

Prod. #76608

HERCULES

"The Warrior Princess"

Written by

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Directed by

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ALL PINK SCRIPT

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HERCULES

"The Warrior Princess"

Cast List

HERCULES
IOLAUS
ALCMENE

SYREENA (Sy-REE-nuh)
TREMULUS (TREM-u-lus)
XENA (ZEE-nuh)
THEODORUS (THEO-dor-us)
LOCAL #1
ESTRAGON (ESS-trah-gon)
SERVANT
DRINKER #1
DRINKER #2
PETRAKIS (Puh-TRAY-kiss)

HERCULES

"The Warrior Princess"

Set List

INTERIORS:

FORGE
VILLAGE INN
IOLAUS' BEDROOM
BARN
ALCMENE'S HOME
BEDROOM IN XENA'S MANSE
COUNTRY TAVERN
MAIN ROOM IN XENA'S MANSE
HALLWAY IN XENA'S MANSE

EXTERIORS:

VILLAGE
XENA'S COMPOUND
ALCMENE'S HOME
GROVE
COUNTRY ROAD
STABLE
STREAM
HILLTOP
VALLEY
PETRAKIS' FARM
COUNTRYSIDE

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HERCULES

"The Warrior Princess"

Chronology

DAY 1	SCENES #1 - 6
NIGHT 1	SCENE #7
DAY 2	SCENE #8
NIGHT 2	SCENE #9
DAY 3	SCENES #10 - 13
NIGHT 3	SCENE #14
DAY 4	SCENES #15 - 19
NIGHT 4	SCENES #20 - 22
DAY 5	SCENES #23 - 35

*
*

HERCULES

"The Warrior Princess"

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 INT. FORGE - DAY

1

HERCULES and IOLAUS are working side by side, forging what will turn out to be a perfect knife. They're both shirtless and sweat is pouring down their torsos, propelled by their labor and the heat from the forge.

We see them pounding the steel into shape, tempering it in the fire, pounding it some more, dousing it in the water trough, and fitting it with a magnificent handle. When the knife is finished at last, Hercules examines it by the light of the fire and offers it to the best friend he ever had.

HERCULES

It's all yours, Iolaus.

IOLAUS

What are you talking about? You worked as hard on it as I did.

*
*

HERCULES

The next one can be mine. How's that sound?

*
*

IOLAUS

To tell you the truth...

(beat)

... it's the best idea you've had all day.

*
*
*
*

Smiling like a cat that just caught a canary, Iolaus grabs the knife from Hercules and pantomimes throwing it.

*
*

SMASH CUT TO:

2 EXT. VILLAGE - DAY - ON IOLAUS' KNIFE

2

It flies through the air, rips a magnificent apple off a tree branch, and pins the apple to the wooden wall 10 feet behind it.

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED:

2

HERCULES (O.S.)

Now that's a shot...

ANOTHER ANGLE

Iolaus, who threw the knife, preens while Hercules praises.

HERCULES

...that deserves an audience.

IOLAUS

Thank you, thank you.

He moves toward the wall so he can remove his knife.

IOLAUS

(continuing)

All it takes is years of practice,
nerves of steel, and a knife so
perfectly forged...

A WOMAN (O.S.)

(interrupting angrily)

Just what in the name of Hades do you
think you're doing?

Hercules and Iolaus turn to see that the speaker is a WOMAN
in her late 20s whose beauty is surpassed only by her anger.

IOLAUS

(surprised)

Syreena?

SYREENA

(equally surprised)

Iolaus? Did you do that?

She points accusingly at the knife in the wall.

IOLAUS

Yes, I was testing my new knife.
Hercules and I...

SYREENA

(interrupting)

This is my house.

Iolaus shoots Hercules a look, then turns back to Syreena.

IOLAUS

You live here? I thought it was
abandoned.

SYREENA

We moved in yesterday.

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED: 2

2

IOLAUS

We?

SYREENA

You didn't hear? I'm married now.

IOLAUS

Oh... Who's the lucky guy?

Hercules hates watching his friend suffer this way.

SYREENA

Tremulus.

TREMULUS (O.S.)

(shouting)

Syreena? Are you going to help me or not?

SYREENA

I've got to go. He's so cute when he needs me... Bye, Iolaus. Take it easy on my wall, okay?

She hurries away before she can hear:

IOLAUS

Yeah.

(prying the knife free)

Maybe I'll just use this on my wrists and end my misery.

Hercules comes up and slaps him on the back encouragingly.

HERCULES

It would be a lot less painful to end your misery with a meal fit for a king.

*
*

IOLAUS

(not buying it)

I loved that woman -- worshipped her -- and she winds up marrying Tremulus, a guy so nervous he could make a hummingbird look like it had weights on its wings.

HERCULES

Don't worry, Iolaus. Somewhere the perfect woman is waiting for you.

Off Iolaus, who's too blue to believe it.

CUT TO:

3 EXT. XENA'S COMPOUND - DAY

3

There's a handsome stone manse surrounded by tents, lean-tos and the corral where XENA, the proud beauty who presides over this domain, is feeding carrots to the horses. She's dressed handsomely and she moves regally, which seemingly makes her a perfect target for the eight THUGS who suddenly attack her from all angles.

But Xena isn't fazed. She levels the first attacker to reach her with a kick in the mouth. The second gets flipped over the corral railing. When another attacker tries to grab Xena from behind, she drops him with an elbow. And so it goes, Xena kicking ass until she's standing and all her attackers are on the ground looking up at her, dazed and bewildered. She shakes her head in disgust.

XENA

Pathetic.

Two of the attackers -- the dashing, handsome THEODORUS and the darkly sinister ESTRAGON -- trade a look. Xena's tone of voice clearly hurts them more than her punches did.

XENA

If you can't fight any better than that, you're never going to kill Hercules. And I want him dead.

Off her homicidal intentions --

FADE OUT.

SMASH CUT TO MAIN TITLES

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

4 EXT. ALCMENE'S HOME - DAY

4

The bare-chested Hercules is muscling a cart full of large stones along a path on his mother's property.

ALCMENE (O.S.)

Hercules?

(no response; so louder)

Hercules?

Finally, he looks up and sees ALCMENE heading his way with a basket in her hand.

ALCMENE

You're working too hard.

HERCULES

I've got to do something to make up for never being around here.

ALCMENE

Then how about stopping long enough for a picnic? I'd rather have your company than the wall you want to build.

Hercules sets down his cart.

HERCULES

What if I give you both?

ALCMENE

You certainly know how to make your mother happy.

Hercules grabs his vest and slips it on as he and Alcmene make their way toward the shade of a nearby tree.

ALCMENE

(continuing)

But I really do think you spend too much time worrying about me. I mean, this wall...

HERCULES

If it keeps you from being hurt or robbed just once, it's worth every drop of sweat I put into it.

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED:

4

ALCMENE

I still don't think the world's that bad a place, Hercules. Besides, Iolaus looks in on me whenever he can.

HERCULES

He's a good man.

ALCMENE

But a lonely one, I'm afraid.

HERCULES

You see it, too?

Alcmene nods as they come to their picnic spot and begin to settle in.

ALCMENE

His clothes need mending. He looks like he's lost weight, so I'm sure he's not eating right. But it's his eyes that touch my heart. There's no joy in them.

HERCULES

It sounds like you think he needs a woman in his life.

ALCMENE

Do you disagree?

HERCULES

(wistfully)

No, I could never do that.

For once he had Deianeira, and Deianeira made his life better than it ever will be again.

CUT TO:

5 EXT. GROVE - DAY

5

Xena has exchanged her armor for everyday clothes. She and the admiring Theodorus are holding their horses as they talk. There's a traveling bag at Xena's feet, a knife in her scabbard, a bolo dangling from her belt, and a bow and arrow on her back.

THEODORUS

I won't be far away, Xena. *

XENA

Do you doubt that I can take care of myself? *

(CONTINUED) *

5 CONTINUED:

5

THEODORUS

No, of course not. But what if...

*

XENA

(interrupting)

You'll know when I need you,
Theodorus. I don't want to see you
before then.

*

*

*

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED: 2

5

THEODORUS
(resigned; obedient)
Very well.

*

Theodorus climbs aboard his horse and rides away. Xena's eyes are on him, but you know that her mind is on the treachery ahead.

*

*

*

CUT TO:

6 EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

6

Iolaus is walking toward town. When he rounds a bend, he is stopped in his tracks by the sight of

THE DUSTY BUT STILL BEAUTIFUL XENA

working on one of her horse's hooves. She doesn't know she has company until:

IOLAUS
Need any help?

Xena looks up, grabs her knife and sets herself for action.

XENA
(snarling)
Stay away from me!

Iolaus raises his hands, hoping to show he means no harm.

IOLAUS
Hey, take it easy.

XENA
Give me a reason to.

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED:

6

IOLAUS
Come on, do I look dangerous?

XENA
Looks are deceiving.

IOLAUS
If you want to stay here and threaten every good samaritan who comes along, be my guest. But I'd be glad to help you get to the village.

There's a beat as she sizes him up. He's doing the same to her and liking what he sees.

XENA
Are you sure that's what you really want to do?

IOLAUS
Put down your knife and I'll be glad to.

XENA
Oh, sorry.

She seems almost embarrassed -- and almost innocent -- as she lowers the knife to her side.

CUT TO:

7 INT. VILLAGE INN - NIGHT

7

Hercules draws a lot of looks from the locals when he wanders in.

LOCAL #1
What's the matter, Hercules, run out of monsters to slay?

HERCULES
Not if my mother's wall counts.

As he speaks, he's scanning the room.

LOCAL #1
Is it tougher than the Nemean Lion?

HERCULES
The blisters on my hands say it is.

Then he spots Iolaus sitting at a corner table. Hercules starts to wave at him, but stops. Are our hero's eyes

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED:

7

deceiving him? Poor, lonely Iolaus has a woman next to him and she's beautiful. (It's Xena, of course.) As Hercules makes his way to the table, Iolaus spots him.

IOLAUS

Hey, look what the cat dragged in.

HERCULES

Iolaus, I was hoping you'd stop by to help me with my mother's wall today.

IOLAUS

Sorry, something came up.

He glances at Xena, whom he clearly regards as a prize. Xena, no shrinking violet, takes the initiative in introduction. As she does, it's impossible for Hercules not to notice the medallion hanging around her neck.

*
*

XENA

Hello, I'm Xena.

HERCULES

I'm ...

IOLAUS

(interrupting)

He's my best friend in the world, that's who he is.

XENA

But does he have a name?

IOLAUS

(laughing embarrassedly)

Oh, yeah ... Sure ... This is Hercules.

Xena is impressed. Iolaus can't help being a tad jealous.

XENA

(to Iolaus)

Is everybody you know so famous?

IOLAUS

(deadpan)

Hercules? Famous? Whatever gave you that idea?

XENA

(laughing; to Hercules)

Has Iolaus always been a comedian?

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED: 2

7

HERCULES

I'm afraid so -- until it's time to
get down to business. And then I
wouldn't want anyone else on my side.

Iolaus puffs up a little bit with pride.

XENA

I had a feeling he was like that.
(off Hercules' look)
My horse had gone lame out in the
countryside when Iolaus found me. He
made sure I got here without anybody
bothering me.

Hercules affectionately slaps Iolaus on the shoulder.

HERCULES

He never lets you down.

XENA

I'll have to remember that.

HERCULES

(teasing)

Don't worry, he won't let you forget.
But if he's going to talk about
himself, it might as well be over a
nice roast boar. Are you interested?

Iolaus shrugs and looks at Xena. The decision is hers.

XENA

I think I'd be better off finding a
nice, soft bed.
(to Iolaus)
Think you could help me one more time?

If there was ever an invitation for a roll in the hay, this
is it. Iolaus and Hercules trade a look that says they
both know it. Then Iolaus turns back to Xena.

*
*

IOLAUS

I think that can be arranged.

*

Off the great expectations in his smile --

DISSOLVE TO:

8 EXT. ALCMENE'S HOME - DAY

8

Hercules is at work on the first stages of the wall around
Alcmene's house as he talks to his mother.

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED:

8

HERCULES

I haven't seen him since he walked out of the inn with a big, dumb smile on his face. That's a week ago. What's he doing anyway?

ALCMENE

(smiling; shaking her head)

Hercules, you fathered three children. You shouldn't have to ask.

HERCULES

That's not what I'm talking about. It's just that I don't get to see much of Iolaus except when we're out staring death in the eye. I was hoping we could do something more normal this time. Hunt, fish, solve the world's problems over a few mugs of ale.

ALCMENE

Everything can't happen to fit your schedule. You should have learned that long ago.

HERCULES

Sorry, the only time I accept the unexpected is when I'm dealing with Hera's killers or a hydra that wants to eat me for dinner. Iolaus isn't anywhere on that list.

ALCMENE

Where human beings and love are involved, you'd better expect the unexpected, too.

HERCULES

But Iolaus doesn't know anything about this Xena. What if she's got a jealous husband?

ALCMENE

And what if she's the best possible cure for his loneliness?

(off Hercules' look)

She could be, you know. So I think that until you find out otherwise, you should just be happy for him.

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED: 2

8

HERCULES

All right, you win.

(a beat)

But I'd still like to know who's going
to help me finish your wall if Iolaus
doesn't.

*

Off mother and son sharing a laugh --

CUT TO:

9 INT. IOLAUS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

9

Iolaus and Xena are steaming the place up. He's stripped to the waist; she's in a flimsy little number that he's trying to get her out of. And then she pulls away, the passion on her face replaced by sorrow. Iolaus is mystified.

IOLAUS

What's wrong?

XENA

I don't want you to fall in love with me.

IOLAUS

It may be too late to warn me, Xena.
Did you ever think of that?

Xena nods sadly, then studies him for a beat.

XENA

I was hoping I'd be the only one to go away from this with a broken heart.

IOLAUS

You don't have to go away from anything. I want you right here.

She caresses his face.

XENA

I know you do. And I'd stay if...
(groping for words)
...if it didn't mean I was letting
somebody else down.

IOLAUS

You never talked about another man.

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED:

9

XENA

Not one man. Many of them. And women and children, too. They're under siege by a warlord named Petrakis. He's trying to drive them out of the Arcadian highlands, and I'm building an army to defend them.

IOLAUS

So that's why you were traveling with so many weapons. You're a warrior.

XENA

I used to think I was. But now I know that no matter how hard I fight, I can't beat Petrakis by myself. I need help.

And then it all becomes clear to Iolaus.

IOLAUS

You came to get Hercules, didn't you?

XENA

Yes.

(a beat)

But I found you.

IOLAUS

Then I should be the one you ask for help.

XENA

I can't do that.

IOLAUS

(angrily)

Why? You think Hercules is better than I am? Is that what it is? He's the warrior and I'm some meaningless jester?

XENA

No, it's because it wouldn't turn my life upside down if he got hurt...or even killed.

(a beat)

But if something happened to you...

Emotion prevents her from finishing her sentence. Iolaus takes her in his arms.

IOLAUS

Nothing's going to happen to me.

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED: 2

9

XENA
You're not going to take no for an
answer, are you?

IOLAUS
I'm afraid you're stuck with me.

XENA
I like it like that.

And all the passion that was there are the top of the scene
surges back to the surface as they kiss.

MATCH CUT TO:

10 EXT. STABLE - DAY

10

Another sizzling embrace. The passion between Iolaus and
Xena seems to know no bounds. But when Xena comes up for
air, we see it isn't Iolaus she's been kissing. It's
Theodorus, her love-struck young lieutenant.

XENA
(breathless)
No more.

THEODORUS
But it's been so long.

XENA
Better to go without than to share a
bed with Hercules' best friend.

Theodorus flares with jealousy.

THEODORUS
I'll kill any man who touches you.

XENA
No, Theodorus. Kill the half-man,
half-god who has never touched me.
Kill Hercules. *

THEODORUS
You would let me have that honor? *

XENA
As long as you think you're worthy of
it. *

(CONTINUED)

10 CONTINUED:

10

THEODORUS

You know I am.

*

XENA

Then take this.

*

She removes the medallion that Hercules noticed and hangs it around Theodorus' neck.

*

*

XENA

It will make you strong in battle and bring you safely back to me.

*

*

THEODORUS

Xena...

*

He moves to kiss her, but she stops him.

*

XENA

Go. Make me proud.

*

THEODORUS

I will, I swear it.

*

Off his zeal to please Xena --

*

CUT TO:

11 EXT. ALCMENE'S HOUSE - DAY

11

Hercules is back at work on the fence when Iolaus rides up with Xena. The first thing our hero notices about them is that they've got weapons and traveling bags strapped to their steeds. And, of course, Iolaus' magnificent knife is tucked in his belt.

IOLAUS

(re the wall)

It's looking good.

HERCULES

I wish it was looking finished.

(a beat)

Where you going?

Before Iolaus can reply:

XENA

To rid my people of the warlord Petrakis.

HERCULES

I've never heard of him.

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED:

11

IOLAUS

From what Xena says, you and the rest
of the world will if this bloodthirsty
marauder isn't stopped in Arcadia.

HERCULES

Is there anything I can do?

XENA

(interjecting sharply)

No.

Hercules is stung by the force of her reply. After a beat:

HERCULES

I'm just offering my help. There's no
need to get angry.

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED: 2

11

XENA
Iolaus is all the help I need.

HERCULES
Well, you know how I feel about him --
he's the best.

XENA
That's why he's with me.

Xena rides off without another word. Iolaus waits.

HERCULES
If it turns out that you do need me,
I'll be there for you.

IOLAUS
I know you will. I just don't want
you to get the wrong idea about Xena.
She's worth whatever the risk is,
believe me.

HERCULES
Then you're lucky she's in your life.

Iolaus nods and sets out after Xena.

HERCULES
Good luck, my friend.

But Iolaus can't hear him as he and Xena grow smaller and
smaller in the distance.

CUT TO:

12 INT. BARN - DAY

12

Light from a fading sun is slanting through the wooden walls
as the door opens slowly and a weary Hercules pushes his
stone-hauling cart inside. As he does, a bale of hay falls
out of the loft, hitting him and sending him tumbling to the
ground.

The instant Hercules tries to get up, Theodorus swings down
from the loft on a rope and delivers a flying kick that
knocks Hercules against a wall. All kinds of farm
implements fall around our hero as he looks at Theodorus
with a mixture of disbelief and consternation.

HERCULES
You know, a true warrior attacks from
the front.

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED:

12

THEODORUS

My commander says you attack from any side that serves your purpose.

HERCULES

Bad manners.

Theodorus grabs a crude pitchfork off the wall and hurls it at Hercules. Our hero catches it with the greatest of ease and snaps it in two.

HERCULES

You better try something else.

THEODORUS

With pleasure.

He draws the sword at his side.

HERCULES

(under his breath)

Me and my big mouth.

Theodorus smiles coldly and advances. Hercules starts circling, one eye on his foe, the other searching for something he can use as a weapon. When he nears the pitchfork, Theodorus brings his sword down hard on it. Hercules dodges the blade, but Theodorus stays after him.

HERCULES

Enjoy this while you can.

Then Hercules dives to get back to his tools. He picks up a crude shovel just in time to use it to block another blow from Theodorus' sword. But Theodorus simply starts chopping up the shovel's wooden handle.

THEODORUS

I'm still enjoying it, Hercules.
Disappointed?

HERCULES

As a matter of fact, yes.

What follows is a madcap battle with the two of them dodging around pillars, dancing over hay bales and dodging farm implements. It comes to a smashing end when Hercules knocks the legs out from under Theodorus. As he falls, his sword sails high in the air. When it comes down, it pins Theodorus to the ground. In that instant, he is transformed from warrior to dying man.

All Hercules can do is kneel beside him.

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED: 2

12

HERCULES
Why did you attack me?

THEODORUS
(growing weaker)
For love...

HERCULES
Whose love?
(Theodorus is fading
fast)
Come on, tell me.

But Theodorus isn't looking at Hercules anymore. He's
staring up at the shaft of sunlight that has embraced him.

THEODORUS
Xena, I'm sorry I failed you.

And then he dies, leaving Hercules puzzled as to why he
would utter Xena's name. A beat later, our hero sees the
medallion around Theodorus' neck, the one he saw Xena
wearing. In that instant, Hercules realizes that Iolaus
may be in harm's way.

*
*

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

13 EXT. STREAM - DAY

13

Iolaus and Xena are getting to the heart of the matter as they water their horses.

XENA

(re Hercules)

Just in case you're still wondering, I really would rather go into battle with you.

IOLAUS

You don't have to make me feel good.

XENA

And you don't have to treat me like I'm a hypocrite. Believe it or not, I don't give a fig for Hercules' name or his reputation.

IOLAUS

Then you're the only one, Xena.

XENA

Maybe you and the rest of his admiring legions should take a closer look at him.

(off Iolaus' look)

What's Hercules really fighting for? Go ahead, Iolaus, tell me.

IOLAUS

He fights to help people. I thought everybody knew that. He wants to stop slavery and injustice and...

XENA

Oh, stop it. You're a grown man, an honored warrior, and yet you're taken in by the same lies that schoolchildren cling to.

IOLAUS

They're not lies. I've seen the good that Hercules has done. I've been there with him.

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED:

13

XENA

In that case, you should know that all Hercules fights for is to prove he can succeed without Zeus, and to get revenge on Hera for killing his family. He's selfish, Iolaus. Selfish right to the bone.

Iolaus is taken aback by Xena's blunt disrespect. It takes him a beat to recover.

IOLAUS

I don't need to hear that.

XENA

And I don't need to hear you say Hercules should be here instead of you. The fact is, I think you're a better man than he'll ever be.

Iolaus is touched by the flattery, particularly when Xena underscores her sentiment with a lingering kiss.

CUT TO:

14 INT. ALCMENE'S HOME - NIGHT

14

Hercules is getting ready to hit the road. Alcmene is watching him, concern written all over her face.

ALCMENE

I don't know why you think it's her. There must be lots of other Xenas in the world.

HERCULES

I'd agree with you if the warrior who attacked me hadn't been wearing a medallion just like the one she had on.

ALCMENE

But that still doesn't explain him trying to kill you, Hercules.

HERCULES

He loved her, and he wanted to prove it.

ALCMENE

Are you sure that's why he died?

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED:

14

HERCULES

He didn't just die, mother. Xena sent him on a suicide mission.

ALCMENE

But there's no reason for that.

HERCULES

Yes, there is. He was the bait. Now Xena expects me to go after Iolaus and walk right into whatever trap she's laying.

Alcmene swallows hard. It's agonizing to hear her son be so candid about the kind of danger he routinely faces.

ALCMENE

And that's what you're going to do, isn't it?

HERCULES

I have to.

ALCMENE

Iolaus is going to think you're coming to steal his glory. This woman will make sure of that. Even if you don't get killed, you could end up destroying your friendship with Iolaus.

HERCULES

Saving his life is more important. *

Alcmene nods. After a beat:

ALCMENE

Just promise me you'll come back in one piece.

HERCULES

In one piece -- and with Iolaus.

Off our hero's steely resolve as he heads for the door --

CUT TO:

15 EXT. HILLTOP - DAY

15

Iolaus and Xena rein in their horses. Iolaus is clearly impressed by the lush foliage around them.

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED:

15

IOLAUS
Beautiful country. I can see why
you're fighting to keep it.

XENA
(suddenly grim)
You're going to do more than see.

She draws her sword and nods toward the valley that she and Iolaus are about to ride into. Iolaus turns and look at what has attracted her attention:

A BAND OF FIVE SOLDIERS

is escorting a horse-drawn supply wagon across the valley. The soldiers are on foot, but that doesn't make them any less impressive. They're large, muscular, well-armed and obviously primed for action.

XENA (O.S.)
They're part of Petrakis' legion.

RESUME IOLAUS AND XENA

He's watching her intently.

IOLAUS
What do you want to do?

XENA
(low but menacing)
Wipe them off the face of the earth.

She takes the bolo off her belt and, swinging it over her head, urges her horse down the hill toward the soldiers' traveling party.

Iolaus can't believe what he's seeing. The odds are against Xena, and still she never spent a second wondering if she should tiptoe around the soldiers. Shaking his head in wonderment, Iolaus draws his own sword.

IOLAUS
(to himself)
I can't sit this one out.

And he rides into the valley after her. He's far enough behind to watch the early stages of the battle unfold.

HIS POV

Two of the soldiers rush out to challenge Xena, intent on knocking her off her horse. No way she's going to let that happen. She hurls her bolo at one soldier, wrapping it

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED: 2

15

around his neck in a death grip. The she draws her sword and puts it to work on the other soldier. Color him dead.

IOLAUS

is more amazed than ever. But he can't stay that way for long, because he has ridden into the middle of the battle and one of the soldiers is knocking him off his horse. Iolaus lands on his feet, in perfect position to sword fight the soldier and simultaneously cast a satisfied glance toward Xena, who's battling two of these killers. They quickly move so they're back-to-back, and as they fight from that position, there's something almost sexual about the choreography of their movements.

IOLAUS

You sure know how to show a fellow a good time!

XENA

Don't talk ... Fight ...

IOLAUS

Okay.

Finally he succeeds in knocking the sword out of the soldier's hand and sending him running.

XENA

Don't let him get away!

She shouts this, mind you, while she's still dueling her two foes. What Iolaus thinks of her response is written all over his face: The woman is a beautiful savage. And she proves it by taking care of her foes with two vicious slashes of her sword. Then she starts chasing the escaping soldier, only to be grabbed by Iolaus.

XENA

What are you doing?

IOLAUS

(the voice of reason)

It's over, Xena. Let him go.

But she continues to struggle against Iolaus in front of the soldiers' supply wagon. In the process, his magnificent knife falls to the ground.

CLOSE ON KNIFE

as it lies there unnoticed.

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED: 3

15

RESUME SCENE

It looks like Iolaus is finally getting Xena under control.

IOLAUS

No, no, it's okay. We won. He won't be coming back. *

XENA

(a trifle gloomy)
I guess you're right.

IOLAUS

Hey, don't sound so blue. You were great. No, you were better than great. You were amazing. *

XENA

You don't have to say that.

XENA

But it's true. The only warrior I've ever seen who's as magnificent as you is Hercules.

At last, Xena smiles.

XENA

I'm honored.

IOLAUS

You deserve to be.

XENA

If you mean that, you won't try to stop me from burning their wagon.

Off her defiant look --

CUT TO:

16 EXT. XENA'S COMPOUND - DAY

16

Xena's biggest and fiercest warriors are hard at work when one of them glances at the main entrance and breaks into a worshipful smile.

WARRIOR #1

It's Xena!

The rest of the warriors shout out their greetings as Xena rides in with Iolaus at her side. He can't help being impressed by the adulation pouring out of the warriors surging around Xena. But Xena can.

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED:

16

XENA

Give me some room! Act like warriors!

She jumps off her horse as the warriors obey her order.
Then she looks up at Iolaus.

XENA

After all the riding we've done, I'd
think you'd want to get off that
horse.

IOLAUS

Good idea.

As Iolaus dismounts, Estragon steps to the front of the pack
and eyeballs him defiantly.

ESTRAGON

Who's this?

XENA

This is the man who gives us the power
to defeat Petrakis.

Iolaus, emboldened by the praise, offers Estragon his hand.

IOLAUS

I'm Iolaus.

Estragon reluctantly shakes with him.

XENA

He's Hercules' best friend, Estragon.
I've never seen anyone better with a
sword.

(to Iolaus)

I want you to teach me the move you
used to knock the sword out of that
soldier's hand.

IOLAUS

Even if I didn't kill him with it?

XENA

I can always fix that.

(a beat)

You can, too.

Then she turns back to her warriors.

XENA

You've all got things to do. We'll
never defeat Petrakis if you just
stand around.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED: 2

16

XENA (cont'd)
(to Iolaus)
As for you...
(smiling seductively)
...come with me.

She doesn't wait for a reply before walking away. Iolaus has to hurry to catch up with her.

CUT TO:

17 EXT. VALLEY - DAY - LATER

17

Smoke rises from the burning wagon. The bodies of the four dead soldiers litter the battle site.

On the far side of the carnage, Hercules appears. He slowly makes his way through the bodies, checking to see if anyone is still alive, wondering if Iolaus and Xena had anything to do with this. And then he stops, frozen in his tracks by what he sees beside the burning wagon:

IOLAUS' KNIFE

is lying in the dirt.

HERCULES

kneels and picks it up. He turns it over in his hands, studying it, hoping it wasn't used to kill any of the soldiers lying nearby. Finally, Hercules rises. He puts the knife in his pouch, looks around the battle site once more and, satisfied there's nothing more to find, resumes his pursuit of Iolaus and Xena.

CUT TO:

A SERIES OF SHOTS

showing Hercules as he races to catch up with Iolaus.

- He weaves through woods;
- Splashes through a stream;
- Pounds across a valley;
- Scales a cliff;
- And runs along a ridge, outlined against an azure sky.

CUT TO:

18 INT. BEDROOM, XENA'S MANSE - DAY

18*

In this lavish setting, Xena is bathing Iolaus.

IOLAUS

I wasn't expecting this from someone whose warriors treat her like a hero.

XENA

You deserve what you get, I deserve what I get.

IOLAUS

I'm not going to argue. I saw the way you handled yourself in that fight.

XENA

Did I surprise you?

IOLAUS

When a woman asks for help, I don't expect her to be so...

He's searching for the right adjective. She helps him.

XENA

Independent? Violent?

IOLAUS

Yes, and fearless, too.

XENA

Hard times make hard people, Iolaus. There's no avoiding that. My father died in battle. So did all three of my brothers.

(a beat)

I'm not going to.

IOLAUS

I admire your goal. But there may be a warlord out there who would wade through an ocean of blood to keep you from achieving it. If not Petrakis, then the next one who comes along.

XENA

You sound like you're worried about me.

IOLAUS

I am. It's not every day that I meet a beautiful woman who wants to wash my back.

*

(CONTINUED)

18 CONTINUED:

18

With a look that says she can wash more than that, Xena stands, slips off her gown and eases her naked body into the tub with Iolaus. *

IOLAUS

Do you do this for all your warriors?

XENA

Only the special ones.

IOLAUS

I hope there aren't many of them.

XENA

Right now there's only you.

They lock in a soapy embrace and kiss passionately until they're interrupted by a knock on the door.

XENA

Come back later!

SERVANT (O.S.)

But Hercules is here!

Iolaus and Xena trade a surprised look.

IOLAUS

Hercules?

XENA

He must have followed us.

IOLAUS

But why would he do that?

XENA

(teasing)

Maybe he doesn't trust you with me.

IOLAUS

(teasing right back)

He shouldn't.

XENA

(getting serious)

Or maybe he doesn't think you're man enough to help me.

IOLAUS

(his pride stung)

I better go see what he wants.

As Iolaus rises and turns away to grab his clothes, a satisfied smile creeps onto Xena's face.

CUT TO:

19 EXT. XENA'S COMPOUND - DAY

19*

Hercules is waiting when Iolaus steps out of Xena's manse. For a beat, the two old friends regard each other almost as strangers. All around them, Xena's warriors are watching expectantly. At last:

HERCULES

Hello, Iolaus.

IOLAUS

I didn't expect to see you here, Hercules.

HERCULES

I didn't expect to come.

IOLAUS

You didn't have to. I thought we'd agreed on that.

HERCULES

That was before your warrior princess sent someone to kill me.

Iolaus' eyes go hard. The watching warriors stir ominously as he starts walking toward Hercules.

IOLAUS

I don't like the way you're talking about a brave woman.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Xena appears in a second-story window to watch where her treachery will lead.

RESUME SCENE

HERCULES

Since when is there anything brave about sneak attacks or the people behind them?

IOLAUS

You'd better turn around and go back home, Hercules.

It's a statement that draws a verbal line in the sand, but Hercules does his best to get past it.

HERCULES

I was hoping you'd go with me.

IOLAUS

No chance.

(CONTINUED)

19 CONTINUED:

19

They're toe-to-toe now.

HERCULES
Even though she wants me dead?

IOLAUS
Where's your proof?

HERCULES
My word should be enough for you.

IOLAUS
It's not.

HERCULES
I guess that means friendship doesn't count.

IOLAUS
Not when you poison it by coming here.

HERCULES
You've got it all wrong. I'm trying
to save your life. *

IOLAUS
Don't make me laugh. Just get out of
here, would you? We're through
talking. *

HERCULES
Why? Are you afraid of what you'll
hear?

IOLAUS
(with cold fury)
Get out.

HERCULES
You haven't answered my question.

BOOM! Iolaus hauls off and punches Hercules, driving him
backward two or three steps.

IOLAUS
There's your answer.

XENA

is delighted by what she sees from her vantage point.

RESUME SCENE

Hercules looks at Iolaus, surprised, stunned, hurt more

(CONTINUED)

19 CONTINUED: 2

19

emotionally than physically. He doesn't speak, but he does reach into his pouch and pull out Iolaus' knife. Everybody watching expects the worst, especially Iolaus. Knife in hand, Hercules studies his wayward friend for a beat. Then:

(CONTINUED)

19 CONTINUED: 3

19

HERCULES

I think you lost this.

He throws the knife in the dirt between them, but Iolaus doesn't move to pick it up. His eyes stay on Hercules.

HERCULES

Goodbye, Iolaus.

With a heavy heart, he turns and walks away.

XENA

sneers triumphantly.

IOLAUS

watches, his face devoid of emotion.

AND HERCULES

leaves, his shoulders slumped with the weight of the worst defeat he can imagine: rejection by his best friend.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

20 INT. COUNTRY TAVERN - NIGHT

20

Hercules is sitting by himself at the bar, working on a bowl of stew and trying to ignore the stares of the tavernkeeper and the tavern's patrons. Finally, a DRINKER works up the courage to approach our hero.

DRINKER #1

Did you take care of her yet?

HERCULES

I don't know who you're talking about.

DRINKER #1

Xena, the warrior princess. Who else?

DRINKER #2 materializes behind #1. Everybody else in the tavern takes that as a cue to crowd around Hercules.

DRINKER #2

All she wants to do is write her name across history in big, bloody letters. She won't rest until she's wiped out everybody and everything that's stopping her from conquering Arcadia.

DRINKER #1

If we don't give her our crops and our wares, she kills every man in sight.

DRINKER #2

And it's not our nature to fight back. We're farmers and millhands. Ordinary people. You've got to help us, Hercules.

DRINKER #1

Come on, what do you say?

The crowd waits expectantly for Hercules' answer. After a beat, in a voice devoid of emotion:

HERCULES

I don't have the strength right now. I'm sorry to disappoint you.

He picks up his bowl of stew and wades through the drinkers to an empty corner table. He has clearly put up a DO NOT DISTURB sign, but an OLD MAN who has been hanging at the back of the crowd still approaches him.

(CONTINUED)

20 CONTINUED:

20

HERCULES

Look, there's nothing more to talk about.

OLD MAN

Oh yes there is. Why don't we start with whatever it is you've lost? *

HERCULES

I didn't think it showed.

OLD MAN

Just like the nose on your face.

(then)

You mind telling me what it was?

HERCULES

It wasn't a what, it was a who -- the best friend I ever had. A warrior... a storyteller... a believer in honor and laughter... Xena got him to fall in love with her.

OLD MAN

If your friend took the trouble to look into her past, he'd know she used him to get you here. Once she has your head hanging on her wall, she doesn't expect anybody to stand in her way.

HERCULES

Well, somebody else will have to be her trophy. I'm going home. There are things for me to do there.

OLD MAN

I imagine so, but it'll be easier traveling by day. Less chance of walking into a tree or off a cliff.

(then)

If you want, I can put you up for the night.

HERCULES

You sure it's no problem?

OLD MAN

I wouldn't have invited you if it was.

(offering his hand)

The name's Petrakis.

Hercules can't hide his surprise as they shake hands.

(CONTINUED)

20 CONTINUED: 2

20

HERCULES

Are you the warlord?

PETRAKIS

Take a closer look at me, son. Do I look like a warlord to you?

HERCULES

No, you don't.

PETRAKIS.

Of course not. I'm a farmer, and an old one at that. But Xena doesn't care anything for the truth when she's trying to get someone in her clutches. She takes my name and applies it to some imaginary madman who rose from Hades robbing shrines and eating babies.

HERCULES

It sounds like she'll do anything to get what she wants.

*

PETRAKIS

And she wants everything. If she kills you, there'll be nothing to stop her.

*

*

*

CUT TO:

21 INT. MAIN ROOM, XENA'S MANSE - NIGHT

21

Iolaus is solemnly sharpening his sword when Xena appears at the door in a sheer nightgown. For a beat, she watches Iolaus, who has a serious case of the blues. Then she approaches and places a hand on his shoulder.

*

XENA

If he was really your friend, he wouldn't have come here and tried to interfere.

IOLAUS

I suppose you're right, Xena. It's just that I've never been on a different side than Hercules.

XENA

You didn't let that stop you from standing up to him. You were a true warrior.

She's laying it on thick and Iolaus is wallowing in it.

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED:

21

IOLAUS

If I was anything less, you wouldn't want me here.

XENA

You've turned out to be everything I thought Hercules would be. But Hercules...

(she sounds hurt)

I can be fierce and violent, Iolaus. You've seen that with your own eyes. But to hear Hercules say what he did was like having a dagger plunged in my heart.

IOLAUS

His words ended my friendship with him.

XENA

Then you must be in pain, too.

IOLAUS

Not as long as I'm with you.

They kiss long and deep. When they come up for air:

XENA

Come to bed when you finish with your sword. I'll be waiting.

And she hurries away, leaving Iolaus further under her spell than ever.

CUT TO:

22 INT. HALLWAY, XENA'S MANSE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

22

Estragon is waiting when Xena comes out of the main room.

XENA

(re Iolaus)

He turns into a whimpering dog every time I mention Hercules.

ESTRAGON

Then he has to die.

XENA

Not by your hand, Estragon, and not by mine. It is Hercules who must kill him.

*
*

(CONTINUED)

22 CONTINUED:

22

ESTRAGON
But Hercules is gone.

(CONTINUED)

22 CONTINUED: 2

22

XENA

It's our job to bring him back -- if you think you're brave enough to ride with me.

ESTRAGON

You know I am. But your strategy...

Xena sneers at his puzzlement.

XENA

Any true warrior would understand that you demoralize and weaken before you destroy. When Hercules realizes he's killed his best friend, he'll be ripe for the slaughter.

Estragon nods.

ESTRAGON

When do we go after him?

XENA

At dawn.

ESTRAGON

(hormones rising)
And until then?

XENA

Save your strength.

Off the icy look she uses to dismiss Estragon --

CUT TO:

23 EXT. PETRAKIS' FARM - DAY

23

Hercules steps outside to greet the new morning. As he stretches and looks around, he sees a humble grave and walks over to have a closer look. When he kneels beside it, he sees a marker indicating that a soldier lies beneath the earth. After a beat:

PETRAKIS (O.S.)

The most painful thing a parent can do is bury a child.

(CONTINUED)

23 CONTINUED:

23

Hercules turns to see that the old man has followed him.

PETRAKIS

My only son is in that grave. He was barely 20 when he died at the hands of a Spartan. But it was really Xena who killed him.

HERCULES

You mean he fell into the same trap my friend is in?

The old man nods and swallows hard. It's obvious the sadness of this loss will never leave him.

PETRAKIS

I warned him. Begged, pleaded, argued. I even ran down the road after him the day he rode off. The only thing I never did was give up.

HERCULES

Is that what you think I'm doing, Petrakis? Giving up?

PETRAKIS

You tell me.

HERCULES

Your son was a manchild. Iolaus is an adult capable of living his own life, making his own decisions.

PETRAKIS

And it's all right if those decisions kill him?

HERCULES

You know it's not.

PETRAKIS

Then why are you leaving him with that murdering harlot? She's a monster just like the Hydra and the Nemean Lion and the Stymphalian Bird. You didn't walk away from fighting them, Hercules, and you can't walk away from fighting her.

Hercules ponders the challenge Petrakis has given him for a beat. Finally:

HERCULES

You're right. I can't.

(CONTINUED)

23 CONTINUED: 2

23

Off his new-found determination to settle things with Xena
and save Iolaus --

*
*

CUT TO:

24 INT. BEDROOM, XENA'S MANSE - DAY

24

The first light of morning wakes Iolaus. He rolls over expecting to find Xena next to him. She's not there. Iolaus' sleepy eyes widen in surprise. And that surprise is compounded by the sound of hoofbeats outside the window. Iolaus hauls himself out of bed, hurries to the window, and looks outside in time to see

XENA AND ESTRAGON

riding out of the compound. Xena has a bullwhip over her shoulder and a razor-sharp round throwing device called a Chakram dangling from her belt.

RESUME SCENE

A frown spreads across Iolaus' face. He's jealous.

CUT TO:

25 EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

25

Hercules strides purposefully into view.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Xena watches him for her hiding place, calm and deliberate.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Estragon crouches behind bushes on the other side of the road from Xena. He's nervous and excited.

HERCULES

is drawing closer and closer.

XENA

slowly licks her lips. She can't wait to see what happens.

ESTRAGON

is coiled to strike. But a bad case of nerves is making him sweat, and it's getting in his eyes. When he can't stand it any longer, he wipes away the sweat and rustles the bushes.

A BIRD

angrily flutters up from the foliage where Estragon is.

HERCULES

hears the noise and sees the bird. He's instantly ready for trouble as he peers intently in Estragon's direction.

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED:

25

HERCULES

Who's there?

ESTRAGON

stays in hiding, hating himself for his clumsiness.

XENA

sneers at Estragon's ineptitude. Hercules has his back to her as he looks toward the sound of the noise. *

HERCULES

tears a branch off a tree and hefts it menacingly.

HERCULES

If you don't show your face, I'm coming in there after you.

ESTRAGON

gathers himself and, with sword in hand, he steps out of hiding to face Hercules. He's filled with bad intentions.

ESTRAGON

That won't be necessary.

HERCULES

What's the matter? Did your warrior princess have a previous engagement?

XENA

doesn't like the way her nom de carnage is being taken in vain. But she stays where she is. *

RESUME SCENE

ESTRAGON

Even the mighty Hercules should show more respect than that.

HERCULES

For what? A murderer? A crazy woman whose only purpose in life is to kill and conquer?

ESTRAGON

(enraged)
You're dead!

And he charges our hero wildly.

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED: 2

25

HERCULES

Not yet.

And he sidesteps Estragon deftly. But the battle is on:
Estragon's sword versus our hero's branch.

XENA

is the essence of skepticism as she watches.

XENA

(to herself)

You're crazy, Estragon. *

RESUME SCENE

But it looks like Estragon might succeed when he slashes
Hercules' arm. But our hero responds by fighting back with
a ferocity that would stun even his greatest admirers. *

XENA

can't believe what she's seeing. The sight of Hercules at
full throttle is the most amazing -- and frightening --
thing she's ever seen.

RESUME SCENE

Hercules ducks under Estragon's sweeping sword stroke, then
counters with a vicious swipe of his tree branch. Estragon
folds like an accordion. As he lies on the ground, gasping
for breath, he looks up at Hercules beseechingly.

ESTRAGON

No more.

Hercules can't believe his ears.

HERCULES

What did you say?

ESTRAGON

(louder)

I said I surrender. Please don't kill
me.

He rolls to one knee.

ESTRAGON

I'm begging you, Hercules.

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED: 3

25

XENA

can't believe her ears, either. Seething with rage at the idea that one of her warriors would dishonor her this way, she reaches for her Chakrah.

RESUME SCENE

HERCULES

I'm not going to kill you. Stand up.

Slowly, warily, Estragon does as he is told.

ESTRAGON

What are you going to do to me?

Before Hercules can reply:

XENA (O.S.)

If Hercules is good enough to beat
you, he's good enough to kill you!

*
*

Hercules and Estragon spin toward the sound of her voice just in time to see the flying Chakrah hit Estragon right between the eyes. He's dead before he hits the ground.

Hercules glances at the dead warrior, then at Xena, who is running to get to her horse. He starts to chase her, then feels a flash of pain from his wounded arm. The pain stops him cold. All he can do is watch

XENA

as she mounts her horse and stares back at him defiantly.

HERCULES

Is this what you do to all your
warriors, Xena?

*

XENA

Only the ones who don't live by my
code.

*
*

And she gallops away.

CUT TO:

26 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

26

Xena is riding hell bent for leather, and then she reins her horse to a stop. She looks back to see if Hercules is on her heels. When she's satisfied that he isn't, Xena jumps off her horse and begins ripping at her clothes. She tears at her hair and claws at her face until she's bleeding. She's a mess, but she isn't done until she rolls in the dirt, thrashing madly.

CUT TO:

27 EXT. XENA'S COMPOUND - DAY

27

Iolaus looks angry and jealous as he throws his prize knife into a target. When he goes to retrieve it, he hears the clatter of hoofbeats and the shouts of the warriors in the compound. He turns and sees

XENA

looking like she's been beaten within an inch of her life as she falls into the arms of the warriors nearest her.

Iolaus rushes to her side, his jealousy replaced by concern.

IOLAUS

Xena, what happened?

XENA

(gasping)

He killed Estragon... and he tried to kill me.

IOLAUS

Who did?

XENA

Hercules.

Off the rage that instantly grips Iolaus --

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

28 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

28

Hercules ties a crude cloth bandage around his wounded arm. When he's finished, he stands carefully, unsure of how much the wound has weakened him. He's not at full strength, but he's damn sure not turning back now. So he begins his "High Noon" march to Xena's compound as we hear:

XENA (V.O.)

He caught us by surprise, Iolaus.

CUT TO:

29 INT. MAIN ROOM, XENA'S MANSE - DAY

29

Xena is a bloody, disheveled mess. Iolaus is trying to clean her up, a process that elicits grimaces from the warrior princess but never a verbal acknowledgment of pain.

XENA

(continuing)

I thought I was going to die.

IOLAUS

That's not the Hercules I know, ambushing people, attacking women. He must have gone crazy.

XENA

You'd know he had if you'd seen what he did to Estragon.

IOLAUS

Estragon shouldn't have been out there with you. I should have.

XENA

Then Hercules would have killed you.

Iolaus wheels away from her angrily.

IOLAUS

Does that mean you expect me to run away now?

XENA

Other men would.

IOLAUS

None of them could love you as much as I do.

(CONTINUED)

29 CONTINUED:

29

XENA

Do you mean it? Can you really put me
in your life before Hercules?

IOLAUS

I stood up to him for you once, Xena.
If I didn't back down then, I'm not
going to now.

XENA

But this time is different. You've
got to know that.

Iolaus nods somberly.

IOLAUS

I know ... If he comes for you, I'll
have to kill him.

*

XENA

Can you do that?

IOLAUS

Only for you.

XENA

Iolaus . . .

She embraces him and they kiss for a long, hot beat. Then:

XENA

You can defeat him, I know you can. I
feel it in my soul. You know the way
Hercules fights, his moves, his
tricks, his weaknesses . . .

Off Iolaus, unable to resist her siren song --

CUT TO:

30 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

30

Still on the march, Hercules heads up a grassy slope. With
every step he takes, the weight of his impending battle with
Iolaus weighs heavier on him.

CUT TO:

31 EXT. XENA'S COMPOUND - DAY

31

In an out-of-the-way corner, Xena has her six biggest,
toughest warriors standing tall.

(CONTINUED)

31 CONTINUED:

31

XENA

(re Iolaus)

The only one who will battle Hercules when he arrives is Iolaus. Do you understand?

(off the warriors' looks)

I don't care how quickly my little man dies in the process, and I don't care how painfully he does it. No one else is to be out there...

(a beat)

...until Iolaus is dead and Hercules is standing there, staggered by the weight of what he has done to his best friend. Then, and only then, will we move in to rid the world of the son of Zeus. Do I make myself clear?

There's a yes in the warriors' obedient silence.

XENA

Good.

She starts to leave, then turns back to the warriors.

XENA

And not a word about this to Iolaus. If he knew the sacrifice he was going to make, he might have second thoughts.

Off her treachery --

CUT TO:

32 EXT. HILLTOP - DAY

32

Hercules comes to a stop and looks down at

XENA'S MANSE

before he takes a deep breath and starts toward it, hating what he fears will happen when he gets there.

CUT TO:

33 INT. MAIN ROOM, XENA'S MANSE - DAY

33

Iolaus paces nervously while his sword stands in a corner. After we watch him sweat in solitude for a few moments, the door opens and Xena appears, looking grim and purposeful.

(CONTINUED)

33 CONTINUED:

33

XENA
He's here.

IOLAUS
I'm ready.

Off a look that says he isn't lying --

*

CUT TO:

34 EXT. XENA'S COMPOUND - DAY

34

Hercules is waiting when Iolaus appears with Xena right behind him. All of her warriors are on hand, circling around our hero and his estranged friend, hungering for the sight of blood. Since Iolaus has his sword and Hercules is unarmed, the source of the blood seems easy to predict.

IOLAUS
I can't believe you'd show your face here.

HERCULES
Stay out of this, Iolaus. It's between me and your warrior princess.

IOLAUS
How can you come here and accuse her of being a coward? You're the one who attacked Xena and killed the warrior with her.

HERCULES
Is that what she told you?

ANOTHER ANGLE

Xena smells blood as she watches the showdown.

RESUME SCENE

IOLAUS
Get a weapon, Hercules. You're not my friend anymore, but this isn't an execution.

(CONTINUED)

34 CONTINUED:

34

HERCULES

It shouldn't be a fight, either.
She's using you to get to me.

IOLAUS

Quit talking and get a weapon. I'm
giving you the chance you didn't give
Xena.

HERCULES

What if I don't want it?

He raises his arms to the side, palms up, as if he is
waiting to be executed.

XENA

Go on, Iolaus! Kill him!

IOLAUS

(to Hercules)

You don't get off that easy.

Iolaus walks to the nearest warrior and snatches his sword
before the warrior can stop him. When the warrior makes a
threatening move, Iolaus freezes him by putting the point of
the sword to the warrior's Adam's apple.

IOLAUS

Nothing to get upset about. It's just
a loan.

The warrior doesn't have any choice but to back down.

XENA

(outraged)

What are you doing?

IOLAUS

The honorable thing.

Then he tosses the warrior's sword to Hercules, who has to
catch it lest it come to rest in his sternum.

IOLAUS

Are you ready to die, Hercules?

HERCULES

Not on your life.

And so it begins, this fight to the death between two
valiant figures who should have always been on the same
side. The clang of their swords fills Xena with a perverse
joy. Her plan is working perfectly.

(CONTINUED)

34 CONTINUED: 2

34

XENA

Yes! Kill him!
(to herself)
Or at least weaken him for me.

Judging by the way the fight goes early on, it looks like she's going to get her wish. Hercules is strictly on the defensive, backpedaling, blocking Iolaus' thrusts, doing everything but trying to draw blood. Iolaus seethes.

IOLAUS

Fight, dammit! Quit acting like you're too good for me.

HERCULES

I've never been too good for you. I'm just trying to stay alive long enough for you to come to your senses.

XENA

Stop talking and kill him, Iolaus!

Iolaus responds to her urging by stepping up the pressure on Hercules. The two of them battle savagely around the compound, hurtling whatever is there to be hurtled, splintering whatever is there to be splintered.

Xena's warriors part only when it advances Iolaus' cause. When Hercules comes close, they shove him toward Iolaus, hoping our hero will wind up being impaled on his former friend's sword.

After this has happened once, Hercules realizes what he's in for and plots accordingly. The next time he's backed toward the crowd, he waits for a warrior to shove him and steps aside just before he gets hit. The warrior stumbles forward and doesn't stop until Iolaus' sword is sticking all the way through him.

HERCULES

(to Xena)

Keep your goons out of this!

When he goes back to dueling Iolaus, he isn't taking it easy anymore. This is vintage Hercules. Xena can sense it, her warriors can sense it, and Iolaus knows it for a flat damn fact. But Iolaus rises to the occasion anyway. He battles Hercules on even terms until our hero throws his sword high in the air over Iolaus, fakes one way, goes the other, and races around behind him to catch it.

Iolaus gets his feet tangled trying to keep up with Hercules. He lands in a heap, but he still manages to pull his prize knife and hold it at the ready as he looks up at

*
*

(CONTINUED)

34 CONTINUED: 3

34

Hercules, who is towering above him. Both of them know the
significance of what Iolaus has in his hand.

*
*

(CONTINUED)

34 CONTINUED: 4

34

HERCULES
Are you going to use it? *

IOLAUS
(after a beat) *
No, this knife wasn't made to be *
tarnished by your blood. *

He tosses it aside. *

IOLAUS
Get it over with.

HERCULES
I'm not going to kill you.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Xena, her eyes flashing furiously, gives the six prime-time warriors she talked to a look and a nod. That's all they need to charge Hercules and Iolaus with a vengeance.

RESUME SCENE

IOLAUS
I was going to kill you.

HERCULES
You thought you were. But real friends don't do that to each other.

IOLAUS
Yeah ... You're right ...

Hercules glances at the charging warriors.

HERCULES
Let's talk about it later.

Iolaus grabs his knife and lets Hercules pull him back to his feet just in time for the two of them to face the charge. They fight with fists and feet as well as with their swords. *

Hercules kicks one warrior in the chest and creates a domino effect that flattens four other thugs.

Iolaus pins a warrior to a wall with his prize knife and leaves it there while he pounds knobs on three other warriors with his fists. Then he comes back and head-butts the warrior pinned to the wall before removing his knife.

(CONTINUED)

34 CONTINUED: 5

34

ANOTHER ANGLE

Xena can see that there's no future for her campaign to rid the world of Hercules, so she's herding the rest of her warriors toward their horses.

XENA

Let's get out of here! Come on, move!

RESUME SCENE

Hercules picks up a warrior and spins him round and round, propeller style, flattening the warriors who get in his way.

(CONTINUED)

34 CONTINUED: 6

34

Iolaus has his sword knocked out of his hand, so he picks up length of wood and goes to work decking warriors. When he has an instant to look up, he sees

ONE OF XENA'S RETREATING WARRIORS

with a bow and arrow, taking aim on Hercules' back while he's preoccupied with hand-to-hand combat. As the warrior draws the arrow back:

IOLAUS
Hercules, look out!

Hercules ducks. The arrow misses him by a hair and pierces the heart of one of the warriors he was fighting.

For a beat, Hercules and Iolaus share a look that says everything between them is back where it used to be. Hercules cared enough to come after Iolaus and Iolaus cared enough to save Hercules from an assassin's arrow.

Then it's back to business against the prime-time warriors, who always seem to keep coming back for more. But while Hercules and Iolaus fight, they can't help sneaking looks at

XENA

as she beats the weeping dogmeat out of the warrior who tried to kill Hercules from behind. Her blows are punctuated by:

XENA
I said retreat, not attack... Hercules is better than you... You don't deserve to fight him... None of you do...

When the belabored warrior sags lifeless at her feet, Xena makes a mad dash for her horse.

RESUME SCENE

Hercules takes time out from the donnybrook to shout at the fleeing Xena.

HERCULES
Aren't you even going to say goodbye?

Xena says no with her silence, so Hercules polishes off his warriors and starts to chase her. But when he glances at Iolaus, he sees his friend get wounded as he battles the last three warriors still on their feet.

Just like that, Hercules forgets about Xena. Helping Iolaus

(CONTINUED)

34 CONTINUED: -7

34

is more important. He races over, taking out two of the warriors and letting Iolaus ignore his wound long enough to polish off the third.

XENA (O.S.)

Hercules!

Hercules and Iolaus turn to see

XENA

astride her horse, a sword in her hand, the fierce look back on her face.

XENA

You haven't heard the last of me!

And then she rides away.

RESUME SCENE

Hercules and Iolaus watch her for a beat. Then Iolaus, wounded in both the head and the chest, turns to our hero.

IOLAUS

You could have caught her if you hadn't saved me.

HERCULES

You're more important than she is.

IOLAUS

Even though I acted like I could kill you? *

HERCULES

You didn't -- that's the important thing. *

IOLAUS

(after a beat)

No, because in my heart, I didn't want you to die. *

HERCULES

Your heart is all that counts.

Iolaus nods, sadder but wiser.

CUT TO:

35 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

35

Iolaus flinches as Hercules ties a torn strip of cloth
around his wounded noggin.

(CONTINUED)

35 CONTINUED:

35

IOLAUS

I don't know what hurts worse, my head
or knowing how stupid I was.

HERCULES

It always helps to know what you're
fighting for before you start
fighting.

Iolaus looks at him gravely.

IOLAUS

Is this where the lecture starts?

HERCULES

(dead serious)

It could.

(a beat)

But it won't.

The two friends trade smiles.

IOLAUS

You know, if you really want to
lecture me about something, it should
be the kind of women I'm attracted to.
After Xena, I think I'd be better off
jumping in bed with a black widow.

HERCULES

Yeah, as long as you don't swell up
when you get bitten.

IOLAUS

Listen, swelling up would be a relief.

HERCULES

If you say so.

(then)

Ready to go?

IOLAUS

I thought you'd never ask.

He stands and the two of them start walking toward home. As
they disappear into the distance:

(CONTINUED)

35 CONTINUED: 2

35

IOLAUS

Maybe I should give women up entirely.
What would you think about that?

HERCULES

I'd think you'd better think twice.
The way they look, the way they feel,
the way they smell -- seems like an
awful lot for a red-blooded guy like
you to be walking away from.

IOLAUS

(after a beat)

Yeah, I guess you're right. But next
time I hope I find a woman who wants
to kill me with kisses.

Off the laughter of these reunited friends --

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FOUR

For information on the Official Hercules Fan Club, send a self-addressed, stamped business size envelope to:

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