

Xena: Warrior Princess - Subtext Virtual Season 8



Production #V804 - A Muse in the Hand - Part 2

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WRITTEN BY
TNovan

PRODUCED BY
Carol Stephens

DIRECTED BY
Denise Byrd

SCREENGRABS
Judi Mair

ARTWORK
Lucia

TITLE GRAPHIC
Linda (Calli)

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TEASER

FADE IN:

ANNOUNCER

Last Week on Xena

GABRIELLE

Okay, I admit it. I'm excited. I mean c'mon Xena, not EVERYONE gets an invitation to go see Sappho.

Xena chuckles and rubs her partner's back as she turns to watch the land growing closer.

XENA

I wouldn't call a request for help an invitation.

CUT TO:

Xena stops, and begins looking between Sappho and Gabrielle as an idea takes form; a smile begins to spread across her face. Gabrielle takes notice and sits up in her seat a little straighter.

GABRIELLE

Oh, I know that look. What are you thinking?

XENA

It just might be crazy enough to work.

SAPPHO

What?

CUT TO:

The two women step out of the dressing room. Xena's eyes widen when she looks at them dressed in identical outfits. Sappho's hair has been cut to match Gabrielle's and now it is nearly impossible to tell them apart.

Gabrielle and Sappho look at the shocked expression on Xena's face and without a word they both cross their arms at the same time and look at her with bemused smiles.

GABRIELLE/SAPPHO

Well?



XENA

Well what?

GABRIELLE

Who's who?

Xena walks slowly around them, looking them both over. She stops and slides her arms around Gabrielle from behind and whispers in her ear.

XENA

You're mine.

CUT TO:

ADRIENNE

What in the name of....

SAPPHO

I can explain.

ADRIENNE

I hope someone can. You tear
out of our bedroom... like....

She stops, turning slowly to Gabrielle.

ADRIENNE

(Cont'd)

It was you in our room, wasn't it?

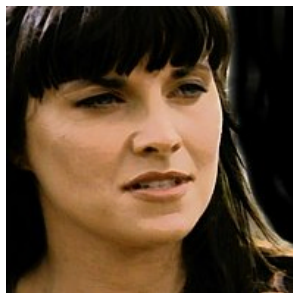
CUT TO:

GABRIELLE

Do you get the feeling for people who are in
love they don't like each other very much?

XENA

I think they've just got problems.
I would imagine the stress of this
situation is laying pretty heavy on them.



GABRIELLE

Then we have to find the answers. If
they're really in love, they deserve
the chance to fix what's wrong.

CUT TO:

Xena and Gabrielle enter the room to find Adrienne hand feeding Sappho an olive and then giving her a passionate kiss.

GABRIELLE

(whispering to Xena)

Maybe we should come back later.

Xena nods and they are about to leave when Sappho laughs, pulls back from Adrienne and waves them in.

SAPPHO

Don't be silly. Come in.

(to Adrienne)

You be good.

CUT TO:

GABRIELLE

I think I made a mistake.

XENA

What kind of mistake?

Gabrielle turns around and sighs.

GABRIELLE

I'm not so sure anymore.

XENA

You think Adrienne may
now be involved?

CUT TO:

Dashing over, she realizes it's Gabrielle who has taken the arrow in the back and takes her from Sappho, slowly lowering her to the ground. Gabrielle opens her eyes and smiles when she feels Xena's arms go around her.

GABRIELLE

Ouch.

Xena grins at Gabrielle's word, but they both know that the wound is worse than either is willing to admit.

XENA

You're gonna be okay.

Gabrielle just nods as her eyes slip shut.

ANNOUNCER

And now Part Two of A Muse in the Hand....

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. BEDROOM - EVE

Gabrielle is lying on her side as Xena gently places a bandage on her wound. Gabrielle slowly opens her eyes when she feels Xena's lips on her forehead.

GABRIELLE

I couldn't catch it and protect her too.



XENA

I know. You did the right thing.

GABRIELLE

Then why does it hurt so much?

XENA

The arrow went into your back, near your spine. It was deep; I had to do some serious cutting to get it out.

GABRIELLE

Am I gonna be okay?

XENA

Sure you are. Just a few days rest and you'll be fine.

She tries to hold back the tears as she combs her fingers through Gabrielle's hair.

XENA

(Cont'd)

Rest now okay?



Gabrielle makes a soft mewing sound and is really asleep before Xena even finishes the sentence.

Xena stands up and turns to where Adrienne and Sappho are seated at a table in the corner. She looks back at Gabrielle and slowly walks across the room. She stops and leans her hands on the table, glaring at Adrienne.

XENA

Now. Did. You. Have. Anything.
To. Do. With. That?

ADRIENNE

No! Xena, I swear I don't have any idea
who is behind this. I would never hurt
Sappho and I certainly wouldn't hurt Gabrielle.

Sappho takes Xena's clenched fist and rubs it.

SAPPHO

Is she okay?

XENA

There may be damage around her spine.
I won't know for sure until the swelling
goes down, but she may never walk again.

Sappho puts her face in her hands, shaking her head slowly. She looks back to Xena with tears in her eyes.

SAPPHO

I'm so sorry.

XENA

So am I. And so is whoever did this
to her. They've crossed a line with me.



ADRIENNE

Is there anything we can do to help?

XENA

(nodding)

Oh you better believe it.

CUT TO:

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

Xena, Adrienne and Sappho, still dressed like Gabrielle, are walking through the village and Xena is making a beeline for the magistrate's office. Adrienne takes her by the arm.

ADRIENNE

Xena, trust me on this one. Danus is a jackass. If you go in there looking for trouble, he'll give it to you.

XENA

Do I look like someone who worries about trouble?



ADRIENNE

No, but let me try something before you threaten to kill him. We've dealt with him a lot. We know how to handle him. We want to help you find out who hurt Gabrielle, but busting his head isn't going to get us anywhere.

XENA

Maybe not, but I'll feel a lot better.

Adrienne glances at Sappho and completely understands what Xena is saying.

ADRIENNE

I would too, but please let me try to help you first. You've helped us by keeping Sappho safe. It's the least we can do for the women who saved her life.

Xena nods reluctantly, but steps aside and lets Adrienne go in first.

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Danus is seated at a large table with several of his men. They're playing a card game of some type and there's a pile of money in the middle.

XENA

Now there's a vision of the people's tax money well spent.

All eyes turn to the trio. Adrienne steps forward, Sappho takes Xena hand and holds onto it. Partly for support, and partly to try and hold her back.

ADRIENNE

We need to make a report, Danus.
Someone tried to kill Sappho.

Danus drops his cards and gets up from the table.

DANUS

When?

ADRIENNE

We were at the construction site with
Xena and Gabrielle and someone
shot her from the top of the wall.

DANUS

Do you have any idea who it was?

XENA

If we did, we wouldn't be here.

DANUS

Oh, why not?

XENA

I would have already killed them.

SAPPHO

(quietly)

Xena....



Xena nods again and stops before she says too much. She looks at the faces of the young men playing cards with Danus. As she appraises them, she notices that they're wearing cloaks like the one that she saw disappear over the wall. She tenses and Sappho once again tries to calm her. She takes Xena by the arm and leads her to a corner.

SAPPHO

Don't.

XENA

It was one of them. I saw
one of those cloaks....

SAPPHO

Not necessarily. That's a standard part of the uniform and a lot of people in the island wear them anyhow. Xena, if you tip your hand, you won't do Gabrielle any good. Let's just get this done and get back to the house so you can be with her. Remember, we've got the brains, but Danus has the numbers and he wouldn't hesitate to set every guard under his command on you.

XENA

All right.

She smiles at Sappho.

XENA

(Cont'd)

You sound like Gabrielle.



SAPPHO

I take that as a great compliment.

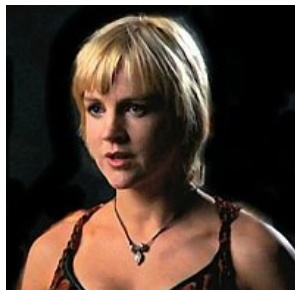
Across the room, Adrienne still has Danus engaged in conversation.

DANUS

I'll open an investigation immediately.
I'll bring some men and see what we can find out. I'll need to see Sappho too.

SAPPHO

You can't. She's badly injured and she needs to rest.



ADRIENNE

I won't let you disturb her, at least not today. Tomorrow perhaps.

DANUS

(nodding)

All right. Go back there and wait for us. We'll be out later.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Xena is sitting on the bed wiping down Gabrielle's skin with a cloth. It's apparent that her condition is not improving at all and has probably even slipped since Xena has seen her last.

XENA

Hang in there, sweetheart.

Sappho enters with a young servant woman who is carrying a tray with food and a few other items, which she places on a table next to the bed. She bows politely and leaves.

SAPPHO

How is she?

XENA

Not good. The wound is infected and she's running a fever.

SAPPHO

The herbs you asked for are right here.

XENA

Thank you. Can you keep running this over her forehead until I get them mixed?

SAPPHO

Of course.

They trade places and Xena begins mixing the herbs that hopefully will draw the infection from Gabrielle's body.

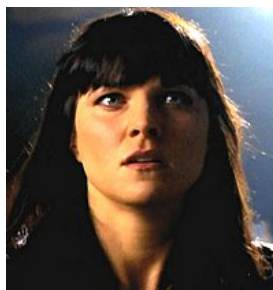
SAPPHO

(Cont'd)

Xena, do you think there's still a chance she won't walk again?

XENA

I think there is a very good chance of that.



SAPPHO

What will you do?

XENA

I'm not sure. The one place we could have gone doesn't exist anymore.

SAPPHO

You could stay here if you like.

XENA

What?

SAPPHO

I said, you could stay here on the island if you like. You'd be safe here and Gabrielle could help teach at the school. Assuming I ever get it open. Trust me when I tell you Xena, that this is the first time in my life that I have had problems here. It's always been a beautiful and very peaceful place. I would understand if you would rather leave the island though. I think it would be very difficult for you two to be happy here.

Xena nods as she continues mixing the herbs. She bites her lip for a second before retaking her seat on the bed.

XENA

Help me roll her onto her stomach.

Carefully, they roll her over, causing her to groan a little. Xena uncovers the wound, which is now inflamed, and a very angry red.

Sappho tries not to gag.

SAPPHO

Oh my.



XENA

Hand me that knife.

Sappho hands the requested item from the table next to the bed and Xena places the blade against Gabrielle's skin. Xena brushes her hand through Gabrielle's hair even though she's sure her partner can't hear her.

XENA

I'm sorry, sweetheart.
This is going to hurt.

She proceeds to cut open the wound. Blood and a foul smelling puss pour out of it. Xena is quick to load it up with clean cloth and carefully clean away the infection. Sappho is standing there obviously fighting the desire to be sick as she watches Gabrielle's hands reflex and grasp the sheets, even though she never makes a sound.

SAPPHO

Unconscious or not, I'd
be yelling like crazy.

XENA

She knows that she can't. It's a matter
of survival. If this had happened on the
road, she'd have to be quiet to
keep anyone from finding us.

Sappho shakes her head in disbelief. Xena just continues dealing with the wound, by packing herbs in it and then replacing the bandage.

SAPPHO

I'm sure she's going to be fine.
But just in case, please
consider my offer.

XENA

I will.

She glances down to Gabrielle, who is slowly releasing her grip on the linens.

XENA

(Cont'd)

We will. Maybe this is her chance
to be that famous playwright.

SAPPHO

Excuse me?

XENA

Just something from another life.



CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Xena is still sitting with Gabrielle, eating some stew but keeping a careful eye on her sleeping partner when there is a knock on the door.



XENA

Come in.

Adrienne enters. She is carrying a piece of cloth. She crosses to Xena and offers it.

ADRIENNE

Danus and his men just arrived, but I took the liberty of doing a little investigating on my own first. I found this caught on the branch of the tree that the arrow came from.

Xena takes the cloth.

XENA

Looks like our assassin mussed his wardrobe.

ADRIENNE

He did more than that. He mussed himself. There's a streak of blood on the other side of the wall about the width of, oh say, a hand.

XENA

I don't suppose you looked for the actual hand?

ADRIENNE

I don't think it was ripped off.

XENA

I can always hope.

ADRIENNE

True, but I suspect that it's badly broken. From the look of the ground where the landing took place, it wasn't the most graceful. Fortunately, I know someone who fits that description.

Xena is on her feet in a split second.

XENA

Who?

ADRIENNE

Danus' son, Demis. He's great with a crossbow, but clumsy as a goat.

XENA

Why would he do this?

ADRIENNE

Last year, he asked to study here. Sappho said yes, and from there everything went down hill. First, he has no talent. I mean he can't write, play an instrument, paint, work with clay and don't even let me tell you what happened when he tried to sing. Second, it became pretty clear that he had a horrible crush on Sappho. That was when we had to ask him to leave. Eventually we even had to go to his father and ask him to step in. After that we didn't have any more problems.

XENA

And now the idea of her opening a school just pushed him over the edge?

ADRIENNE

I think it's possible.

XENA

We need to find out for sure.



ADRIENNE

I know, and I have a plan if you're willing to hear it.

Xena gestures to Gabrielle.

XENA

Look at her. Of course I'm willing to listen to it.

Adrienne takes a seat at the table and gestures for Xena to join her.

ADRIENNE

I think this is what we should do.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Gabrielle is lying in bed. She is awake. There is a knock on the door.

GABRIELLE

Come in.

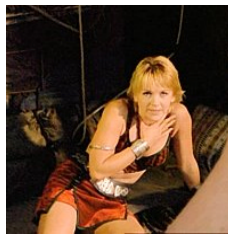
Sappho enters, carrying a large book under her arm and a bottle of ink and a few quills in the other.

SAPPHO

I thought you might enjoy having these,
if you find yourself in a mood to write.

GABRIELLE

Thanks, but I'm more interested
in getting out of this bed and
up on my own two feet.



SAPPHO

I'm sure of it, but just in case....

She places the items on the bed next to Gabrielle

SAPPHO

(Cont'd)

How are you feeling?

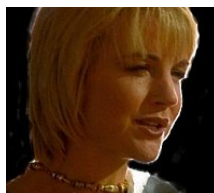
GABRIELLE

I'm fine. My back still hurts, but
Xena says that's normal.
I know I'll be up in a few days.

Sappho smiles gently. Having spoken with Xena, she knows the reality of the situation, but she can see that Gabrielle is not ready to admit the truth to herself or anyone else just yet.

SAPPHO

I'm sure everything will work out for the best.



GABRIELLE

Of course it will.

Gabrielle looks to Sappho, tears shimmering in her eyes.

GABRIELLE

(Cont'd)

It has to.

(beat)

It just has to.

SAPPHO

I've noticed something about
our respective partners
over the last week or so.

GABRIELLE

What's that?

SAPPHO

They are very much alike. I'm sure
whatever the outcome, you and
Xena will find a way to make this work.

GABRIELLE

Have you and Adrienne?

SAPPHO

Yes, thanks to you and Xena.

GABRIELLE

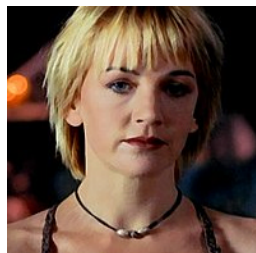
Well, considering that we haven't
found out who's behind this yet,
I'm glad some good came out of it.

SAPPHO

Oh don't give up yet. Xena and
Adrienne have got a plan cooking.
They're going to flush the culprit out.

GABRIELLE

I hate being this helpless.



SAPPHO

You're not helpless. You've been
slowed down, but not stopped.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - EVENING

Gabrielle is still lying in bed, but she is awake and alert. Xena is sitting next to the bed, running her fingers through Gabrielle's hair.

GABRIELLE

I'm not going to walk again, am I?

XENA

It's still too early to tell yet.

GABRIELLE

I still don't have any feeling and
I can't move my legs, Xena.

XENA

The wound is still pretty new
Gabrielle. Give it more time.



GABRIELLE

(angrily)

More time? How much more time
do you need to see that I'm never
going to get out of this bed?

XENA

Gabrielle....

GABRIELLE

No! No, Xena please spare me the
pep talks. Don't sit here and tell
me everything will be all right
when we know it won't be.

XENA

(firmly)

We don't know that.

Xena is trying not to get angry. She knows Gabrielle is striking out because the reality of the situation is starting to hit home.

XENA

(Cont'd)

Whatever the outcome may be,
you can't give up. It's not your
style. Whatever happens, you'll
be all right. We'll be all right.

GABRIELLE

Let's suppose for just a minute
that I'm not going to walk again.
What are we going to do?



XENA

The same thing we always do.
Make the best out of a bad situation.
We've had tons of practice doing that.

GABRIELLE

And where will we go?

XENA

The way I see it we have several options.

GABRIELLE

Care to share?

XENA

Sure. We can go somewhere nice
and build a little house, live in peace
and quiet for the rest of our lives. Or we
could go back to either Amphipolis
or Poteidaia and set up there.

Xena grins and tweaks Gabrielle's nose.

XENA

(Cont'd)

Become goat herders or something.



GABRIELLE

Yuck.

XENA
(*chuckling*)
Okay, we can go....

GABRIELLE
You know, no matter where we
go, or what we do, if I can't
walk, I'm a burden.

XENA
Don't say that.

GABRIELLE
It's true. I can't walk.
I can't run. I can't fight.

XENA
(*firmly*)
Now you listen to me. You have never
been or will you ever be a burden.

GABRIELLE
Xena....

XENA
No! I don't want you to think like that.
So you can't walk... that doesn't mean
everything else in your life stops. You
don't stop thinking, you don't stop
writing, and you don't stop loving
me. Just like I don't stop loving you.

Gabrielle smiles and pulls Xena's hand from under her chin, kissing it before she closes her eyes and a tear slips down her cheek.

XENA
(*Cont'd*)
Tell me Gabrielle... what would have happened
if I had never got my sight back? Or if this had
happened to me? You'd be doing the same
thing. Telling me about how we could make
it anyhow and find other things to do.

GABRIELLE
Like this would have happened to you.



XENA

Hey, I'm the one that Callisto nailed with an arrow, remember?

GABRIELLE

How did that happen anyhow?

XENA

Same way it happened with you. Lucky shot. I was too busy concentrating on something else to fend off the attack. Just like you were.

Xena slips from her chair and kneels next to the bed.

XENA

(Cont'd)

I love you. We will get through this. This is not the worst thing that has ever happened to us Gabrielle.

(teasingly)

I'd say in comparison it's a pretty simple problem to overcome.



GABRIELLE

I say again... I'm keeping you.

XENA

Good, because I'm keeping you. And if I have to, I can make you one of those chairs like Autolycus had. Then you can be mobile.

GABRIELLE

We could probably go get that one. I'm sure he's out of it now and chasing the girls around.

XENA

Somehow, I think Azel is putting a crimp in his chasing.

Xena sighs, kissing Gabrielle on the forehead.

XENA

(Cont'd)

But that doesn't matter. What does matter is that we'll get through this.

GABRIELLE

Just like always.

XENA

Just like always. There is another option I haven't mentioned yet.

GABRIELLE

Do tell.

XENA

Sappho has offered to let us stay here. Once you're better, she'd like you to help her teach at the school.

Gabrielle smiles at the thought, then bites her lip.

GABRIELLE

What about you? What would you do on this island?



XENA

Get a great tan?

Gabrielle gives her the 'come on, be serious' look.

XENA

(Cont'd)

Okay, I'm sure I could get a spot training the militia, or maybe serving as security advisor to Sappho.

Xena pauses, giving Gabrielle an evil teasing grin.

XENA

(Cont'd)

Or I could be a model for the art classes. I am experienced you know.

GABRIELLE

Keep dreaming.

XENA

Adrienne could teach me to throw pots.

GABRIELLE

Or you could teach her
how to actually work clay.

Xena laughs now and gives Gabrielle a gentle hug.

XENA

(reassuringly)

That's my girl. We're
going to be fine.

GABRIELLE

I never thought we'd really
be discussing this. Leaving
the road and what to do.

XENA

Well Gabrielle, if we're going to
do it, Lesbos is a beautiful place to
settle down. It's quiet and it's safe.

Gabrielle nods her agreement giving Xena a long hug in return.



GABRIELLE

I love you.

XENA

I love you too.

CUT TO:

INT. TAVERN - EVE

Xena and Adrienne enter the local tavern. Several of the islanders are there and the crowd seems happy. They each take a seat at the bar and slowly look around.

XENA

Is he here?

ADRIENNE

No, not yet, but give him time. He'll be here. Demis is a good poker player and never misses a game.

XENA

Funny, he wasn't playing the other day when we were at the magistrate's office.



ADRIENNE

Yeah, I know. That is very unusual for him.

XENA

Is that when you began to suspect him?

ADRIENNE

I'm not sure suspect is the right word, but I knew something wasn't right. I just want to get a look at his hand.

XENA

Do we have to leave it attached to his wrist?

ADRIENNE

I think that would be best.

XENA

You people don't have a lot of fun on this island, do you?

CUT TO:

EXT. BALCONY - EVENING

Gabrielle is seated in a chair looking out into the sky, which is a myriad of colors. She looks down at her legs and then draws a deep breath indicating that she's trying not to cry. Then she looks back to the sky.

GABRIELLE

Why? Why did you let this happen?
Especially now. What can I do?
What must I prove? Help me.

Xena is standing back in the shadows listening to her partner, slowly she steps forward and places her hands on Gabrielle's shoulders.

XENA

You don't need to make any deals.

She moves and kneels in front of Gabrielle.

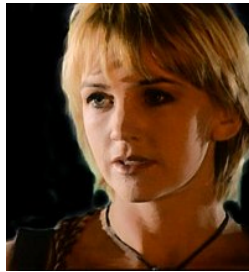
XENA

(Cont'd)

I swear to you and whatever God
or Gods may be above, that we
will do whatever we have to.

GABRIELLE

I've been thinking....



XENA

Not about something silly like you staying
here and my going off without you?

GABRIELLE

(smiling)

I REALLY hate it when you do that.

Xena smiles and brushes her fingers through Gabrielle's hair.

XENA

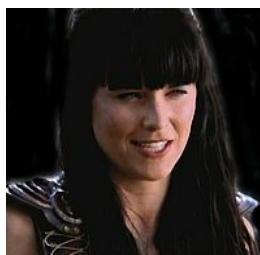
I've discovered since the bonding
that it's much easier now.

GABRIELLE

I know. There are times when I
can almost hear your thoughts.

XENA

Inside my head has got
to be a scary place.



GABRIELLE

Not as much as you might think.

Xena smiles and takes a deep, slow breath and releases it as slowly.

XENA

Adrienne and I put our plan into action tonight. We went to the bar and talked a little too much and a bit too loudly.

GABRIELLE

It's a good thing these people don't know you. They'd know it's a trap, because that's not your style at all.

XENA

Yeah but, they don't know it and now all we have to do it wait for someone to fall into it.

GABRIELLE

Promise me something?

XENA

Yes, Gabrielle I'll let them live.



GABRIELLE

(smiling)

Thank you.

XENA

Chalk it up to my getting soft in my old age.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Gabrielle is now sitting up in a chair. Xena is standing at her feet, gently working them, rubbing them and slowly bending her legs. Gabrielle grimaces and grips the arms of the chair.

GABRIELLE

That hurts.

XENA

I know, but we need to work the muscles.
Just a minute or two more, okay?

Gabrielle nods and braces for the next round. She sighs in relief when there is a knock on the door and Xena gently places her legs on a footstool in front of her.

XENA

Come in.

Adrienne and Sappho enter. Sappho goes directly to Gabrielle and kneels next to her.

SAPPHO

How do you feel?

Gabrielle is relieved beyond words that her exercise routine has been put on hold.

GABRIELLE

I think I love you.



ADRIENNE

(laughing)

Sorry, she's spoken for.
Besides that would be just....

She shivers involuntarily.

XENA

A narcissus' dream come true.
What can we do for you today?



SAPPHO

I wanted to let you know that I have my finest artisans making that chair you drew the plans for. You know Xena... you have a natural talent for sketching. You should take that up.

GABRIELLE

She has many skills.

ADRIENNE

And in the meantime, we thought we would come see if you would like to go to the garden for lunch. We have of course provided transportation for Gabrielle if you both would like to join us.

SAPPHO

(to Gabrielle)

It's a beautiful day.
You should come out.

XENA

(to Gabrielle)

You up to a little fresh
air and sunshine?

GABRIELLE

Will it get me out of
those exercises?



XENA

Yes.

GABRIELLE

Let's go.

Adrienne gestures to the door.

ADRIENNE

Madam, your carriage awaits.

GABRIELLE

(teasingly)

Thanks, Fred.

Xena bends over and gently pulls Gabrielle into her arms and cradles her close as they walk to the door.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

There is a large, plush sedan chair in the middle of the hall. Standing at the ends near the rods to carry it, four scantily clad well-muscled servants. Gabrielle smiles.

GABRIELLE

Now this is the only way to travel.

XENA

(teasingly)

Un-huh. Don't get used to it.

She places Gabrielle in the chair and throws a light blanket over her legs. Then she turns to Adrienne.

XENA

How long before the chair is ready?

ADRIENNE

Just few days.

XENA

We can't let her get use to this.
She's an Amazon Queen you know. This could go to her head.



They all laugh as the servants gently lift the chair.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - EVE

Xena is untying Gabrielle's boots and gently slipping them from her feet. She looks up and sees the depression on Gabrielle's face.

XENA

Hungry?

GABRIELLE

Not really.

XENA

Tired?

GABRIELLE

A little.

XENA

Do you want to talk about it?

GABRIELLE

What's to talk about?
I'm not getting better.



Xena stands up and walks to the other side of the room to change. She's angry, but she doesn't want to take her aggravation out on Gabrielle. Xena knows that Gabrielle is just frustrated and she is trying to maintain some sense of calm so that the situation doesn't blow up between them.

GABRIELLE

Xena?

XENA

Yeah?

GABRIELLE

I think the problem is that I've never felt so helpless. I've never had time to deal with anything like this. Our life lends itself to decisions on the fly. This is the first time I've had to take a long hard look at what is and what will be. And I'm not sure I like what I see.

XENA

I understand. Been there, done that.



CUT TO:

EXT. BUILDING SITE - DAY

Xena and Adrienne are back at the building site. As they pretend to look around the area, they look up to find Aubin walking toward them. He's still using a cane but the bandage is gone from his leg and foot.

Aubin eyes Xena, then addresses Adrienne.

AUBIN

How is Sappho doing?

ADRIENNE

As well as can be expected
under the circumstances.

AUBIN

And your companion
Xena, where is she?

XENA

She's with Sappho. We think it's
best that she not be left alone at
the moment. Some one tried
to kill her you know.



Aubin smirks and turns to Adrienne.

AUBIN

I suppose that since her recovery
is taking so much time, the plans
to open the school are put on hold.

ADRIENNE

Not at all. As a matter of fact, with
Xena and Gabrielle's help I will
personally be rededicating the
building. I intend to see to it that
the school is completed no
matter what happens to Sappho.

AUBIN

Aren't you afraid that whoever tried
to kill Sappho will come for you?

XENA

Do you think someone would
make the same mistake twice?

AUBIN

Anything is possible.

ADRIENNE

We'll be rededicating the building
in two weeks. Chancellor, will
you stay on until then?

AUBIN

I'd be honored.

Aubin bows and slowly walks away. Xena and Adrienne cross their arms in exactly the same way and watch him go.

XENA

He's an idiot.



CUT TO:

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Xena and Gabrielle are in the ocean. They have their arms wrapped around each other as they share a passionate kiss, while the surf splashes gently around them.

GABRIELLE

Now I know what paradise is.

XENA

This is good. Hold on, all right?

Gabrielle pushes herself around to Xena's back and holds on around her neck.

GABRIELLE

I got ya.

Xena starts swimming for shore, but before she gets there, she feels something bump her and stops. Carefully treading water with Gabrielle holding on, she looks around. Everything seems all right and there is no apparent danger. Then Gabrielle points.

GABRIELLE

Look!

Xena looks at the dorsal fin cutting through the water and as her mind processes what need to be done, a dolphin pops up out of the water and chatters at her.

GABRIELLE

Isn't he cute?



She reaches out and rubs his nose. The dolphin chatters wildly and then goes back under the water only to appear a second later with a friend. Both dolphins swim in circles around them.



XENA

I think they want to play.

Gabrielle reaches out and runs her hand along the back of the dolphin closest to her and then takes hold of the protruding fin. The dolphin slowly pulls her away from Xena and through the water as the second dolphin comes out of the water and dances on its tail before Xena. As she watches, it flips over backwards and is gone.



Xena starts to swim for the dolphin that's playing with Gabrielle, but they turn and Gabrielle is delivered safely back into Xena's arms.

They both watch as their two new friends jump and play with each other in the deeper water.

GABRIELLE

Now that was cool.

XENA

Yes, it was, but I'm pruin'. Come on.

She once again pulls Gabrielle into her arms and they head for shore. As she approaches the beach, Xena stands and carries Gabrielle the rest of the way onto dry sand.

She settles her down gently on a blanket, shaded by two large umbrellas. Gabrielle tosses Xena a cloth so she can dry off as she uses a matching one to do the same.

Xena flops down on the blanket next to Gabrielle and finishes drying off.

XENA

How do you feel?

Gabrielle looks down at her feet.

GABRIELLE

Well the fact that I can wiggle my toes makes me feel pretty good. That's a good sign, right?

XENA

It's a very good sign. I'm proud of you. You've been working hard.



GABRIELLE

I've had my moments. Like the other night, I'm sorry about that. I didn't mean to bite your head off.

XENA

You're allowed Gabrielle. What you're trying to do is very difficult. You had a serious back injury. The fact that you can move your toes and are starting to get some feeling back is amazing.

GABRIELLE

I just want to be back
on my own two feet.

XENA

I know you do.

Xena reaches out and caresses Gabrielle's cheek.

XENA

(Cont'd)

But no matter what happens,
you're doing great.

GABRIELLE

You have to say that.
You love me.

XENA

I don't have to,
but it's the truth.

GABRIELLE

Yeah well.... So you and
Adrienne have narrowed
down the suspect list?

XENA

We have a short list. Danus,
his idiot son Demis,
or Chancellor Aubin.

GABRIELLE

Why those three?

XENA

Well, we think Danus may be
holding a grudge because
Sappho pawned the idiot
son back off on him.

Gabrielle chuckles a bit and lies back on the blanket.

GABRIELLE

That's not nice.

XENA

Nice, no. True, yes. And we think
Demis is holding a grudge because
he got tossed out of here before there
was even a school to get tossed from.

GABRIELLE

And Aubin is just jealous.

XENA

That's the theory.

GABRIELLE

But he got hurt.

XENA

I can't prove it, but I think his accident was not so much an accident. I think he was trying to scare her out of opening the school by staging his own mishap.

GABRIELLE

Stupid, just stupid.

XENA

Yeah, he's not the brightest torch in the holder.



CUT TO:

EXT. BUILDING SITE - DAY

Adrienne, Xena and Sappho, continuing to pose as Gabrielle, are standing back from the group that has gathered for the rededication ceremony. The three chief suspects are there as well as about fifty others.

Adrienne is cautiously watching the entire crowd. Xena is focused on the three men she believes responsible for Gabrielle's injuries. It's not long before Aubin walks over to them.

He eyes Xena and 'Gabrielle' and then smiles at Adrienne.

AUBIN

Beautiful day.

ADRIENNE

It is a beautiful day and perfect for rededicating the school.

Danus and Demis join them. Danus stands up straight and inserts himself into the conversation.

DANUS

How is Sappho today?

ADRIENNE

Better. We moved her to the large bedroom at the south side of the house.

Adrienne points to the estate house.

ADRIENNE

(Cont'd)

She wanted to be able to watch the construction as she recuperates.

AUBIN

And neither of you are with her? Aren't you afraid some one will try to hurt her?

XENA

Not today. Whoever tried to hurt her is too busy with something else.



Xena notices Demis looks away from them and slowly raises his eyes to the window that 'Sappho'

XENA

(Cont'd)

Isn't that right, Demis?

DEMIS

I certainly hope so. You're going to catch him, aren't you, Xena?

She smiles at the questioning tone. It's not disdainful. It is filled with respect and expectation.

XENA

Yes, Demis, I am.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - EVENING

Xena carefully lifts Gabrielle into her arms and with Adrienne serving as lookout, she carries her out of the bedroom.

Adrienne speaks quietly into the second room.

ADRIENNE

We're ready.

Sappho, dressed in her own clothes with a bandage showing underneath, slips quickly into bed. Adrienne sits on the bed next to her and caresses her cheek.

ADRIENNE

I am so proud of you.

SAPPHO

Really? Why?



ADRIENNE

This is very courageous. Xena and I think we can trap him without using you as bait, there's no need for you to put yourself in harms way.

SAPPHO

No. I want to do this. Gabrielle has given up a lot for me. I owe this to her.

ADRIENNE

That was a very kind offer you made to Xena to allow them to stay here.

SAPPHO

She told you about that?

ADRIENNE

Yes, she said she would have to talk to Gabrielle about it first, but she was grateful they had another option open to them. Have I told you lately what a wonderful woman you are and how much I love you?

SAPPHO

I don't think you've mentioned it recently.

ADRIENNE

My mistake.

Adrienne leans in and kisses Sappho. Xena slips quietly back into the room. She gives them a minute before gently clearing her throat.

XENA

We're ready. Gabrielle is safely tucked away.

ADRIENNE

Good. Why don't you go ahead and get ready?

XENA

Yeah, I will. But before I do, I just wanted to say thanks. I mean it's not very often that we have to rely on someone else and I don't know how to....

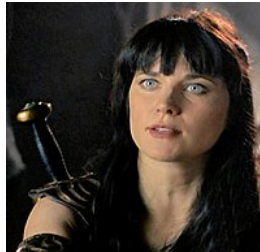
Adrienne smiles and saves Xena the trouble.

ADRIENNE

It's okay. We all have our moments and if it really were Sappho in Gabrielle's place, I know we could depend on you.

XENA

Well anyhow, thanks.



Adrienne nods and Xena slips into the room where she will wait until someone makes their move.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Adrienne is asleep in a chair next to the bed. Sappho is sleeping peacefully under the covers.

Xena is still watching the room from her hiding spot, peering from behind the door, which is just barely opened a crack. She perks up when the door to the bedroom opens and a cloaked figure slips in. Just as she is about to spring into action a noise from the balcony draws her attention there as she watches someone come over the top rail. She takes a deep breath and waits. Watching, she sees the figure on the balcony slip into the shadows while the figure in the room readies a dagger. When the cloaked figure starts across the room to the bed, both Xena and the figure spring to life. Xena tackles the hooded figure and knocks the knife from its hand before knocking it into unconsciousness. Then she springs on the other figure and kicks him back causing him to stumble and fall. The hood is pulled back to reveal DEMIS.

DEMIS

Wait!

He scrambles to his feet and puts his hands up in defense.

DEMIS

(Cont'd)

I'm not here to hurt her!
I'm here to stop him!

He points frantically at the figure on the floor. Keeping an eye on the young man, Xena goes back to the unconscious figure and throws his hood back to reveal Aubin.

Adrienne is now on her feet armed with a knife of her own as she stalks over to Demis.

ADRIENNE

Explain yourself.

DEMIS

I found out that he was the one who wanted to stop her from opening the school. He was afraid of the competition. He knew everyone would come here to study under Sappho. It was him in the tree, he shot Sappho. I had been following him and I knocked him out of the tree, before he could do anymore damage. He took off running and I hurt my hand. I couldn't stay around because I knew it looked like I had been the one.

XENA

And we should believe you why?



DEMIS

Because I care about her. I would never want anyone to hurt her. I tried to tell my father, but he wouldn't listen. He thinks I'm an idiot. I had to do it myself. I didn't know who I could trust. I swear! It's the truth.

He looks to Adrienne.

DEMIS

(Cont'd)

Look, I know she loves you and that I never stood a chance. But that doesn't stop me from caring about her. I would never hurt her. I promise.

Adrienne looks to Xena who nods her belief and Adrienne stands down. Sappho sits up then climbs out of the bed. Demis' eyes widen again.

DEMIS

Gabrielle?

SAPPHO

No Demis, it's me. Gabrielle was the one that was hurt, but we couldn't let anyone know that. We had to let people think it was me in order to flush out the real culprit. We knew word would get around and if people knew where they could find me they would try again.

DEMIS

(to Xena)

I'm sorry. I wish I could have been quicker to keep her from getting hurt.

SAPPHO

Why didn't you come forward when you found out?



DEMIS

Because until the other night, I wasn't sure. Then I hurt my hand in the fall and I was afraid that if I came forward you would think it was me, and that I was just trying to lay the blame on Aubin. I had to wait until he did something else. I'm sorry.

ADRIENNE

It's okay Demis.
Thank you for your efforts.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

EXT. TOWN - DAY

Xena and Adrienne are watching as Aubin is marched in chains from the magistrate's office to a waiting ship. Many of the people line the route, shouting and yelling angry comments as he passes by.

As he is led to the waiting ship he makes eyes contact with Xena. There is a brief pause in the walk and Xena steps forward.

XENA

I believe in justice and you had better pray that they keep you locked up for the rest of your life.



They guards pull Aubin away, taking him up the gangplank. Danus stops in front of Xena.

DANUS

I feel like I owe you an apology.
If I had listened to my son, this might not have happened.

XENA

Gabrielle and I knew the risks.
The mainland court had better do the right thing though.

DANUS

They will. I'm going with him.
I'm going to present the case.
I won't let him get away with it. He will be punished.

ADRIENNE

When you get back, come out to the house and let us know what happened.

DANUS

I will.

CUT TO:

INT. GREAT ROOM - EVENING

There is a huge party in progress. Adrienne and Sappho are mixing and being charming hosts to dozens of guests. They look very happy together. Smiling and winking at each other from across the room, it's apparent that they are working through any problems they may have had.

The doors open and Xena pushes Gabrielle's chair into the room. As the doors close, Sappho and Adrienne rush over to them and the foursome exchange hugs.

SAPPHO

Ladies and gentlemen, may I
have your attention please?

All voices stop and all eyes turn to the door.

SAPPHO

(Cont'd)

I would like to introduce my dear friends and
our honored guests, Xena and Gabrielle.
Without their help, the school would not be
opening and the feeling of safety and
security that we've always known here
would have been lost forever.



The room erupts in applause and they both look slightly embarrassed but take the accolades well. Adrienne gestures for the crowd to quiet.

ADRIENNE

As you know, Sappho's Academy for the
study of fine arts is going to become a
realization and it is only because of these
two people that it is very possible. First
we'd like to unveil the model of what the
completed building will look like.

She nods and two servants pull a sheet from a large table in the center of the room where a model of a large series of building is revealed to the crowd to much ooohing and ahing.

SAPPHO

And I'd like to take the time
to make the formal dedication
of one section of the building.

She steps back into the room. Adrienne and Xena gently lift Gabrielle's chair down the steps and then push it to the table.

SAPPHO

(Cont'd)

I knew when I met them that these
were two very special women.

She lays her hand on Gabrielle's shoulder.

SAPPHO

(Cont'd)

Especially this one,
she's so good looking.

The room erupts in laughter. Giving it a moment, Sappho moves to the table and retrieves a scroll from under the table.

SAPPHO

(Cont'd)

What I really didn't know about
Gabrielle was how incredibly
talented she is as a bard.

Gabrielle looks to Xena who tries to look innocent, but can't quite manage it. She looks away, trying to smother a guilty grin.



SAPPHO

(Cont'd)

With Xena's help, we have convinced
Gabrielle to write a new scroll for us
so that we can archive it in the
library that will bear her name.

Gabrielle looks properly embarrassed as the audience applauds once again. Xena gives her shoulders a loving rub.

GABRIELLE

(to Xena)

You knew about this.

XENA

Of course I did.

ADRIENNE

And now maybe we could ask our
eminent guest if she would give us a
live performance of one of her stories.

GABRIELLE

I... I... don't....

Xena steps forward.

XENA

Actually, if it is all right, I would like to try and be the storyteller tonight.

With the approval of the crowd, Xena steps up on a small stage and turns directly to Gabrielle. The room is quiet as the first words are heard.

XENA

I sing a song of Gabrielle, the fearless young girl who followed her heart and then stole mine....

CUT TO:

INT BEDROOM - NIGHT

Xena lifts Gabrielle from her chair and sits her on the bed, then kneels to help her take off her boots.

GABRIELLE

That was very sneaky. I can't believe you managed to keep that secret from me.



XENA

Gabrielle, you don't do the things I have done in my life without being able to keep a secret. Besides I just kept you focused on getting better.

Xena tosses Gabrielle's boots away and takes her feet gently into her hands.

XENA

(Cont'd)
Ready?

GABRIELLE

Sure.

She looks down and concentrates as she wills her feet to move in Xena's hands. After a moment there is movement in her right foot and a huge smile breaks out across her face.

GABRIELLE

Did you see that?!

XENA

Yes, I did. Try again.

Once again she does, and there is movement in her left foot, causing her foot to lift a bit from Xena's hand.

XENA

I think this is wonderful. Gabrielle, this is a very good sign. We should really start working as much as you can stand.

GABRIELLE

Absolutely. I love it here Xena and I could be very happy here, but this just isn't us. If I can get back on my feet and you think I'll still be as good as before, then I want to leave.

FADE TO:

EXT. GARDEN - DAY

Two parallel bars have been constructed and Xena places Gabrielle's chair at the end of them.

XENA

This is the big day. You ready?



GABRIELLE

You bet. We've worked hard to get me here.

XENA

You've done all the hard stuff.
I'm just the cheering section.

Gabrielle grasps the bars and pulls herself up. There is a brief look of pain then she grips the bars and forces her left leg forward, taking her first step on her own in months.

XENA

(Cont'd)

That's my girl. Come on,
Gabrielle you can do it.

GABRIELLE

One of my earliest lessons
coming back to haunt me.

XENA

What?

GABRIELLE

Start on the left foot.



She takes another three or four steps and pauses, gasping for air.

XENA

Do you want to stop?

GABRIELLE

No. I want you to go down there and
be ready to catch me, because I'm
going to fall flat on my face if you don't.

Xena chuckles and moves to the end of the bars.

GABRIELLE

What do I get if I get down there?

XENA

How about a kiss?

GABRIELLE

You can do better than that.

She grunts as she takes another two steps then pauses to catch her breath.

GABRIELLE

(Cont'd)

I know you can.

XENA

How about a kiss, a soak in
a hot tub and a massage?



GABRIELLE

Now you're talking.

CUT TO:

EXT. GARDEN - DAY

Gabrielle is on her feet. She and Xena are sparring, very slowly, with exaggerated slowness. Xena is making Gabrielle turn from side to side to block her blows. After one movement Gabrielle was not expecting she stops and bends over, dropping her staff.

GABRIELLE

Ah that stings!

She drops to the ground and rubs the small of her back. Xena joins her and helps her lay face down in the grass so she can rub her back.

XENA

Just breath slow and
easy. I've got ya.

She rubs Gabrielle's back and tries to make the obvious pain her partner is in disappear.

GABRIELLE

I'm walking, but I still can't fight!

XENA

Give it time. You're healing.
You know these things
don't happen overnight.

GABRIELLE

They do for you. I'm not sure I'll
ever be able to fight again. Every
time I have to extend my reach it
pulls and stings all the way to my toes.

Xena can hear the defeat in her voice and carefully pulls her into her arms, cradling her close.

XENA

It's okay. Just relax. We did a lot of work
today. Your muscles are just tired.



GABRIELLE

My everything is tired.

She sniffs and clings to Xena

XENA

I know.

Xena can tell now is the time to be sympathetic and not the cheering section. She just holds Gabrielle close as she watches the sun set over the ocean.

CUT TO:

EXT. GARDEN - DAY

Xena is seated on the ground in front of Gabrielle and Gabrielle has her feet planted in the middle of Xena's back

XENA

Push.

GABRIELLE

I don't want to hurt you.

XENA

You're not going to hurt me. Push.

Gabrielle lays back and pushes against Xena's back. Xena leans back pushing against Gabrielle's feet.

XENA

(Cont'd)

This will strengthen your muscles
and help loosen them up.

GABRIELLE

(grunting)

That's what you said about the
last five weird exercises we did.

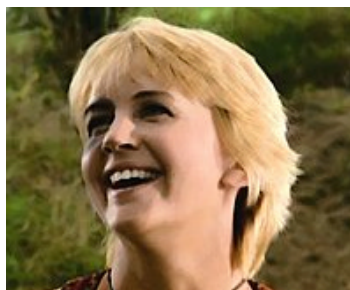
XENA

(teasingly)

And three days ago you could only
do three of those weird exercises.
Are you seeing a pattern here? You're
getting stronger everyday. I think it's
safe to say you're going to be fine.

GABRIELLE

Yeah, well, I'll be happy when I can
get my leg over my head again.



This comment causes Xena to burst out laughing, which causes them both to lose the position. She rolls onto her stomach and crawls over Gabrielle, looking down at her with a mischievous smile.

XENA
So will I.

Gabrielle just rolls her eyes and shakes her head.

XENA
(Cont'd)
Now you complain?

CUT TO:

EXT. GARDEN - DAY

Gabrielle has her sais in hand and is throwing them with a great deal of force at two targets at the other end of the garden. When the second sai lands dead on, she takes a step toward the target. She still has a slight limp, but it's clear her recovery is nearly complete and given time she will heal without any trace of her injury.

When she turns, she sees Sappho standing back at her throwing line. She puts her sais away and joins her friend.

SAPPHO
I guess this means that you
and Xena will be leaving soon.

GABRIELLE
In a couple weeks, I think.

SAPPHO
I'll be sorry to see you go.

GABRIELLE
Oh yeah, I've been a real joy.
Cranky, grumpy, and hard
to get along with.



SAPPHO
Courageous, determined. A
pleasure to be around considering
your circumstances. You are
a very inspiring person.

GABRIELLE

You give me too much credit.

SAPPHO

No, I've read those scrolls of yours that we've managed to round up. You have inspired a certain tall, dark, warrior type to things she never considered possible. People think I'm a talented person Gabrielle, but to be honest I'm in awe of you. I write because I dream about doing the things that you do. You do the things that you write about.

GABRIELLE

Thank you. Part of me was looking forward to being here and maybe teaching with you at the school. At the time it seemed like the perfect answer and I very well could have just given up and I know we would have stayed here. But I also know in my heart of hearts that Xena wouldn't have been truly happy here. She inspired me to work hard to get better.



SAPPHO

That's the beauty of your relationship. You seem to bring out the best in the other.

GABRIELLE

We do. Just like you and Adrienne do.

SAPPHO

I know, but I didn't realize that was true until I started reading some of your stories. It occurred to me that if you and Xena could survive all that you've been through and still be so bound together, then Adrienne and I should be able to work past the things we've been through. They are so very minor in comparison. And we're really trying. We've actually set aside time every night, just for us.

GABRIELLE

I'm glad. She loves you very much. She only wants to make you happy and keep you safe.

SAPPHO

I know, almost as much as
I love her stubborn soul.

Gabrielle laughs and shakes her head.

GABRIELLE

We must just attract them.

SAPPHO

Lucky us.



GABRIELLE

Very lucky us.

CUT TO:

INT. DINING ROOM - EVE

The four are having dinner together, laughing and enjoying the company.

SAPPHO

The ship will take you to the
Mainland tomorrow if you're
sure you want to leave.

XENA

It's not that we want to leave....

GABRIELLE

It's just what we do.

ADRIENNE

Somehow I knew you
were going to say that.

Xena gestures to Sappho.

XENA

So are you going to
leave it short?

SAPPHO

Yeah I think so. Leaves
more room for nuzzling.

Gabrielle looks to Xena, who smirks.

GABRIELLE

I should have known it wasn't just because, 'It'll be easier to take care of, Gabrielle'. After all these years, how naive can I be?



Xena leans over and nuzzles her neck.

XENA

Just the right amount, thanks.

CUT TO:

EXT. SHIP'S DECK - DAY

Xena is standing behind Gabrielle with her arms wrapped around her as they watch the island fade into the distance.

XENA

We come for a week
and end up....

GABRIELLE

We've spent less time
in worse places.

XENA

No kidding. I remember a day
in Rome that went on for a week.

GABRIELLE

Which one?

XENA

Your pick. How's your back?



GABRIELLE

Stiff, but other than that, it's fine.

XENA

We could have stayed there you know.

GABRIELLE

Nah, I don't think so. There must be someplace in the world you've never been. We should go check it out.

Xena laughs and tightens her arms around Gabrielle.



FADE OUT.

DISCLAIMER

Gabrielle has recovered just fine, but she plans on using this to get sympathy for some time to come.