads down to the beach, and the dark sea beyond. This is their escape route, but it is so narrow, only one woman can descend at a time.

Behind the Amazons, the noises of the approaching army come closer. Several Amazons look over their shoulders, their faces pale and frightened.

GABRIELLE

(to Raya)

Lead the way down to the beach.
Go as quickly as you can, but be
careful. Those rocks are loose.

RAYA

(angrily)

No. An Amazon doesn't tuck tail
and run. I say we stand and fight!

Some of the Amazons grumble in assent.

Gabrielle sighs.

GABRIELLE

Raya, we've been over this. An Amazon stands and fights, but she also knows when a battle can't be won.



She looks deep into Raya's stormy eyes.

GABRIELLE

(Cont'd)

We can't win this, Raya.

Grief floods Raya's face.

RAYA

The spirits of my mother, and her mother, and generations of our sisters fill this land. How can you ask us to leave them behind?

GABRIELLE

(compassionately)

You won't be leaving them behind. The ones you love will always be with you. Here.

Gabrielle places a hand on Raya's chest.

GABRIELLE

(Cont'd)

In your heart.



Impatient with the delay, Xena pushes through the milling group, her expression foreboding. Seeing this, Gabrielle removes her hand from Raya's chest and uses it to grasp Xena's arm in a gentle restraining gesture. She continues to look at Raya.

After a long moment, Raya's shoulders slump and she nods, though it's clear that she's anything but happy.

Gabrielle breathes a silent sigh of relief.

GABRIELLE

All right everyone. Single file down this cliff. Be quick, but careful. Hurry.

As the Amazons begin to move down the cliff, Gabrielle turns to Xena, who shakes her head.

XENA

A few minutes at most. They're almost through the woods.

Gabrielle unsheathes her sais.

GABRIELLE

Okay then.

Xena lays a hand on Gabrielle's wrist and shakes her head again.

XENA

You need to get below and light those signal fires. Our friends aboard those ships weren't expecting us quite so soon.



Bidu, who has been waiting her turn down the cliff, overhears Xena's words.

BIDU

Friends? Those are **our** ships?

GABRIELLE

(distractedly)

Yes.

BIDU

(confused)

But how? You haven't had time since....
You did this **before** your Joining?

XENA

Let's just say that we were going to get you to safety one way or another.

Bidu's look changes to one of respect, and she moves off to spread the word.

GABRIELLE

Xena....



XENA

Gabrielle, you know I'm right on this. I can handle these guys. You need to organize the evacuation or we'll never get them out of here.

Unable to argue around Xena's logic, Gabrielle finally nods.

GABRIELLE

You just damn well better get yourself back to me in one piece, Xena, because I'm **not** leaving here without you.

XENA

I will.



GABRIELLE

You'd just better.

With that, Gabrielle turns away. Xena watches her until she disappears from sight, climbing easily, but carefully, down the steep, narrow trail.

Xena squares her shoulders and turns, leaving the milling Amazons. She walks away from the cliff, a hand on her chakram. A cool sea breeze ruffles her hair and pushes her from behind as she waits, feet planted amidst the tall, waving grasses, for the army to arrive.



FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. AMAZON TERRITORY- NIGHT

Unhooking her chakram, Xena watches as the frontrunners of the approaching army finally break through the woods and onto the flat, grassy plain that borders the sea cliff.



Ten Amazons are still waiting their turns to go down the trail.

LEAD SOLDIER

There they are! Get them!!

SOLDIERS

AARRRGGGHHH!!

The soldiers begin to run across the plain, torches and swords held high in their hands.

Xena smiles coldly, her grip tightening on her chakram as she lets them approach.

When the soldiers are some fifty feet away, Xena releases her chakram. It flies through the air toward the soldiers, turns, and cuts a line through the torches and swords they hold in their hands. Metal and torches land on the ground. The flame from the torches immediately catches the tall grasses, setting up a roaring line of fire pushed back toward the soldiers by the wind from the sea.

Two soldiers catch fire. Running back toward their brethren screaming, they spread the fire across the tall, bone dry grass in their panic.

The others stop, turn, and run away from the quickly pursuing flames, back to the forest.

The chakram returns to Xena, and she catches it, a cold smile still on her face.



The fire continues to spread, spurred on by the dry grass and the stiff wind blowing it toward the woods and the fleeing army.

After a moment, when it's obvious her plan has worked, Xena turns away and heads for the trail down the cliff. A roaring, out of control fire backlights her movements.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

Two large signal fires have been set up along the beach. Gabrielle and the Amazons watch as the two darkened ships lower large rowboats down into the water and head for shore.

RAYA

You **planned** this?

GABRIELLE

Yes.

RAYA

How? When?

GABRIELLE

Xena knows a couple of Amazon sea captains who run their ships out of Piraeus. They have no tribe affiliation, but they owe her a couple of favors. We both decided it was a good idea to have a plan.

RAYA

When did you have time to think up this plan?

GABRIELLE

Does it matter? Xena made a promise to Ephiny. I'm the Amazon Queen. We both knew this was right.

RAYA

What about **our** say in this?
Didn't we have one?

Gabrielle's face sets.

GABRIELLE

No.



Raya grits her teeth, her anger obvious.

GABRIELLE

(softly, but firmly)

Raya, this isn't a democracy. I'm Queen here. You either do as I ask, or you leave. There are no other choices. Not anymore.

RAYA

You'd abandon me here?

GABRIELLE
(without hesitation)
Yes.
(beat)
You aren't the only one
without choices, Raya.



Gabrielle's expression softens as she senses Xena approaching from behind.

GABRIELLE
(to Raya)
Think about what I've said.

With that, Gabrielle turns and walks up to the beach toward Xena. Xena has a frown on her face and is looking past Gabrielle, sending Raya her own easily read message.

XENA
(to Gabrielle)
Problem?

GABRIELLE
Nothing that I couldn't handle.

Gabrielle looks up at the cliff and the flames framing it.

GABRIELLE
(Cont'd)
Nice job

XENA
They won't be bothering us for awhile.

She sees the rowboats land on the beach.

XENA
(Cont'd)
Let's get this show on the road.



The two walk toward the shoreline where the boats have landed. The Amazon captains, sisters, step from the boats and approach Xena and Gabrielle. SOROI and CYDELL look very much alike. Older, but not yet over-the-hill, both are tall, thin, blonde, deeply tanned and weathered from constant exposure to the elements. Though dressed flamboyantly in colorful silks, they look extremely capable.

Both wear identical smiles as they greet Xena, grasping her forearm in a warrior's handshake.

SOROI

We came as soon as we heard.
It's good to see you again, old friend.

XENA

Likewise. I'd like to introduce you to Gabrielle.



Both Amazons immediately straighten and salute Gabrielle, clenched fists over their hearts.

SOROI and CYDELL

My Queen.

GABRIELLE

Thank you both for coming.

CYDELL

For the future of our sisters,
we could do no less.

XENA

Let's get those boats loaded. That
grassfire isn't going to burn forever.

Both captains nod and begin ushering the Amazons onto their respective boats. It will take at least two trips to ferry all the Amazons aboard the ships.

Xena and Gabrielle step away from the commotion, standing close together in the signal fires' light.

GABRIELLE

Not exactly how I imagined
spending my wedding night.

XENA

(ruefully smiling)

That wasn't the plan, no.

Gabrielle sighs and looks down at the sand at her feet.

GABRIELLE

I understand the logic of us being in separate ships, but I don't have to like it.



XENA

I don't like it either, but it's for the best.
If one of the ships goes down....

Gabrielle looks back up, eyes blazing.

GABRIELLE

Don't say that, Xena. Don't even think it.
I finally have what I've been searching
for my entire life. I won't let that be
taken away from me. I won't let it.

Feeling Gabrielle's pain through this new bond they've formed, Xena does the only thing she can. Gathering Gabrielle in, she envelops her in a tight hug close against her body, loving her as best she can.

After a moment, Gabrielle gathers herself and pulls away, wiping her eyes.

GABRIELLE

(Cont'd)

Sorry about that.

Xena smiles sadly.

XENA

Don't be.

Reaching out, Xena tips Gabrielle's chin so that their eyes meet.

XENA

(Cont'd)

I'll make it up to you. I promise.



GABRIELLE

(softly)

I'll hold you to that.

Coming together, they kiss, and the sweet power of it rocks both to their very foundations. When they finally pull away, both are visibly shaken.



GABRIELLE

(Cont'd)

Wow. That...will take some getting used to.

Xena's reply is aborted by the sound of someone clearing their throat. Xena and Gabrielle turn to find Cydell looking at them, a knowing smirk curving her lips.

CYDELL

Any time you're ready,
Your Majesties.

Xena's hand extends lazily, causing the captain to double over, wheezing from the slap to her belly.

CYDELL

(breathlessly)

All right, al right.
I can take a hint.

Straightening, Cydell looks at Gabrielle, who is grinning from ear to ear.

CYDELL

(Cont'd)

Do you think you can lend her your
sense of humor for the journey?

Gabrielle laughs as Cydell shrinks away from another threatened slap in her direction.

XENA

Let's just get this over with.



CUT TO:

EXT. XENA'S SHIP - EVENING

It is several days into the journey and the Amazons are just now settling down. Some have spent the first hours at sea hanging over the ship's railing, feeding the ocean. Most now tap pressure points in their wrists, courtesy of Xena's teaching, even though the sea is very calm.

Too calm.

A small group stands off to one side, watching the sun set.

Xena and Cydell stand to the other, watching a roiling, angry cloudbank moving swiftly on a collision course with their ship.

CYDELL

It's gonna be a bad one.
Quick, but bad.

Xena nods, agreeing.

XENA

I'll get the Amazons below deck.



After staring a moment more at the increasingly angry sky, both women turn away. Cydell signals her crew as Xena walks over to the Amazons and begins directing them to the hold.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. XENA'S SHIP - EVENING

The storm has come much closer, blackening the sky above. The sea is white-capped and foamy with large, crashing waves that rock the ship sickeningly up and down and side to side.

The Amazons are safely below deck. The captain, her crew, and Xena are the only ones who remain. The large mainsail has been lowered to keep it from being ripped apart by the howling winds. Cydell is at the wheel, trying to keep the craft on course by mainly strength, white teeth gritted and flashing in the meager light.

At the stern, her hands gripping the railing, Xena looks over at Gabrielle's ship, which has also been readied for the storm. Unhooking her chakram, she waves it in the air, once, twice.

Gabrielle unsheathes her sais and returns the signal. All is as ready as it can be.

Xena nods grimly, and returns to her spot beside Cydell as the clouds unleash their fury. Rain sheets down, blown almost horizontal by the force of the shrieking wind. The only way to be heard above the din is to shout.

CYDELL

We'll have to ride it out! Hope it doesn't take us too far off course!!

XENA

Worry about the course later! Just concentrate on keeping us afloat!

CYDELL

Aye, aye, Cap'n!

The storm hits in all its fury. The ships are tossed about like children's toys by huge, foaming waves that crash over the deck repeatedly and with malicious intent.

CYDELL

(Cont'd)

Poseidon's in a feisty mood tonight!

XENA

Poseidon's dead!



CYDELL

Oh yeah! Remind me to thank you for that later!!

Some internal sense causes Xena to look toward the east. Her eyes widen slightly as a towering wave, taller by far than the rest they've encountered thus far, bears down swiftly in their direction. With no time to try and position the ship, Xena tackles Cydell and bears her down to the deck, grabbing hold of the wheelbase with her free hand and holding on for dear life.

CUT TO:

EXT. GABRIELLE'S SHIP - NIGHT

As predicted, the storm, while violent, is brief. Soroi breathes a sigh of relief as she steers her sail-less ship into brilliant moonlight and calming seas.

SOROI

(to herself)

Thank whatever gods are left.
That was a nasty one.

Slowly prying her fingers from the wheel, she looks down proudly at her crew who are slumped against the rail, soaked to the skin and breathing heavily. Gabrielle stands close by, also at the rail. As Soroi watches, Gabrielle's back stiffens and her chin snaps up as if in response to a summons only she can hear.

SOROI

(Cont'd)

Uh oh. I don't like the looks of that.

Stepping down onto the deck, Soroi approaches Gabrielle and lays a gentle hand on her shoulder.

Completely unaware of her visitor, Gabrielle doesn't move.

Soroi frowns.

SOROI

(Cont'd)

Gabrielle? Are you all right?

After a moment that seems to span eternity, Gabrielle's muscles finally relax enough for her to turn to the captain. Soroi gasps slightly at the mix of desolation and determination on Gabrielle's face.

GABRIELLE

We need to turn back.



SOROI

We need...what? Have you lost your senses? That storm was one of the worst I've ever been through, and you want to go through it again?

GABRIELLE

Yes.

(beat)

Something happened. Xena's in danger.

SOROI

What? You can't know that.

GABRIELLE

Yes, I can. And I do.

You've got to turn us back. Now.

Soroi shakes her head.

SOROI

I'm sorry, my Queen, but I can't do that. I won't put the lives of everyone on my ship at risk because you "think" something happened.

Gabrielle's jaw tenses, betraying her anger.

GABRIELLE

I don't "think" something happened.
I **know** something did.



Reaching out, she grabs the front of Soroi's silk vest and pulls down until their faces are mere inches apart. Gabrielle speaks, her voice very low and soft.

GABRIELLE

(Cont'd)

Now turn this ship around, or by the gods I'll grab the wheel and do it myself.

SOROI

You don't know how to captain a ship.

GABRIELLE

(growling)

I'll learn.

Soroi studies Gabrielle's face intently, and finally nods, pleased when the tight grip on her vest loosens, allowing her to straighten to her full height.

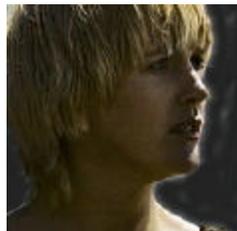
SOROI

(very formally)

It shall be as you order, my Queen.

GABRIELLE

Thank you.



Soroi nods once again, then returns to the wheel, eyes staring up at the star-filled sky.

SOROI

I must have done something to anger
the gods. Only the Furies could
have caused this kind of insanity.

With a grunt, she throws her weight behind the wheel, turning the large ship back in the direction of the furious storm.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. GABRIELLE'S SHIP - NIGHT

Gabrielle hangs onto the rail with iron hands as the ship pitches downward at a sickening angle. One hand lifts away to prod the pressure point at her wrist, then returns to grip the rail as the ship reverses its angle and heads up the next towering wave.

The ship seems to pause for a moment, as if floating on air, before slamming downward once again, rattling Gabrielle's teeth.

A crewmember spots something from the stern, and points frantically in that direction.

AMAZON CREWMEMBER

Look! Over there!!

Releasing her grip on the rail, Gabrielle runs across the slippery deck, slipping and falling, then rising desperately back to her feet, stumbling until she crashes into the rail on the opposite side. Her eyes strain to see through the blackness of the night and the sheeting rain that stings her eyes and the exposed areas of her skin.

What she sees causes her face to pale and her heart to clench painfully in her chest.

GABRIELLE

(whispering)

Dear gods. No.



FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

EXT. SEA - NIGHT

Gabrielle, Soroi, and the rest of the Amazon crew stand at the railing looking down into the still churning sea. Shattered bits of wood, are all that remains of Xena's ship. They float in and among the frothing, angry swells of the ocean below.

SOROI

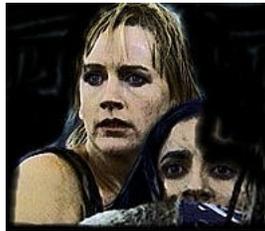
Dear gods.

AMAZON CREWMEMBER

They're all dead.

GABRIELLE

No they're not. Not all of them.



SOROI

(doubtfully)

My Queen....

GABRIELLE

(pointing)

Look!

A young woman, barely conscious, is seen gripping a splintered wooden plank, floating at the mercy of the sea.

Without thought, Gabrielle begins to climb the rail in preparation for jumping into the waters. Soroi pulls her back, one hand in the straps of her top.

SOROI

Wait! We'll use the rowboat!
If there's one, there's bound to be more!

Gabrielle nods, and follows captain and crew as they head for the rowboat.

CUT TO:

EXT. SEA - NIGHT

Gabrielle, Soroi and two crewmembers crew the boat. Between them, they have managed to rescue ten Amazons from the sea's rage. All are suffering from exposure to the cold water. Some are unconscious; most are bleeding from various injuries sustained when the ship disintegrated. Gabrielle and Soroi work together to drag up another Amazon, barely conscious and bleeding heavily from a cut above her left eyebrow.

AMAZON

T... thank you. I... t... thought I was going to d... die out there.

GABRIELLE

(urgently)

Have you seen Xena?



AMAZON

Y... yes. Sh... she saved my life.

SOROI

Cydell? Did you see Cydell?

AMAZON

Sh... she was helping Xena.

GABRIELLE

Do you know where they are?

AMAZON

N... no.

Gabrielle and Soroi exchange a look.

SOROI

We need to go back to the ship.

GABRIELLE

No! We can't! Xena's still out there!

SOROI

As is my sister. But our boat is full and these women need care.

Gabrielle reaches out and grabs Soroi's wrist.

GABRIELLE

I'm not leaving without her, Soroi.



SOROI

You won't have to. As soon as we've gotten these women to safety, we'll return. I swear it.

After a long moment, Gabrielle nods and releases her grip on the captain's wrist.

GABRIELLE

Just hurry. Please.

CUT TO:

EXT. SEA - NIGHT

The crew has managed to rescue seven more Amazons, including Cydell, who is found unconscious and tied to a large plank.

GABRIELLE

Xena....

SOROI

What?

GABRIELLE

Those knots. Xena uses them. She's the one who tied Cydell to this board. She's close by. I know she is.

SOROI

I'll praise her name to the ends of the earth when this is over. Now, help me get my sister on board.

She realizes to whom she's talking.

SOROI

(Cont'd)

My Queen.

With Cydell safely aboard, the crew begins rowing through the remaining wreckage, searching for any more survivors.

There are none.

SOROI

(hesitantly)

We need to get back to the ship.

GABRIELLE

(fiercely)

No. Not without Xena.

SOROI

There's no one left here. You've seen it yourself.

GABRIELLE

Don't tell me that. Xena's alive.



SOROI

(compassionately)
Gabrielle...

GABRIELLE

No! You listen to me. Xena is **alive**.
And we're not leaving here until we
find her. Do you understand me?!

SOROI

I know you want to believe
Xena is alive, my Queen, but...

Soroi is interrupted by a firm hand on her shoulder. She turns her head to see her sister sitting behind her, shivering in the chilled air.

CYDELL

Xena and Gabrielle were joined before
we set out. It was a blood bonding.

Soroi's eyes widen. She turns to look at Gabrielle, a new respect in her eyes.

CYDELL

(Cont'd, to Gabrielle)
Can you sense her? Do
you know where she is?

For a moment, Gabrielle is confused. She doesn't know what to do. Then instinct takes over and she closes her eyes, drawing on the meditation techniques she's learned in India, and from Xena. A very short time later, her eyes snap open, and she stares off to her left into the slowly calming sea.

GABRIELLE

That way. She's over there. Hurry.



Soroi nods, grabs an oar, and helps her crew start rowing in the direction indicated.

They get no more than a few strokes forward before a cresting wave almost swamps them. A dark figure seems to glide along the top of the wave, holding a smaller figure's head just above the water.



GABRIELLE

(Cont'd)

XENA!!

Soroi immediately sticks her oar out, and Xena grabs it with her free hand, using her great strength to pull herself next to the boat. With a mighty heave, she tosses her unconscious charge, ESME, into the boat, then pulls herself aboard, with some help with Gabrielle. She is chilled to the bone, soaked to the skin, and bleeding from at least a dozen cuts and scrapes to her body.

She is the most beautiful sight Gabrielle has ever seen. Gabrielle pulls Xena tightly against her.



GABRIELLE

Xena! Thank the gods you're all right.

Xena returns the hug, burying her face in Gabrielle's sodden hair.

Cydell and Soroi grin at one another, and the group heads back to the ship.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SHIP'S CABIN - MIDDAY

Xena and Gabrielle have worked throughout the night and into the morning, helping to care for the injured Amazons. Of the thirty-two women who went down with the ship, twenty-one have survived... all in various states of health.

Only after the last Amazon is stabilized does Xena give in and allow Gabrielle to lead her to their tiny, cramped cabin below deck.

Xena is naked on the narrow cot, face down as Gabrielle tends to the last of her injuries. It's a large, if shallow cut from left hip to her ribs on the lower right. She is almost asleep when she feels Gabrielle press a kiss between her shoulder blades and slip off the cot.

XENA

Where'ya going?



GABRIELLE

It's all right. I'm just going to check on the Amazons. Make sure everything's quiet.

Sighing, Xena pushes herself up to her knees.

GABRIELLE

(Cont'd)

And where do you think you're going?

XENA

(coming awake)

With you.

GABRIELLE

No, Xena. You need to rest.

XENA

(pointedly)

So do you.

GABRIELLE

Excuse me, but I wasn't the one who spent half the night in the water rescuing Amazons.

XENA

Musta been someone else who pulled me onto the boat, then. Funny, she looked just like you.



GABRIELLE

Xena....

XENA

No, no. Where you go, I go.
Package deal, remember?

Gabrielle sighs, trapped by her own words. A yawn catches up to her, and she gives into it, betraying her utter exhaustion.

GABRIELLE

Well... maybe I am a **little** tired.

XENA

(smirking)

Mm hmm.

GABRIELLE

I suppose a few hours of sleep couldn't hurt. But....

XENA

What?

GABRIELLE

I'm sure Adelia would welcome some help. She's not a young woman anymore, you know.

XENA

She has plenty of helpers, Gabrielle. One more isn't going to make that much of a difference.



Gabrielle yawns again.

GABRIELLE

I know you're right. It's... just.... If I'm sleeping when I know that other people are working, I don't know, I just feel... kind of... selfish.

Xena smiles slightly. She holds out a hand, which Gabrielle willingly grasps.

XENA

I think we've earned the right to be selfish once in awhile.



Gabrielle's brow furrows, then clears as she allows herself to be drawn against Xena's warm body. A kiss follows naturally, and both are lost to it for several long, intense moments.

GABRIELLE

(gasping)

You know, I think you might
be onto something.

XENA

Ya think so, huh?

GABRIELLE

(grinning)

Well...I might have to experiment a
little more, just to be sure. I wouldn't
want to be wrong about this.

XENA

We wouldn't want that, now would we.



FADE OUT.

EXT. SEAPORT -DAY- SEVERAL WEEKS LATER

Xena, Gabrielle and several Amazons walk through a bustling, colorful seaport, their arms laden with sacks of provisions for the next leg of the trip. The group comes to a stop by the docks as Xena looks over at a large, beautiful ship offloading its cargo.

As if she can read her mind, Gabrielle puts a hand on Xena's elbow and shakes her head in the negative.

XENA

(sighing)

Gabrielle....

GABRIELLE

We've gone over this already, Xena,
and my answer's still the same.
We're not splitting up again.

XENA

Gabrielle, Soroi's ship isn't built to carry so
many people. This journey is going to take
months, with us all crammed in like sardines.



GABRIELLE

Then we'll just have to learn how to
get very cozy with one another,
because I'm not changing my mind.

Rolling her eyes, Xena looks over her shoulder to Cydell, who smirks and shakes her head.

Xena grits her teeth.

XENA

Fine. We'll do it your way. But if your
Amazons start going after one
another with fishhooks, you deal with it.

Gabrielle grins.

GABRIELLE

Don't worry. I will.



DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SEA - LATE AFTERNOON

A month later, and so far, to the surprise of all, the journey has been a relatively peaceful one. The seas are calm, the sunsets spectacular, and the Amazons have been on their best behavior.

Xena, Gabrielle and Cydell stand at the rail, looking over the vast expanse of open sea.

GABRIELLE

Xena, look!

Xena and Cydell look down into the water to see a school of DOLPHINS swimming beside the ship, keeping pace easily. Gabrielle laughs as one of the dolphins leaps up, does a flip, and lands back in the water with a mighty splash.

XENA

Not a word, bard. Not a word.

Gabrielle smirks.

CYDELL

We'll be having good luck today.

GABRIELLE

What do you mean?

CYDELL

It's said that Poseidon shows his favor
by sending dolphins to guide and
protect ships on their journeys.

GABRIELLE

Poseidon's dead.



Cydell squints, looking out toward the horizon.

CYDELL

So's our luck.

Gabrielle follows Cydell's glance, but sees nothing. Beside her, she can feel Xena stiffen.

GABRIELLE

What is it?

XENA

(grimly)
Pirates.



FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

EXT. SHIP - LATE AFTERNOON

The PIRATE SHIP can now be easily seen by everyone aboard ship. Though still quite a distance away, it is gaining quickly.

GABRIELLE

Can we outrun them?

CYDELL

Too much ballast. With all these women and provisions, we'd be lucky to outrun a Roman bath.

Gabrielle flinches.

GABRIELLE

I'm....

CYDELL

'sall right. Nothing to be done about that now.

GABRIELLE

What **can** we do?



RAYA

I say we fight!

AMAZONS

YEAH!!

Raya turns in a circle, arms raised.

RAYA

We're Amazons, not old women!
I'm tired of running away! Let's
stand our ground and fight!

AMAZONS

YEAH!!

SOROI

(from the wheel)

Not on **my** ship, you're not.

RAYA

Stay out of this! You're
not even an Amazon!

Soroi puts a hand on the hilt of her sword.

SOROI

Would you like to test that theory?

Raya draws her sword.

RAYA

Let's get it on, old timer.

A piercing battle cry freezes the erstwhile combatants in their tracks, along with the rest of the Amazons. Xena strides onto the deck from the hold.

XENA

Any more fighting and I'll hand
you all over to the pirates myself.
Is that understood?



The Amazons grumble, but back down. No one is willing to test the validity of Xena's threat.

XENA

(Cont'd)

Good.

(beat)

Gabrielle, Cydell, Soroi, come with me.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SHIP'S CABIN - NIGHT

Dressed in simple breast wraps and loincloths, Xena and Gabrielle face one another. They smooth the last of the dark, pungent ointment that will keep them all but invisible to their enemies over their exposed flesh.

Xena teasingly wipes another daub along Gabrielle's nose. Gabrielle grins white teeth blinding against the oily dark of her face.

Xena slips a heavy waterskin over Gabrielle's shoulder.

XENA

Careful with that stuff.
It's worse than Greek fire.

GABRIELLE

I know. I'll be careful.

Nodding, Xena slips a heavy length of coiled rope over her own shoulder and grips her chakram securely in one hand.

XENA

Ready?

GABRIELLE

As I'll ever be.

XENA

Let's go.



CUT TO:

EXT. SHIP - NIGHT

The Amazon ship has slowed appreciably and a white flag, indicating surrender, flies from the main mast. Most of the Amazons are now below deck, and the ones that remain topside are hidden in the shadows, hands on their weapons.

The pirate ship has closed the distance and has likewise slowed in preparation for coming alongside the surrendering ship and boarding her.

Xena, Gabrielle, Soroi and Cydell stand in the shadows along side the rail.

XENA

You know what to do.

SOROI

Yes, though gods willing,
we won't have to.

Xena nods.

XENA

Just be prepared.

CYDELL

The Fates be with you both.

GABRIELLE

The Fates are....

CYDELL

Dead, I know. Just... good luck.

GABRIELLE

(smirking)

Who needs luck? I've got Xena.

Cydell and Soroi laugh softly as Xena and Gabrielle climb over the rail. Xena nods to Cydell, who nods back.

Xena and Gabrielle let go of their holds and plummet, feet first, into the water. The slowly moving hull of the Amazon ship hides them from the view of those on the pirate ship, and they tread water until their ship passes. Xena adjusts the rope and chakram.

XENA

Let's go.

CUT TO:

EXT. SEA - NIGHT

Xena and Gabrielle surface just as the pirate ship glides past, continuing to slow. Treading water, Xena lifts the heavy rope over her head, frays one end, and ties it securely through her chakram.

Also treading water, Gabrielle moves behind Xena and firmly grasps her around the waist.

XENA

Ready?

GABRIELLE

Yep.

With a slight grunt, Xena releases the chakram, and watches with satisfaction as it imbeds itself high in the square stern of the pirate ship. The rope unravels and becomes quickly taut, jerking both women hard and dragging them through the water. Working hand over hand, Xena slowly pulls them both along until they reach the ship. Gabrielle then reaches down and grabs the trailing rope in one hand, releases Xena, and follows her partner as Xena begins to climb the slippery hull.

CUT TO:

EXT. PIRATE SHIP - NIGHT

A split second after Gabrielle's feet land on the deck, she releases Xena, and ducks as a fist flies over her head, crushing the nose of the unfortunate pirate who has stumbled upon their covert entrance.

As Gabrielle drags the now unconscious pirate further into the shadows at the ship's stern, Xena hurriedly retrieves her chakram and drops the rope into the sea.

Turning, Xena hands Gabrielle the chakram, and briefly touches the side of Gabrielle's face.

XENA

Good luck.

GABRIELLE

You too.

With a battle cry, Xena leaps, and flips into a large group of pirates who are preparing to board the Amazon vessel. Bodies scatter as Xena straightens, grinning.

XENA

Hello, boys. Can I play too?

After a moment of shock, the pirates grab for their swords.

PIRATE CAPTAIN

GET HER!!!

The sound of sabers being unsheathed seems to echo in the still air as the pirates form a large circle surrounding Xena.

XENA

Hmm. And me without my weapons.

(slyly)

Whatever shall I do?



PIRATE

Aarrgghh!

The pirate rushes forward, intending to gut Xena through the middle. Her hand snakes out and clamps vice-like on his wrist. His sword drops neatly in her free hand.

XENA

For me? How considerate.

The pirate receives a hilt to the forehead for his courtesy and drops like a stone at Xena's feet.

XENA

(Cont'd)

C'mon, boys, let's step on it.

I don't have all day.



PIRATES

AARRGGGHH!

The pirates move in en masse, but Xena holds them off easily. She ducks under the sweeping blade of one, kicking out hard with one foot as she parries the swing of another. The first pirate screams in pain as his knee joint is shattered, and he falls to the ground, writhing.

Two more suddenly find their swords wrenched from their grips by the vicious left to right sweep of Xena's borrowed blade. They are quickly punched into oblivion.

Sensing another thug behind her, Xena holds her sword above her head, blade parallel to the ground, and blocks the cut meant to cleave her head in two. Then she drops to one knee, twirls the blade, and stabs backward and up, piercing her attacker's heart.

Another pirate takes advantage of her temporarily vulnerable position and knees her in the chest, causing her to roll to her back.

Dropping her borrowed sword, she catches the blade in two hands, inches from her face. Her lips split in a fierce grin.

XENA

Ah. Ah. That's not very nice.



The pirate howls as Xena launches a kick up between his legs.

Xena rolls away from the falling man, and comes to her feet, laughing and twirling her new sword in a series of intricate figure eights.

She spares a moment to look into the shadows in the ship's stern, and gives Gabrielle a quick nod.

Then, with another laugh, she begins backing toward the bow, wagging her fingers at the remaining pirates to get them to follow her.

They do.

Seeing all attention diverted from her, Gabrielle takes a step forward and flings the chakram toward the main mast. Her aim is true. Groaning, the huge mainsail begins to fall, its rope neatly sliced in two. She catches the chakram easily as it flies back to her.

GABRIELLE

Heh.

Several more pirates scream, trapped beneath the heavy weight of the fallen sail.

XENA

(wincing)

Ooh. That had to hurt, huh boys?



As their fellows struggle from beneath the sail, the rest of the pirates push forward, intent on trapping Xena against the narrow prow of the ship.

Another battle cry and Xena vaults over their heads, landing behind them and knocking out another two with a double back fist.

Gabrielle runs to the sail as the last man frees himself from under its weight. Slipping the heavy waterskin off of her shoulder, she uncaps it and begins squirting the pungent oil over the cloth sail in a random, but effective pattern.

That done, she tosses the skin to the side. She turns, just as a pirate approaches with a torch in one hand, and a sword in the other. Gabrielle indicates the torch.

GABRIELLE

Can I have that?

The pirate crumples to the ground, brained by the hilt of Xena's sword. The torch falls into Gabrielle's waiting hand.

GABRIELLE

Thanks!

With a mighty heave, Gabrielle tosses the torch onto the sail. The liquid catches immediately and flames greedily consume the cloth.

PIRATE CAPTAIN

FIRE!! FIRE!!!

The scene on deck becomes instant chaos as the pirates run pell-mell, some jumping overboard to get away from the fire, others running for buckets filled with rain water in order to put it out.

Xena and Gabrielle are quickly forgotten.

Grinning, Xena takes Gabrielle's hand and leads her to the rail. The pirate ship has pulled along side the Amazon ship, and both women can easily see the concerned faces of the Amazons peering across the narrow space separating them.

Xena bends slightly, lacing her hands together. Gabrielle steps into the foothold, and Xena straightens, catapulting Gabrielle into the air.

GABRIELLE

Yodel ay hee-HAH!

Tucking her body, Gabrielle does a double flip in the air and comes down easily, landing squarely in the middle of the deck of the Amazon ship.

XENA

Cheeeeeee-YAH!

Xena leaps off of the rail, tucks into a double flip of her own, adds a fancy twist, and lands beside Gabrielle, grinning.

GABRIELLE

Show off.

The Amazons cheer.

SOROI

All right, you landlubbers,
put your backs into it!!

The main sail is swiftly raised, and the Amazon ship catches the stirring wind, easily leaving the foundering pirate ship behind until it is nothing but a tiny speck in the background.

The Amazons continue to cheer, waving their swords and laughing.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. SHIP'S GALLEY - DAY

Another month has passed. The atmosphere aboard ship is tense, almost bordering on mutiny. The weather has turned cold and stormy, forcing most of the Amazons below deck for extended periods. Food, water, and patience are growing thin, and the Amazons, never the most peaceable of people, grow more belligerent by the day.

A fair sized group, including Raya, is gathered in the galley, bunched tightly around a small, rickety table as the ship rocks and heaves beneath their feet.

DALMA

If we don't find land soon, I swear I'll jump overboard and take my chances with the sea. I can't take much more of this.

RAYA

Who says we'll even find land? None of us even knows where we're going!

CELEN

That's true! We only have Xena's word that this wonderful place exists. None of us has ever seen it.

DALMA

Seen it? I've never even heard of it!

CELEN

Nor have I.

RAYA

I told you we shouldn't have trusted her. She's already murdered an entire tribe of our sisters. How do we know she's not going to do the same with us?

The Amazons grumble in agreement.

RAYA

We've followed her like children, allowing her to take us away from our homes, the land we've fought and bled for, the spirits of our ancestors! And for what? Months of floating around in an empty sea with no end in sight?

Raya rises from her seat, and unsheathes her sword.

RAYA

(Cont'd)

I say we take back what is ours!
For the Amazons!

AMAZONS

For the Amazons!!

The women turn to the door to find Gabrielle filling it, her face set and unreadable.

GABRIELLE

You weren't thinking of doing anything stupid, were you?



RAYA

Step out of the way, my Queen. Once you're away from Xena's influence, we know you'll see things our way.

GABRIELLE

Well see, that's where the problem is. To get to Xena, you'll have to go through me.

RAYA

Though it would pain us all to do so, my Queen... that can be arranged.

ADELIA

ENOUGH!!

Adelia pushes her way through the crowd until she stands between Gabrielle and Raya. She turns so she is facing the Amazons, her face red with anger.

ADELIA

(Cont'd)

You're Amazons! It's about time you started acting like Amazons instead of crazed Harpies!

She gestures toward Gabrielle.

ADELIA

(Cont'd)

This is your Queen! The woman you have sworn on your lives to serve and protect!

Several Amazons shuffle their feet, uncomfortable, their zeal lost to Adelia's passionate words.

RAYA

She is under the spell of that witch, Xena.

ADELIA

She is under no spell, Raya. She is trying to save what's left of this nation! And this is how you would repay her? With mutiny?

RAYA

What else would you have us do, Adelia? None of us knows where we're going. None of us knows that there is even such a place!
(beat, to Gabrielle)
Have you ever been there?

GABRIELLE

No, I haven't, but....



RAYA

See?? Even our Queen follows the Warrior Princess blindly into death! She's under a spell, I tell you!

AMAZONS

YES! GET XENA!!
FOR THE AMAZONS!!!

Xena appears behind Gabrielle's left shoulder, her eyes glittering.

XENA

(very softly)
You want me? Here I am.



The room falls silent once again.

Gabrielle steps into the room, and Xena moves to stand beside her.

XENA

(Cont'd)
C'mon, Raya. You want me out of the way? Fine. Give it your best shot.

Raya tightens her grip on her sword, jaws clenched, muscles tense. Then, just as suddenly, she relaxes and her gaze drops to the floor.

XENA

(Cont'd)

I thought as much.

She scans the crowd.

XENA

(Cont'd)

Anyone else wanna try?

The Amazons avoid her direct gaze, suddenly uncomfortable in the extreme.

XENA

(Cont'd)

You know, I don't mind if someone calls me a murderer, or a liar. I've been all those things in my life. But when someone calls Gabrielle a traitor, well, I have a problem with that. And when I have a problem with something, the results can be nasty. And I don't think you wanna see me when I'm nasty.



After a long moment of uncomfortable silence, Celen steps forward, hands empty and raised.

CELEN

Xena, we don't think our Queen is a traitor.

(beat)

At least, I don't. It's just that... we're cold and we're tired and we're sick, and we just want to go home.

Xena's expression softens.

XENA

I know. And you'll soon have that home. I promise.



CELEN

But how can we be sure? We've never heard of this place. How do we know it even exists?

GABRIELLE

If Xena says it exists, then it exists.



CELEN

But how do **we** know?

XENA

I've been there, Celen.

CUT TO:

EXT. SEA. FLASHBACK - MANY YEARS AGO

Xena dressed in furs, is standing on the deck of a small ship that is being tossed violently about by a strong storm. Behind her, the crew struggles to keep the ship afloat in the harsh wind and buffeting rains.

XENA

(VO)

After my time in the Norse lands, I commandeered a ship to sail back to Greece. It was spring, and the storms were intense, hitting us one after the other. The ship was crewed by Norsemen who knew their craft well, but even they couldn't fight against Poseidon's wrath.

CUT TO:

EXT. SEA. FLASHBACK - MANY YEARS AGO

Another storm buffets the ship. A huge wave turns the ship almost on its side. Crewmembers fly, screaming, into the sea. The ship is finally righted as another wave slams into it.

XENA

(VO)

We were blown far off course. Many died. Mostly the men who I'd recruited for a new army.

CUT TO:

EXT. SEA. FLASHBACK - MANY YEARS AGO

The ship continues to sail along a stormy sea. Caught in the valley between two huge waves, the hull is breached when it comes in contact with a sharp reef, tearing the ship almost in two. More men scream as they are thrown into the sea. The ship sinks quickly, leaving only small bits of itself to float on the buffeting waves.

XENA

(VO)

The ship was destroyed, and I was thrown into the sea with the rest of my men. I was one of the lucky ones. A board floated by and I was able to grab onto it. All around me, I could hear the screams of my men. They were injured, dying, begging the gods for help. Begging me.

CUT TO:

INT. GALLEY - PRESENT DAY

Gabrielle puts a hand on Xena's arm, her eyes sad.

GABRIELLE

Xena....

XENA

(smiling slightly)

It's all right, Gabrielle. They need to know.



CUT TO:

EXT. SEA. FLASHBACK - MANY YEARS AGO

Men scream and thrash about in the sea. The water churns and froths. Fins appear, bisecting the water with evil intent.

XENA

(VO)

So many of us in the water attracted sharks who fed on the injured and the dying. The sea ran red with their blood. One of my men, my second in command floated over to me. I grabbed him, but when I did, he tipped back. There was nothing left of him below the waist.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEACH. FLASHBACK - MANY YEARS AGO

Unconscious, Xena and several of her men float up onto a sandy beach. All are injured, dehydrated, and appear dead. A group of men and women, mahogany skinned with black hair, little clothing, and decorated with feathers and shells, appear on the beach. Immediately, they go to the aid of the strangers, pulling them out of the water and onto the shore, tending them.

XENA

(VO)

Somehow, we managed to wash up on the beach of a land I'd never seen. Its people were kind, and took us in, feeding us, sheltering us, and tending to our injuries as if we were their own. All without once ever asking us for anything in return.

INTERCUT TO:

Various scenes of the beautiful, bountiful land, its native people, and Xena's crew as they become stronger as the days pass.

XENA

(VO)

It wasn't long before we were back to full strength and exploring the land the Fates had guided us to. I'd never seen beauty like that anywhere, before or since. My men called it "the land of milk and honey". For one of the first times in my life, I felt a sense of peace, and of home.

CELEN

(VO)

Why didn't you stay?

XENA

(VO)

I couldn't. As I grew stronger, the rage in me started to return. And I knew that if I stayed much longer, I would turn it against the very people who had saved my life. The native people and the Norse crewmen who had managed to stay alive were experts at ship building. Together we built a ship that would carry me back to Greece.

INTERCUT TO:

Several scenes of a ship being built.

XENA

(VO)

When the job was done, I boarded that ship. In one of the few decisions during that period of my life which I can be proud of, I gave my men a choice. Come with me, or stay on this land that they'd come to love. A few chose to return with me. The rest I let stay, with my blessing. And then I left, to give vent to my rage once again.



DISSOLVE TO:

INT. GALLEY - PRESENT DAY

Gabrielle stands close to Xena, one arm around her waist. The Amazons listen enthralled. More than one has tears in her eyes.

AMAZON CREWMEMBER

(VO)

Land ho! Land!! Land ho!

The Amazons push past Xena and Gabrielle, yelling in excitement. Xena and Gabrielle embrace tightly.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW WORLD (North America) - DAY

Xena and Gabrielle stand on the shore, watching the Amazons joyfully embrace their new home. Native people smile, and greet the women, welcoming them to this land of bounty and beauty.

Celen breaks free from the crowd and approaches Xena and Gabrielle. Her face is flushed with excitement and joy.

CELEN

Xena, Gabrielle, I can't thank you enough. This place is everything you said, and more. I'm sorry we ever doubted you.

GABRIELLE

It's all right, Celen. I'm just glad you like it.



CELEN

Like it? I love it! This is a fitting home for the Amazons. You are truly our Queen. Thank you.

GABRIELLE

Don't thank me. Thank Xena. She's the one who got us here in one piece.

CELEN

Thank you, Xena. From the bottom of my heart. You will always have a place of honor among the Amazons.

XENA

Just be happy. That's reward enough.



CELEN

Oh, I assure you. We will.

Celen leaves to join her fellows. Xena and Gabrielle turn to one another, smiling.

GABRIELLE

Well, you did it.

XENA

(smirking)

Yes, **we** did.

Gabrielle embraces Xena tightly, then kisses her. The kiss grows deeper, until finally Xena pulls away slightly.

XENA

(Cont'd)

C'mon. I promised you a wedding night to remember.



Gabrielle laughs and the two walk toward the native village, hand in hand.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FOUR

TAG

FADE IN:

EXT. SHORE. DAY - A WEEK LATER

Xena and Gabrielle stand at the shore. Cydell stands next to a rowboat, ready to escort them back to the fully stocked and ready ship looming behind them.

ADELIA

Are you sure you won't reconsider?
The Nation needs her Queen,
and we need our friends.

GABRIELLE

I'm sorry, Adelia, but we can't.
Not now. Xena and I have
too much journeying left to do.
(beat)
But we'll be back one day. I promise.



ADELIA

We'll hold you to that, my Queen. Xena.
May the spirits of our ancestors guide you
safely home, and return you back to us very soon.

The group embraces, then steps away.

As Xena and Gabrielle turn toward the rowboat, **EPHINY** appears, shimmering between them.

GABRIELLE

Ephiny?

EPHINY

Thank you, Xena. You kept your promise
and didn't let the Amazon Nation die.
We'll always be in your debt.



XENA

No. The debt is paid. I can't erase what I did all those years ago. I can only hope that the Amazons will live on in spite of it.



EPHINY

Because of it, Xena. It made the person you are now. The person I'm proud to call my friend.

(beat, to Gabrielle)

And you, my friend, have proven yourself to be the true Queen of the Amazons. You've given us a home and a reason to live again. We'll never forget that. Ever.

Ephiny steps in and embraces them both tightly.

EPHINY

(Cont'd)

Good journey. And please come home again, soon.

Gabrielle smiles through her tears.

GABRIELLE

We will. I promise.



Ephiny fades from sight, and Xena and Gabrielle step into the rowboat. As it pulls away from shore, Gabrielle turns to face the Amazons, who are waving and shouting their goodbyes.

GABRIELLE

(Cont'd)

I'm going to miss this place.

Xena smiles and puts an arm around her shoulders.

XENA

Oh, I have a feeling we'll be back again.



FADE OUT.



DISCLAIMER

No ships were harmed during the making of this motion picture, and Rob's Folly still floats among the yachts of Auckland harbor like a vulture among swans.