

## Xena: Warrior Princess - Subtext Virtual Season 9



**Production #V909 – Bardcage**

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**WRITTEN BY**  
TNovan

**PRODUCED BY**  
Carol Stephens

**DIRECTED BY**  
Denise Byrd

**SCREENGRABS**  
Judi Mair

**ARTWORK**  
Lucia

**TITLE GRAPHIC**  
Linda (Calli)

## TEASER

FADE IN:

### INT. CHAMBER - DAY

A YOUNG MAN paces wildly around a spacious, well-appointed palace room. Sitting in a lounge chair near a fire in an older man, whose face is not yet seen.

#### YOUNG MAN

Father, we have to fix this!

#### OLDER MAN

Val, calm down. We will find an answer to this problem.

The man rises from the chair and we see that it is a much older PALAEMON. Crossing over to his son he takes him by the arms and forces him to stop pacing.

#### PALAEMON

Look at me.

Valius' eyes lift to meet his father's.

#### PALAEMON

*(cont'd)*

I understand your concern and I share it to some extent. We will not let this be a problem. We'll either find a true answer or make up a convincing lie.

#### VALIUS

Father, I don't want you to think I don't love him because I do. He's been there for me all my life, but this will be a disaster. King Dameus will call off the wedding if Vidalus....

#### PALAEMON

Stop. I told you, we will find a way. Have I ever lied to you before?

#### VALIUS

No.

#### PALAEMON

Have I ever let you down?

**VALIUS**

*(smiling)*

No.

**PALAEEMON**

And I have no intention of starting  
now. So ride over and see Alicia.  
Tell King Dameus that our kingdom  
is looking forward to receiving him  
and his entourage next week  
for the pre-wedding feast.

Valius seems to sigh in relief before hugging his father and leaving the room. Palaemon walks across the room and steps out onto a large balcony, where he can look over most of his kingdom.

**PALAEEMON**

*(cont'd)*

And exactly where am I supposed  
to find a real Amazon in a week?  
They're as scarce as hen's teeth.

**FADE OUT.**

**END OF TEASER**

## ACT ONE

FADE IN:

### EXT. MARKET - DAY

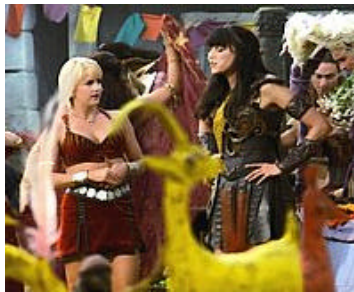
XENA and GABRIELLE are wandering through the market, stopping at various booths to browse or pick up a few items. Gabrielle hands them to Xena, who puts them in a shoulder bag she's carrying.

**XENA**

Are we done yet?

**GABRIELLE**

Nearly. What's the rush?  
You late for a hot date?



**XENA**

Oh, yeah. I met this cute little pig herder. Come on Gabrielle. You know I'd rather poke myself in the eye with a stick than shop.

Gabrielle laughs and takes the bag from her partner.

**GABRIELLE**

G'wan, get. I'm sure you can find something to occupy your time until I'm done. I'll meet you back at the inn.

**XENA**

You're sure?

**GABRIELLE**

I'm positive. Now go before I change my mind.

**XENA**

I don't have to be told twice. See you at the inn.

Xena leans over and gives Gabrielle a quick peck on the cheek and then disappears into the crowd. Gabrielle smiles, shakes her head and goes back to her shopping.

**GABRIELLE**

Warriors.

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. MARKET - DAY**

Xena is now wandering through a section of town that is far more to her liking with shops selling weapons, armor and other 'warrior' type items. As she picks up a dagger, it's clear half her attention is on the dagger and the other half is on all the guards milling around the city. She waves the knife and draws the vendor over.

**XENA**

How much?

**VENDOR**

Twenty dinars.

An eyebrow goes up and the vendor gulps.

**VENDOR**

*(cont'd)*

Fif...fifteen dinars?

The other eyebrow goes up and she starts to lay the dagger down.

**VENDOR**

*(cont'd)*

Twelve?

Xena takes in a deep, thoughtful breath and then shakes her head.

**VENDOR**

*(cont'd)*

Oh come on, lady.

Yer killin' me here.

**XENA**

Ten. Not a dinar more.



**VENDOR**

Sold.

She digs a few coins out and tosses them to his table as she picks up her new dagger.

**XENA**

Are you expecting  
an attack?

**VENDOR**

What?

Xena gestures around her at all the guards.

**VENDOR**

*(cont'd)*

Oh that, no. That's King Dameus'  
guard. They're always in the  
streets. A deterrent, I think.

The vendor leans over the table and drops his voice to a whisper.

**VENDOR**

*(cont'd)*

That's why prices are so inflated  
in this town. He taxes us to death  
to keep his army up. The treasury  
is always empty because he is  
constantly supplying his troops  
with new weapons and armor.

**XENA**

A well-prepared army  
is a good thing to have.

The vendor stands back and gives her a disgusted look.

**VENDOR**

If we had any real enemies in the  
area it would be all right, but our  
closest neighbor is Magara. The  
king there is a smart man. His  
kingdom has no power to speak  
of, but he's got vaults of dinars.  
And his son is going to marry  
the Princess Alicia in a month.

Xena nods, knowing how these things work.

**XENA**

So he gets part of an army  
and you get the dinars. A  
marriage made on Olympus.

**VENDOR**

Oh no, Prince Valius and  
Princess Alicia honestly  
love each other.

**XENA**

Well, that's a nice change.

**VENDOR**

The marriage will be good for  
both kingdoms and since the  
Amazons seemed to have  
disappeared, King Palaemon....

**XENA**

What did you say?

**VENDOR**

I said since the Amazons....

**XENA**

No, after that, King Who?



**VENDOR**

Palaemon.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. INN - AFTERNOON**

Xena enters the common room of the inn and her eyes land immediately on their target.

**XENA**

Gabrielle! Come on,  
we're leaving.

Gabrielle looks up from a scroll she has been working on. The look of confusion is clear as Xena crosses the room.

**GABRIELLE**

What?

**XENA**

We're leaving; we're going to Magara.

**GABRIELLE**

Why?



**XENA**

Palaemon is there.  
He's the king.

**GABRIELLE**

Palaemon? Sumac oil?  
That Palaemon?

**XENA**

The one and the same.

**GABRIELLE**

Where do you come up  
with this information?

Gabrielle smiles, honestly amazed and amused at her partner's ability to get information out of thin air.

**XENA**

That's not important. But we need to go to Magara. Palaemon's son is apparently going to marry the daughter of this kingdom's king.

**GABRIELLE**

How nice!



**XENA**

Yeah, but something's not right.  
From what I found out this kingdom  
could have taken over Magara  
anytime it wanted, but it didn't  
for some reason. And now the  
kids are getting married....

**GABRIELLE**

Do you know why Dameus  
didn't conquer Magara?

**XENA**

I don't know why, but I know it  
had something to do with the  
Amazons. And now that they're  
gone, a royal wedding is about  
to take place. Convenient huh?

**GABRIELLE**

I guess we're going to Magara.

**DISSOLVE TO:**

**EXT. VILLAGE - EVE**

As they enter the village, both Xena and Gabrielle take notice of the high walls that surround the village. There are a few guards walking the walls. Some men and some women and all of them have bow and arrows.

**GABRIELLE**

I recognize that type of  
fletching. It's definitely  
Amazon. What would Palaemon  
be doing with Amazons?

**XENA**

Maybe he paid the Amazons  
to protect his kingdom.

**GABRIELLE**

And now that they're gone,  
he has no protection?

**XENA**

It's possible.

**GABRIELLE**

You're right. We need  
to find out. Think Palaemon  
will see us? No pun intended.

**XENA**

There's only one  
way to find out.



**CUT TO:**

**EXT. PALACE - EVE**

As they approach the palace, they are quite aware of the lack of guards. Glancing at each other, Xena just shrugs and pushes one of the heavy wooden and iron doors open. Inside one guard meets them and places his hand on the hilt of his sword.

**GUARD**

Halt!

They stop in their tracks. Gabrielle raises her hands in a placating gesture.

**GABRIELLE**

Easy. We're friends and  
we're here to see your king.

**GUARD**

I was not informed of any  
visitors to the palace.

**XENA**

He didn't know we were in the  
area, but he'll see us. Tell  
him Xena and Gabrielle  
are here to see him.

The young guard looks at them and then pulls a cord, which apparently summons a palace messenger. It doesn't take long for a boy of about 10 to appear in the entryway.

**GUARD**

Go tell King Palaemon that  
'Xena' and 'Gabrielle'  
are here to see him.

Without a word, the boy bows slightly and jogs down the hall, disappearing around the corner.

**CUT TO:**

## INT. PALACE CHAMBER - EVENING

A weary looking Palaemon sits at a table. He is watching Vidalus who stands near an open window, watching the sun dip behind the hills that surround the small kingdom.

**PALAEMON**

You do understand,  
don't you?

Vidalus turns and stares at Palaemon. There are clearly tears shimmering in his eyes, but others have fallen down his cheeks.

**VIDALUS**

You want to hear I  
understand, so that's  
what I'll say.  
Yes, I understand.

**PALAEMON**

I want the truth.

**VIDALUS**

No, you don't!

He waves an agitated hand in a motion that can only be described as 'feminine', causing his flowing blue and golden robes to flourish around him.

**VIDALUS**

*(cont'd)*

If you WANTED the truth you  
wouldn't be doing this. You  
wouldn't deny the simple  
truth. You wouldn't want  
to hide me away!

**PALAEMON**

That's not what  
we want to do....

**VIDALUS**

Oh, it's not? Funny... going  
in search of a woman to  
play the Amazon mother  
of our son certainly sounds  
like hiding me away.

Agitated, Palaemon stands and crosses to Vidalus. He stops short and gestures his frustration instead of completing the touch he was about to offer.

**PALAEMON**

You know if King Dameus thinks  
there is anything unusual here  
he will call off the wedding.  
Forget what could happen to us.  
What would happen to Val?  
He loves that girl. He would be  
devastated if anything happens.

Palaemon reaches out and places a gentle hand on Vidalus' arm.

**PALAEMON**

*(cont'd)*

You've always done what's  
best for him. How can  
this be any different?

Vidalus, far too overcome with emotion to speak simply moves closer and is embraced by Palaemon, who rubs his back and does his best to comfort.

**PALAEMON**

*(cont'd)*

I promise it'll be okay.

They stand like that without moving when there is a knock on the door.

**PALAEMON**

Yes!

The voice of the boy floats through the closed door.

**BOY**

Majesty, the door guard sent  
me to tell you that Xena and  
Gabrielle are here to see you.

Palaemon looks temporarily shocked, then a smile spreads across his face and he pulls slowly back from Vidalus and looks down at him.

**PALAEMON**

I know everything will be all  
right now. Come on, get  
yourself together and  
let's go see them.

**FADE OUT.**

**END OF ACT ONE**

## ACT TWO

FADE IN:

### INT. FRONT HALL - EVENING

Xena is looking at various weapons along the walls as Gabrielle inspects art hung there as well. It's clear that they're waiting to hear the king's response.

**GABRIELLE**

Kinda eclectic, isn't he?



**XENA**

Most definitely. These look more like an art collection than a weapons display.

**PALAEMON**

*(from the end of the hall)*

That's because they are.

They both turn and smile when he approaches them with a huge smile and arms wide open. He hugs them both with one arm.

**PALAEMON**

*(cont'd)*

It is so good to see you again.

He pulls back and whistles low and appreciatively.

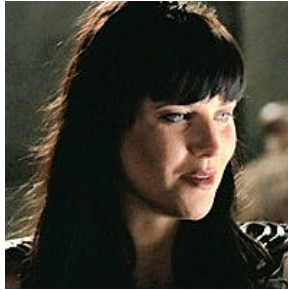
**PALAEMON**

*(cont'd)*

I see that time hasn't had the same effect on you that it has on we mere mortals.

**XENA**

Time in deep freeze doesn't  
make us immortal.  
Just well preserved.



**PALAEMON**

I guess it doesn't matter how  
it happened. What matters is  
it happened. Come! Where  
are my manners? Let me get  
you some food and wine!

He gestures down the hall and they take a few steps ahead of him. Xena leans toward Gabrielle and whispers.

**XENA**

Does he seem just a **bit**  
**too happy** to see us?

**GABRIELLE**

He is acting a little odd.

**PALAEMON**

Vidalus will be  
thrilled to see you.

**GABRIELLE**

You're still together?

**PALAEMON**

Why wouldn't we be?

**GABRIELLE**

Well, I um... I....

**XENA**

We weren't sure you would  
make good traveling companions  
when we last saw you. You had  
quite a chip on your shoulder.

**PALAEMON**

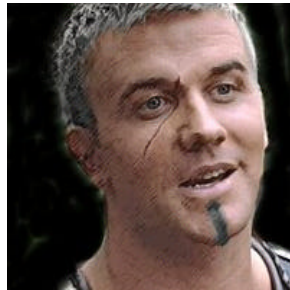
I suppose I did, but he became a good friend. After a while I couldn't really think of life without him.

**XENA**

It's good to see you've gotten rid of the chip.

**PALAEMON**

I did. Because of you and the things I learned from my friend.



Xena and Gabrielle just smile knowingly as they follow him.

**DISSOLVE TO:**

**INT. DINING ROOM - EVENING**

Xena and Gabrielle sit with Palaemon at a large table. Dinner is complete and now they are sipping from golden goblets.

**XENA**

So where is Vidalus?

**PALAEMON**

Well, I'm afraid that we have a situation here that has him a bit upset. I had hoped he would come down to dinner, but, well Vidalus can be so emotional I'm sure he didn't want you to see him like that.

**GABRIELLE**

What's the problem?

Xena notices that Palaemon seems to try and hide a smile as he prepares his answer, almost as if he is pleased and they've been caught in some trap.

**PALAEMON**

My son is getting married.

**XENA**

How is that a problem?



Palaemon knows that the jig is up; Xena knows something is going on. He decides to be straight with them.

**PALAEMON**

My son, Valius was the product of a short and very intense time with a young Amazon.

**GABRIELLE**

Well, that explains that.

**PALAEMON**

Excuse me?

**XENA**

We heard that your kingdom was here and that there was some connection to the Amazons. That's why we came. To see you and find out if there was some sort of problem since they've all disappeared.

**PALAEMON**

My problem isn't because they're gone.

He sighs and shakes his head.

**PALAEMON**

*(cont'd)*

It is sort of because they're gone.

**GABRIELLE**

Start from the top.



**PALAEMON**

Val is marrying Alicia.  
King Dameus is expecting  
to meet his mother and me.

**XENA**

But she's not around.

**PALAEMON**

Right and never has been.  
The whole reason Val is even  
here is because I had the  
unfortunate luck to be held  
hostage by the Amazon's  
during a mating ritual.

**XENA**

I see. So they used  
you as a stud service?

**PALAEMON**

And when Val was born his mother  
returned him to me. So I guess  
since I got my son out of it, it wasn't  
that unfortunate. Anyhow, Rhea....

**GABRIELLE**

Rhea!

**PALAEMON**

Yeah, did you know her?

**GABRIELLE**

Yes, she was part of a tribe  
we once lent a hand.

**PALAEMON**

She was a sweet girl, but Val was  
not welcome in the tribe so she  
brought him to me and I never  
saw her again. Vidalus is the closest  
thing to a mother Val has ever had.

**XENA**

But he's not the one you  
want to present to Dameus?

**PALAEMON**

Right.

**GABRIELLE**

And Vidalus isn't  
taking it well?



**PALAEEMON**

Right again.

**DISSOLVE TO:**

**INT. BEDCHAMBER - NIGHT**

Xena is washing up in a basin as Gabrielle sits in front of the fire staring at the flames.  
She joins Gabrielle on the floor.

**XENA**

Dinar for your thoughts.



**GABRIELLE**

I'm not sure they're  
worth that much.

**XENA**

Care to share?

Gabrielle leans back into Xena's arms, resting her head on her shoulder, but continuing to stare at the flames.

**GABRIELLE**

Does it seem to you that we  
keep finding ourselves involved  
in the lives of Amazon progeny?

Xena chuckles and kisses Gabrielle's temple.

**XENA**

They do seem to pop up  
in the strangest places.

**GABRIELLE**

How long do you think it's  
going to take Palaemon to get  
up the courage to ask us for help?

**XENA**

If we sneak out before breakfast,  
he won't have a chance.

Gabrielle chuckles and seems to sink further into Xena's embrace.

**GABRIELLE**

That quickly?

**XENA**

I'll bet my saddle on it.

**GABRIELLE**

Are we going to?

**XENA**

Do you want to?

**GABRIELLE**

Yes and no.

**XENA**

That was decisive.

**GABRIELLE**

Well, on one hand I want to help  
anyone of Amazon blood, but on  
the other hand, I must admit I'm  
not wild about getting involved in  
something that has Vidalus so  
upset. I dunno, it just seems  
wrong for Palaemon to be trying  
to deny his place in Val's life.

**XENA**

Ah yes, but Dameus has a large  
army he's not afraid to use. So if  
something goes wrong here, it  
could be the end of this kingdom.  
No wedding, no Vidalus, no nothing.

**GABRIELLE**

You're not playing fair. You're making it impossible for me to justify making Palaemon get himself out of this mess.

**XENA**

Shall we wait until morning and see if he even asks?

**GABRIELLE**

Sure. I guess it's not our problem unless we make it our problem huh?

**XENA**

Exactly, and in the meantime, we can enjoy that big soft bed.

**DISSOLVE TO:**

**EXT. GARDENS - MORNING**

Gabrielle is walking through the palace gardens. In the distance Xena can be seen doing a series of sword drills. Gabrielle has a scroll tucked under her arm and is apparently looking for a place to sit and write. As she comes to a bench she finds Vidalus seated and looking miserable.

**GABRIELLE**

Morning.

He looks up at her and gestures aimlessly.

**GABRIELLE**

*(cont'd)*

May I join you?



**VIDALUS**

Of course.

She takes a seat and there is an uneasy silence between them for a moment.

**VIDALUS**

*(cont'd)*

I'm sorry I didn't join you  
for dinner last night. I  
was rather out of sorts.

**GABRIELLE**

I understand. Palaemon  
kind of explained  
what was going on.

**VIDALUS**

I'm not speaking to  
him at the moment.

**GABRIELLE**

I can understand that.

**VIDALUS**

After all these years! After  
everything we've gone through  
together, he has the nerve to  
treat me like this during one of the  
most important times in Val's life.

**GABRIELLE**

I don't think he wants  
to exclude you.

**VIDALUS**

Of course he does. How can he  
think of bringing some woman  
in here to pose as Val's mother  
and not think he's excluding me?

**GABRIELLE**

Good point.

Gabrielle looks over at Xena and considers her next words carefully.

**GABRIELLE**

You know, Xena and I  
had a daughter together.

**VIDALUS**

You did?

**GABRIELLE**

Yup, a beautiful little girl named Eve.  
And there were times when Xena  
was pregnant that I felt excluded.  
We weren't sure for a long time  
exactly how she got pregnant and  
I think I held that against her. I  
knew she hadn't been unfaithful to  
me, but somewhere in the back  
of my mind there was this  
nagging little voice, ya know?

**VIDALUS**

I can imagine.

**GABRIELLE**

But as the baby grew and Xena  
began to glow with the pregnancy  
somehow I came to realize that she  
was changing both physically and  
mentally and that it was a good thing.  
I put up with morning sickness and  
mood swings and.... Gods the  
cravings that woman had  
would make a cannibal sick.

Gabrielle notices that a short smile flicker's across his face so she presses on.

**GABRIELLE**

*(cont'd)*

So suddenly we had this  
precious little girl with us.



**VIDALUS**

I remember the day Val was  
brought to us. I fell in love the  
second I laid eyes on him.

**GABRIELLE**

Same with Eve and me.

**VIDALUS**

I helped raise him the best way  
I knew how. Pal and Val... the  
two most important men in my  
life. I did my best and now....

He stops and his head drops.

**GABRIELLE**

Xena and I didn't get to raise Eve.  
She grew up without us and when  
we found her she had become  
Livia, the Bitch of Rome.

**VIDALUS**

Oh Gods! How did that happen?

**GABRIELLE**

It's a long and unimportant story,  
but what I'm trying to say is that  
you have been an important part  
of Val's life, all his life. He is who  
he is today because you were  
there to help him. No matter  
what happens, Val will always  
carry a part of you with him.

**VIDALUS**

And I'm being silly?

Gabrielle bumps shoulders with him and takes his hand.

**GABRIELLE**

No, I don't think you're  
being silly, but maybe

Xena and I could help.

**VIDALUS**

Would you do that for us?

**GABRIELLE**

To help keep your  
family together, yes.

**VIDALUS**

Where is Eve now?

**GABRIELLE**

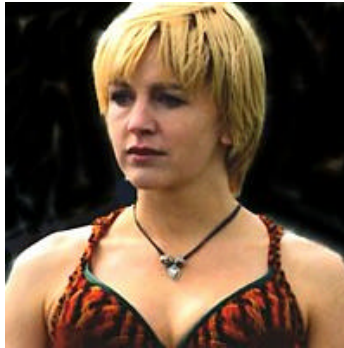
She's dead.

**VIDALUS**

I'm sorry.

**GABRIELLE**

So am I.



**CUT TO:**

**EXT. GARDEN - MORNINIG**

Gabrielle wanders over to Xena who is wiping her face with a cloth before wiping down her blade with it.

**GABRIELLE**

I did a very silly thing.

**XENA**

I know.

**GABRIELLE**

Now, I know your hearing is good, but I was WAY over there.

She gestures to the other side of the garden. Xena smiles and sheaths her sword. Taking Gabrielle's hand they begin a slow stroll through the gardens.

**XENA**

I knew the second you sat down on that bench we were going to be involved. You don't like to see people hurting and it's damn clear that Vidalus is hurting. And we sort of owe him.



Xena stops and turns Gabrielle so they're facing each other. She gently cups her cheek.



**XENA**

*(cont'd)*

He did save my sight. Gave  
me the ability to see the  
beautiful things in my life.

Leaning in before Gabrielle can reply, Xena kisses her very tenderly, but with passion and playfulness as she nips her bottom lip before pulling away.

**XENA**

*(cont'd)*

Now the question is,  
which one of us is going  
to be Val's mother?

**GABRIELLE**

I think you should do  
it. You look more  
Palaemon's type.

**XENA**

I think Vidalus is  
Palaemon's type.

**GABRIELLE**

You know... I'm not sure.  
I mean I can't tell....

Gabrielle begins to walk through the garden with Xena behind her.

**XENA**

We still need to decide.  
I'll flip you for it.



**GABRIELLE**

You do mean with  
a coin right?

**FADE OUT.**

**END OF ACT TWO**

## ACT THREE

FADE IN:

### INT. BEDCHAMBER - DAY

Gabrielle is standing before a long polished piece of metal that passes for a mirror. She is adjusting a leather top that is supposed to pass for a set of Amazon leathers.

**GABRIELLE**

I should have kept  
my old ones.

She tries again to adjust her cleavage in the top and still isn't satisfied.

**GABRIELLE**

*(cont'd)*

How did I end up  
doing this again?

Xena starts ticking points off on her fingers.

**XENA**

One, you're an Amazon  
Queen. Two, I had to  
pose for the artist. Three....

**GABRIELLE**

I get it. It's my turn.

**XENA**

Basically.

**GABRIELLE**

And the story is what?

**XENA**

I think the real story  
works. We'll just  
substitute you for Rhea.

**GABRIELLE**

All right. I can live with that.  
Now... what else do I  
need to pull this off?

She stands staring at her reflection and a wicked grin plays across her face. Slowly she turns to Xena.

**GABRIELLE**

*(cont'd)*  
A slave.

**XENA**

Oh, you think so, do ya?



**GABRIELLE**

Most definitely. Not really a slave per se, but more like a general servant. You know, my fetch and carry gal.

Xena grins and grabs for Gabrielle, catching her around the wrist and pulling her in to lift her up into her arms.

**XENA**

I'll show you fetch and carry.

**GABRIELLE**

*(laughing and squirming)*  
Xena! Stop! Put me down!

**XENA**

Heh.

**DISSOLVE TO:**

## **INT. DINING ROOM – EVENING**

Valius, Palaemon and Vidalus are all sitting, standing or pacing about the room each of them taking a turn at one action or the other, looking somewhat like a dance.

**VAL**

Where are they?

**PALAEMON**

Getting ready. They said they had to see if they could come up with a proper Amazon outfit.

**VAL**

Why?

**VIDALUS**

If you want this to work Vallie,  
trust them. They know what  
they're doing. They were doing  
this before you were born.

**PALAEMON**

And Gabrielle really is an  
Amazon Queen. That  
should impress Dameus.

**VAL**

You don't think they'll  
give it away do you?  
Even by accident?

**VIDALUS**

Not a chance. Once  
they have a plan, it's  
as good as gold.

The door opens and they enter. Gabrielle is in leathers that have been decorated and now are as close to authentic as they can get on such short notice. Xena on the other hand is dressed in a VERY skimpy leather skirt and halter. If there was any less of the outfit, it would be napkins.

Val immediately takes notice. Palaemon isn't completely disinterested. Vidalus is completely nonplussed. It takes a minute for any of them to form words.

**PALAEMON**

This will work.

**DISSOLVE TO:**

**INT. DINING ROOM - EVENING**

They are eating in relative silence... only the sound of clinking goblets and plates is heard. Xena takes a sip of her wine and gently clears her throat.

**XENA**

We've been thinking.



All eyes turn to her except for Gabrielle who continues to eat the food on her plate. It's clear she's heard this plan and is waiting to hear what they think.

**XENA**

*(cont'd)*

Gabrielle and I both feel that it's important that Vidalus is a part of the meeting between the families.

Vidalus is all smiles. Palaemon even manages a grin as he leans forward to listen. Val doesn't look so sure.

**XENA**

*(cont'd)*

So what we're going to do is make him more... presentable.

Gabrielle looks up quickly and smiles at him.

**GABRIELLE**

Not that we don't think you are now.  
Xena and I think you're wonderful,  
but we're concerned about Dameus.  
If he suspects anything is out of  
the ordinary, it could cause  
him to call off the wedding.

**VIDALUS**

That would be the  
least of our problems.

**VAL**

For you maybe.

**VIDALUS**

Now, Vallie I didn't  
mean it that way.

**XENA**

Face it Valius. Dameus has the  
ability to flatten your father's  
kingdom in less than two days.  
Now I know you love this girl, but  
you must think of your family too.

Val nods, suddenly finding his wine interesting. When Xena has chastised you, you stay chastised.

**GABRIELLE**

So, Xena will be working with  
Vidalus to help him pass muster  
while Dameus is here.

**VAL**

What happens  
after the wedding?

**XENA**

You'll be married. Once  
Dameus gets his hands  
on your father's gold, I'm  
sure nothing else will matter.

**VAL**

Good point.

**VIDALUS**

So, Xena what's  
our first lesson?

Xena looks up just in time to see him dabbing the corners of his mouth with his napkin.

**XENA**

Well for starters, stop that.

**DISSOLVE TO:**

### **EXT. GARDENS - MORNING**

Xena is pacing back and forth. She is in her regular leathers and armor, but without her weapons. Her sword and chakram are lying on the same bench where Vidalus and Gabrielle sat the day before.

She is about to get really irritated when Vidalus joins her. Her irritation quickly dissolves into something she can't quite put her finger on, but it resembles trepidation. Vidalus is dressed in long flowing multicolored robes. All his fingers are adorned with rings, and around his neck are several necklaces of various precious stones and metals.

**XENA**

*(to self)*

Gods help me.



Vidalus stops and looks at the expression on Xena's face. He gives a quick glance around and then at himself.

**VIDALUS**

What?

**XENA**

I'm not even sure  
where to start.

She looks him up and down for a moment then makes a decision.

**XENA**

*(cont'd)*

All right, first the jewelry has to  
go. No man would be caught  
dead wearing it. Hiding it in  
a cave somewhere maybe,  
but not wearing it.

**VIDALUS**

But Pala....

**XENA**

Do you want my help or not?

**VIDALUS**

Yes, I'm sorry.  
Get rid of the jewelry.

**XENA**

And the robes. We need to get  
you more suitable attire. A  
merchant perhaps. Palaemon  
does enough trade that it would  
be believable that a member of  
his family is the trade ambassador.

**VIDALUS**

This is the finest silk from Ch....

Xena holds up her finger and makes a noise that sounds something like 'no', but even the short word is clipped and direct.





**VIDALUS**

Fine.

**XENA**

I suppose next is your walk.

**VIDALUS**

What's wrong with the way I walk? I put one foot in front of the other just like you do.

**XENA**

No you don't. I walk with long strides. You scurry like a girl. You need to learn to walk like a man. Like this.

Xena takes a few steps forward. Her stride is long, steady and very masculine. Her arms move very little. After taking a few paces back and forth she stops in front of him.

**XENA**

Can you do that?

**VIDALUS**

Well, it's not difficult!

He takes a few steps, which start out fine, but quickly degenerate into a near run with his hands pulled up in front of his chest.

**XENA**

No. No, no, no. You have to... to... swagger. That's it you need to swagger.

**VIDALUS**

I've never swaggered in my life.

**XENA**

No kidding. All right, let's forget the walk for now; we'll deal with that later. Can you hold a sword?

One of Vidalus' hands goes to his hip, while the other gestures through the air.

**VIDALUS**

What do you think?

**DISSOLVE TO:**

## EXT. GARDEN - AFTERNOON

Gabrielle is moving through the garden, taking the time to stop and smell the flowers. She happens upon Xena who is facing a tree with her forehead resting against it.

**GABRIELLE**

You haven't been beating  
your head against that  
defenseless tree have you?

**XENA**

I considered it.

**GABRIELLE**

Is he hopeless?



**XENA**

Only if he wants to walk or  
talk while they're here.

Gabrielle can't help herself and makes a sound that was suppose to be a laugh but comes out as more of a snort, directly from her sinuses.

Xena slowly looks up from the tree.

**XENA**

Well, that was attractive.

**GABRIELLE**

Do you have any  
helpful suggestions?

**XENA**

I could kidnap Vidalus and  
keep him hidden until it's over.

**GABRIELLE**

It would break his heart.

**XENA**

I know. We're just going  
to have to do our best  
with what we've got.

**GABRIELLE**

We've managed  
more with less.

**XENA**

Not by much.

**DISSOLVE TO:**

**EXT. PALACE GROUNDS - DAY**

Everyone is in place as they await the arrival of the royal caravan. Val is handsomely dressed in his best tunic. Palaemon is in royal regalia befitting his position. Vidalus is trying to look comfortable in a pair of soft doeskin trousers, knee boots and white shirt with a tan vest. There is a hat perched crookedly on his head that Xena finally had to concede to... much as she hated it.

Gabrielle stands in her Amazon gear, with a long cloak to ward off a slight breeze that is blowing. Xena is back in her napkins, only this time with a pair of thigh high black boots. Her eyes roll slightly to the right as she feels Gabrielle looking at her.

**XENA**

I'll get you for this.

Gabrielle merely bites her lips to hide her smile as she looks forward at the approaching caravan.



Two carriages, surrounded by a dozen well-armed guards pull through the gate and stop just a few feet away from the group.

Palaemon and Vidalus watch as Val's eyes light up when a servant assists Alicia from the second carriage. They are so wrapped up in watching him they almost make the first error in dealing with Dameus by not paying him the proper respect as he exits the first carriage.

Gabrielle makes the save by stepping forward.

**GABRIELLE**

Your Majesty, I am Queen Gabrielle of the Amazons. On behalf of King Palaemon and my son Prince Valius of Magara we welcome you.



Dameus takes a moment to look Gabrielle over very appreciatively and take her hand to bestow a kiss to it.

**DAMEUS**

Delighted, Your Majesty. I am glad you could make the long journey from your tribe to be here. I have always been impressed with Palaemon's ties to your nation. Your warriors are legendary.

**GABRIELLE**

Thank you. Please allow me to introduce you.

Turning she gestures to each one.

**GABRIELLE**

This is of course, Valius' father, King Palaemon. Valius you know, of course. This is Valius' Uncle Vidalus. He is the king's most senior and trusted trade ambassador.

Everyone holds their breath as the two men shake hands. When Dameus doesn't appear to be taken aback in any way they all give silent thanks and let go of breaths they don't realize they're holding.

Dameus then notices Xena.

**DAMEUS**

Palaemon, you've provided entertainment. How kind of you.

**GABRIELLE**

Actually, Your Majesty, this is....

She pauses and Xena knows she's trying to come up with a good name for her servant.

**GABRIELLE**

*(cont'd)*

Nikias. She is my  
personal servant.

**DAMEUS**

You're not traveling  
with guards?

**GABRIELLE**

Why would I need guards?  
I'm here for my son's wedding.  
Besides... Nikias was a gift to  
me from Artemis. If something  
arises that I can't take care  
of myself, she certainly  
will deal with it.

Dameus gives Xena another look and decides not to test Gabrielle's word.

**PALAEMON**

Shall we adjourn inside?  
We can find your quarters  
and prepare for dinner tonight?

Xena and Gabrielle hang back and watch as the others head inside. Xena seems pleased that Vidalus is managing to not be his normal self.

**XENA**

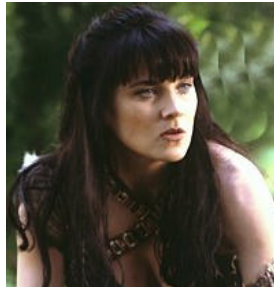
I think we're going to make it.

**GABRIELLE**

The evening isn't over yet.

**XENA**

You had to point that  
out, didn't you?



**GABRIELLE**

Come, Nikias. Let's not keep our guests waiting.

**DISSOLVE TO:**

**INT. DINING ROOM - EVENING**

Everyone is seated at the table except for Xena, who is standing right behind Gabrielle's chair. As servants place large trays on the table, Xena takes Gabrielle's plate and begins placing various items on it after tasting each one first. It's a good show and Dameus is properly impressed.



**DAMEUS**

Would you be interested in selling her?

**XENA**

No, she's been pretty good to me. I think I'll keep her.

Gabrielle nearly spits her wine across the table as Palaemon and Vidalus have a hard time keeping their faces neutral. Alicia smiles and looks to Gabrielle.

**ALICIA**

You'll excuse me for saying so, Your Majesty, but you seem much too young to be Val's mother.

**GABRIELLE**

More gifts from the Gods.

**PALAEMON**

Yes, I can honestly say Gabrielle doesn't look much older than she did the very first time I saw her.

**DAMEUS**

So tell me Gabrielle, why have the Amazons left the region?

**GABRIELLE**

I must do what is best for my tribes. They have been relocated. They are by nature nomads who move from place to place. It was natural that they would eventually leave.

Gabrielle leans nearer Dameus and smiles nicely, but with warning.

**GABRIELLE**

*(cont'd)*

I assure you that we are  
never really far away  
and if Palaemon were to  
call on me, I would be here.

**DAMEUS**

Oh, there will be no worries  
about that. In an exchange  
of wedding gifts, I'll see  
to it that Palaemon and the  
kingdom are well protected.

**XENA**

And he'll see to it  
your treasury is full.

**DAMEUS**

Seems an equal trade to me.  
Gold buys power, you know.

Xena raises a brow and is about to say something when Gabrielle places a hand on her arm.

**GABRIELLE**

You know Dameus, Nikias is my  
champion. Perhaps tomorrow if  
you would like, you two could spar.

**XENA**

*(saccharine)*

Oh could we, please? That would just make my day. Why, I haven't had a good tussle in days.



**DAMEUS**

I would be delighted to see what you can do. I'm sure you've been well trained.

Before anyone notices, Gabrielle catches Xena's hand to stop her from plunging the knife she's gripping between Dameus' eyes.

**GABRIELLE**

*(through gritted teeth)*

Put it down!

**XENA**

No!

**GABRIELLE**

Yes!

She shakes the knife loose as the other guests are beginning to take notice. Vidalus leans over and whispers in Palaemon's ear.

**VIDALUS**

And you were worried about me?

**FADE OUT.**

**END OF ACT THREE**



## ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

### EXT. GARDEN - MORNING

Vidalus and Gabrielle are walking along in the early morning light, both carrying mugs that are steaming.

**VIDALUS**

Thank you for everything you've been doing these last few days.

**GABRIELLE**

It seems to be going well, doesn't it?

**VIDALUS**

Yes, and I adore Alicia. She's so good for Vallie. He seems to walk on air when she's around. It's been nice to get to know her.

**GABRIELLE**

I think she's rather fond of you too.

**VIDALUS**

Pal and I have come up with a story about while I'll be staying here after the wedding.

**GABRIELLE**

I'm sorry you have to come up with a story at all.



**VIDALUS**

Well, it'll be for the best. We're sure that Dameus won't care once he has the gold. If it weren't for the fact that Vallie and Alicia loved each other so much, he wouldn't be doing more than selling her.

**GABRIELLE**

I have to agree with that. Xena doesn't care for him and it was all I could do to call her off during that sparring match.

**VIDALUS**

What was that thing that she did that she said she didn't know how to undo?

**GABRIELLE**

The pinch. I can't believe she made me undo it.

**VIDALUS**

Well, the wedding is tomorrow. Very soon you will be on your way.

**GABRIELLE**

That's going to be good for Dameus.

**VIDALUS**

And I'm sure Xena will be glad to be back in her regular clothes. I'm not sure she cares for her costume. I know these trousers have been itching like mad. At least Xena didn't make me give up my silk unmentionables.

**GABRIELLE**

Did you tell her about them?

**VIDALUS**

That's why they're called unmentionables.

**DISSOLVE TO:**

**INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Gabrielle falls face first into the mattress with a groan. Xena just smiles from where she is slipping a sleeping gown over her head.

**XENA**

Tired?

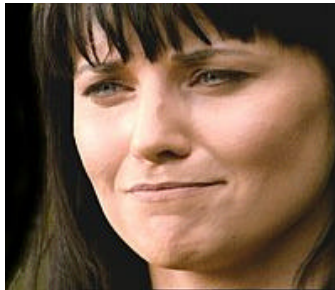
There is a grunt from the bed, but nothing that resembles normal Gabrielle speech. Xena crosses the room and picks her partner up like a sack of flour, over her shoulder. Gabrielle smiles at the play but remains limp over Xena's shoulder with a smile on her face.

Xena throws back the bedcovers then places Gabrielle down far more gently than her partner's previous position would have indicated. Taking a seat next to Gabrielle, she pulls the covers up and kisses her on the forehead.

**XENA**

*(cont'd)*

Just a couple more days  
and we'll be done.



**GABRIELLE**

Who knew pretending to be  
someone's long lost Amazon  
mother could be so tiring?

**XENA**

It's not the pretending that's  
wearing me out. It's not  
acting on the very real desire  
to kick Dameus' butt. He  
is an arrogant son of a....

Gabrielle chuckles placing one hand over Xena's mouth, and patting the bed next to her.

**GABRIELLE**

Come to bed. We've got a long day  
ahead of us tomorrow. You'll need  
all the energy you can get not to  
kill him tomorrow at the feast  
before the wedding. I have a  
feeling he'll be insufferable.

Xena crawls under the covers.

**XENA**

Oh goody.

**DISSOLVE TO:**

## INT. FESTIVAL HALL - EVENING

Xena is standing against the wall, scowling as she watches various members of Dameus' entourage fall all over themselves for Gabrielle's attention. She watches and it's clear she's tapping her foot in irritation as yet another young man vies for a bit of Gabrielle's attention.

**VIDALUS**

*(handing her a goblet)*  
You shouldn't frown like that. It'll give you horrible lines around your eyes.

**XENA**

Thanks for the beauty tips.

He watches as she sips from the cup but never takes her eyes from Gabrielle.

**VIDALUS**

It's just a ruse.  
Remember that.

Xena's gaze swings to him and there is a glare for just a moment and then it softens.

**XENA**

Come with me.



**CUT TO:**

## INT. FESTIVAL HALL - CONTINUOUS

Gabrielle has escaped the throng of young men and is now seated next to Palaemon.

**PALAEMON**

Have you seen Vidalus?

**GABRIELLE**

No. Xena's been missing for some time too. I hope she didn't resort to plan B.

**PALAEMON**

Plan B?

**GABRIELLE**

Never mind. I'm sure  
they'll turn up eventually.

Dameus swaggers across the room, cutting a swath through the guests in the room. Stopping in front of Gabrielle and Palaemon, he smiles at the King, then leers at Gabrielle.

**DAMEUS**

I think the father of the bride  
deserves a dance with the mother  
of the groom. Don't you?

As Gabrielle looks at him, there are a hundred responses she wants to give him and they're all written clearly on her face. Somehow she manages to smile and nod.

**GABRIELLE**

I'd be delighted.

She allows herself to be guided to the floor where several couples are dancing. As they take their positions to start the next dance, Gabrielle smiles politely and looks into Dameus' eyes.

**GABRIELLE**

*(cont'd)*

Move your hand.

**DAMEUS**

Excuse me?

**GABRIELLE**

The extremity that has found  
its way to my backside. Move  
it... or lose it. Your choice.



Dameus is about to respond when a sudden look of anguishing pain crosses his face. From behind Gabrielle his hand comes up, gripped at the wrist by a furious Xena. She is now dressed in her own clothes and if looks could kill, Dameus would be a smoldering pile of ash.

**XENA**

My choice. You move it.

**GABRIELLE**

Xena! What in the name of...?

Gabrielle stops, noticing that Xena is in her leathers and that Vidalus has been returned to his normal state of appearance.

**XENA**

Listen to me, you worthless piece of centaur dung. This woman is not my master. She is my spouse, wife, partner, companion, mate, pal, chum, buddy, cohort, significant other, other half, comrade or FRIEND. I don't care what people call her, but I do care if you have your grubby paws on her. So HANDS OFF!

She shoves him back; he stumbles, but regains his footing. Before he can respond, Xena steps forward and places a finger in his chest as the entire room watches.

**XENA**

*(cont'd)*

This man is not  
Palaemon's trade advisor.

She points to Vidalus.

**XENA**

*(cont'd)*

He is an important part of Palaemon and Val's family. He has been with them since the boy was a baby and he's an important part of this family. If you're going to allow your daughter to marry into it, you're going to have to accept it.

**DAMEUS**

Maybe I'll call off the wedding.

Val and Alicia step through the crowd and watch as Dameus gains more composure and draws himself upright to look taller. Xena is not impressed.

**XENA**

No, you won't. For several reasons. The first is that your daughter and Val love each other and you wouldn't do that to her. The second being, you're a greedy bastard and you don't want to give up your claim to Palaemon's gold.

**DAMEUS**

I have an army.  
I can TAKE his gold.

**GABRIELLE**

I have one too, remember.

Dameus stops and looks between them as they simultaneously cross their arms and raise opposite brows.

**XENA**

And she's not afraid to use it.



Dameus knows he is beaten as Vidalus and Palaemon stand next to each other, along with his daughter and Val.

**DAMEUS**

Fine. The wedding will  
go on as planned.

**DISSOLVE TO:**

**INT. CHAPEL - MORNING**

Xena and Gabrielle watch from the back of the room as the wedding seems to go off without a hitch. The bride's father sits on one side, looking a little frustrated but reasonable.

Palaemon, sitting next to Vidalus, looks over as his friend weeps loudly and dabs at his eyes with a brightly colored hanky. Palaemon smiles and takes Vidalus' hand, looping it through his arm and patting it comfortingly.

**PALAEMON**

*(whispering)*

Think about it... in a few years maybe  
we'll have grandchildren to spoil.

This only causes Vidalus to wail again, this time putting his forehead against Palaemon's shoulder.

From the rear of the room, Xena and Gabrielle share a smile.

**FADE OUT.**

**END OF ACT FOUR**

**TAG**

**FADE IN:**

**EXT. COURTYARD - MORNING**

Xena is stowing their gear on Argo as Gabrielle, Palaemon and Vidalus approach from the garden.

**PALAEMON**

Seems like I'm always  
saying thanks to you two.

**XENA**

*(teasingly)*

And since we keep saving  
your backside, well you should.

Palaemon laughs and nods.

**PALAEMON**

I suppose so.

He offers Xena his arm.

**PALAEMON**

*(cont'd)*

If you're ever in the area  
again stop in and see us.

Xena breaks the handshake and mounts Argo, offering her hand to Gabrielle.

**GABRIELLE**

*(hugging Vidalus)*

Take care of  
yourself and them.

**VIDALUS**

I will. I promise.

Gabrielle turns and is pulled up behind Xena. She waves as they ride off toward the countryside.

**VIDALUS**

I'm going to miss them.

**PALAEMON**

So am I. I learned a lot  
while they were here.



**VIDALUS**

Really?

**PALAEMON**

Yeah, that you should  
never try to hide or be  
something you're not.

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. FOREST - NIGHT**

Xena is sharpening her sword as Gabrielle tosses a small log on the crackling fire. Gabrielle's eyes follow the embers that float upward.

**XENA**

And what is tonight's great  
philosophical contemplation?



Gabrielle smiles and shakes her head a little as she takes her place stretched out on the blanket.

**GABRIELLE**

Well, it just seems  
like I was right.



Xena lays her sword aside and joins Gabrielle on the blanket. Immediately, their hands clasp and finger entwine.

**XENA**

You usually are, but what  
were you right about this time?

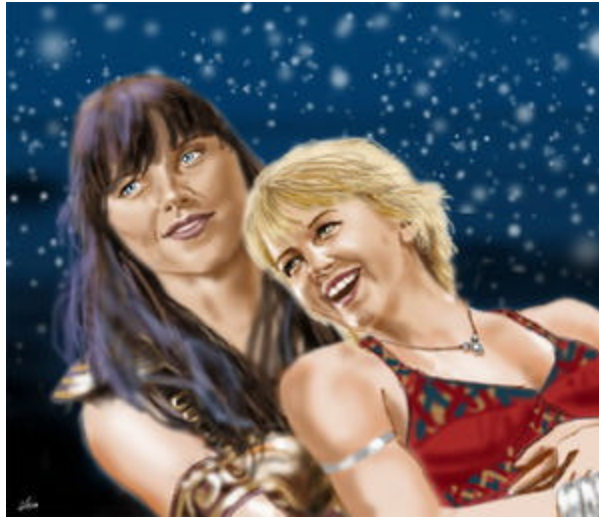
**GABRIELLE**

Sidekick is pretty good  
work if you can get it.

Xena chuckles as they both grow quiet and stare at the night sky. Xena points into the sky.

**XENA**

Does that look like  
a centaur to you?



**FADE OUT.**

**DISCLAIMER**

Xena didn't beat up any trees during the making of this episode,  
but we're pretty sure she was the one that kicked a couple shrubs.