

XENA

WARRIOR PRINCESS

The Path Not Taken

BY
JULIE SHERMAN

Episode #5

XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS

"The Path Not Taken"

a.k.a.

"Going Home"

Written by
Julie Sherman

Directed by
Stephen Posey

Revised pages: Title page, 1 (to indicate title change only)

Executive Producers
Sam Raimi & Robert Tapert

SHOOTING DRAFT
July 27, 1995
Rev. Aug. 07, 1995 - Pink
Rev. Aug. 08, 1995 - Blue
Rev. Aug. 09, 1995 - Yellow
Rev. Aug. 10, 1995 - Green
Rev. Sep. 21, 1995 - White

XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS

"Going Home"

CAST LIST

XENA
GABRIELLE

JANA	(JA-na)
AGRANON	(AG-ra-non)
ANTONIUS	
MEZENTIUS	(me-ZEN-tee-us)
MARCUS	
BRISUS	(BRY-sus)
DICTYS	(DIK-tus)
SOLDIER #1	

Names referred to in dialog:

Boeotia	(bee-OH-sha)
Colonus	(co-LOHN-us)
Draco	(DRAK-o)
Trachis	(TRAY-kus)

XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS

"Going Home"

SET LIST

INTERIORS:

TAVERN
PUB
MEZENTIUS' OFFICE
GROTTO
WAREHOUSE
CASTLE DUNGEON
BOX

EXTERIORS:

CLEARING BY CREEK
TAVERN
ROAD
MEZENTIUS' COMPOUND/COURTYARD
MEZENTIUS' COMPOUND/PATH IN FRONT OF WAREHOUSE
COUNTRY ROAD
RIDGE
FIELD

*

*

XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS

"Going Home"

CHRONOLOGY

NIGHT 1	SCENE # 1	
DAY 2	SCENES # 2 - 20	
NIGHT 2	SCENES #21 - 31A	*
DAY 3	SCENE #40	*
NIGHT 3	SCENE #41	

XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS

"The Path Not Taken" *

a.k.a. "Going Home" *

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 EXT. CLEARING BY CREEK - NIGHT 1

An idyllic setting: moonlit night, burbling creek, majestic tree at the base of which sits JANA (18, lovely and wholesome). Her beloved, AGRANON (20's, handsome), is nearby, fishing something from the creek with his hand.

JANA

Agranon, will you promise that when we're old, we'll still come back here and sit under this tree?

Agranon extracts a skin of wine from the creek.

AGRANON

When we're old? We'll do it every year. On the anniversary of our wedding day. And, one day, we can bring our grandchildren. Lots of grandchildren.

Jana stares up at the full moon.

JANA

Ten years ago, a marriage between our families would have been impossible.

Agranon sits down next to Jana and leans in close, looking up at the moon.

JANA

Does anyone even remember what the feud was about?

AGRANON

Nobody in my family remembers. Whatever it was, it's centuries old. And it ends when we are joined.

She nods and settles into his arms.

JANA

Yes. We will definitely bring our grandchildren. And tell them peace was finally made here.

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED:

1

AGRANON
(hopeful)
And that one of their parents was made
here...?

With a giggle, Jana kisses him.

JANA
After our wedding, maybe.

With a resigned but playful shrug, Agranon begins to pour
the wine.

ANGLE - POV OF JANA AND AGRANON FROM JUST BEYOND THE TREES

Unbeknownst to them, the young lovers are being watched.
Something is moving...

ON JANA AND AGRANON

Jana looks around.

JANA
That's very strange...

AGRANON
Strange?

A SNAP of a twig is heard to their left. They look,
alarmed.

JANA
Someone's there!

Agranon picks up his sword and unsheathes it. It makes a
loud "Shhhing" sound as the blade slips free.

AGRANON
Who is it? Who's there?

All around them, there are "Shhhing" sounds... many swords
being unsheathed. Agranon pulls Jana to her feet.

AGRANON
Run...

JANA
Where? They're all around us!

At that moment, a MASKED MAN rushes Agranon. Distracted, he
swings, but the man stops short. Agranon is not a fighter.
The MASKED MAN stomps on the blade, forcing Agranon to his
knees. Two other MASKED MEN rush from the trees and grab
Jana.

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED: 2

1

JANA

Agranon!

He turns to go to her when a fourth man nails him with a sword hilt to the face. Agranon drops to his knees, still trying to muster the strength to save his love.

AGRANON

Jana...

Another blow to the back of the head drops him to the ground; out. We STAY ON AGRANON as the sounds of Jana resisting fade into the woods.

DISSOLVE TO:

2 EXT. TAVERN - DAY

2

Xena and Gabrielle walk through a dirty, one-murder-an-hour town.

GABRIELLE

The way I look at it, life is an adventure to be explored. And without adventure, what's the point? Granted some of the adventure with you gets a little bit too adventurous, but that makes it interesting. Who was it that said, "If curiosity is the food of life, then adventure is a meal?"

XENA

It sounds like something you would say.

GABRIELLE

Hmmm... maybe it was me. Speaking of a meal...

In front of a seedy-looking tavern is a post where Xena begins to tie her horse. Gabrielle looks the place up and down.

GABRIELLE

Places like this always have the best food.

A WINDOW CRASHES OUT and a MAN sails through and rolls to the street. He gets up and shakes it off.

GABRIELLE

And atmosphere. The two important ingredients to fine dining.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED:

2

GABRIELLE (cont'd)

(wry)

I jest, you know.

Meanwhile, the Man, obviously drunk, looks at Xena, straightens his belt, and winks at her. Xena shakes her head at him, warningly.

GABRIELLE

(re: tavern)

Still, this is part of the adventure.
Let's see what's on the menu.

She starts to head inside. The Man, in his infinite stupidity, has drawn a dagger and, leeringly, approaches Xena from behind her horse. Xena gives two short whistles. The horse kicks back. The Man is sent across the street with a pair of hoof imprints on his chest.

Gabrielle turns around.

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED:

2

GABRIELLE
You whistled?

XENA
Yeah, wait for me.

Gabrielle does. Together they enter;

3 INT. TAVERN - DAY

3

A crowded, somewhat nasty, pub. Xena and Gabrielle come in the front door, a sight for sore eyes for the other, mostly smarmy, patrons. Gabrielle appraises the room.

GABRIELLE
Lovely. Now this is the salt of the earth.

As they move in, a LASCIVIOUS DRUNK sidles up to Xena and puts his arm around her. Xena backfists him in the nose. Gabrielle goes on, having not seen a thing.

GABRIELLE
You've gotta admit, the people of Lerna might never appreciate who you are...

They arrive at the bar. Xena taps the counter; the bartender slaps two ales down before her. As Gabrielle continues, a SLIMEBAG down the way approaches behind her --

GABRIELLE
...but King Gregor certainly did. He would have lost his whole kingdom if it weren't for you. Cider, please.

-- and moves as if to nestle (a nice way of putting it) his body against hers. With full force, Xena elbows the Slimebag in the ribcage. He staggers back, falling to the ground at the feet of Agranon. He is a little out of place here, dressed in his royal finery. He sits at a nearby table, watching Xena in action.

GABRIELLE
The baby got a home, Gregor got his son, Pandora got some rest. And the way you figured out that prophecy... I, for one, am still amazed.

Furious, the Slimebag pulls his dagger, as Xena and Gabrielle turn from the bar. They're walking toward the tables as Xena spies the dagger; as Gabrielle walks ahead, Xena casually grabs a lighted torch nearby as she takes a sip of ale, and as the Slimebag springs toward her, she breathes out a huge ball of fire.

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED:

3

Still, Gabrielle was looking away. The Slimebag jumps back as Agranon looks on, impressed. Other patrons who've witnessed this, scurry from their tables and Xena and Gabrielle slip immediately into a vacated spot.

GABRIELLE

Did you ever notice how we never have trouble getting a table?

XENA

Mystery to me.

Xena hikes up her legs and rests her boot-clad feet on the table. As she and Gabrielle drink, there's a THUNK as a bag of coins lands on the table, right by Xena's feet. Both women look up with a start to see Agranon looming over them, trying his best to look regal and commanding. He's a fly's hair shy of that goal, but he has their attention.

AGRANON

That's if you're for hire.

GABRIELLE

Hey!

Xena puts a hand on Gabrielle's arm. This man intrigues her.

XENA

Not that kind of hire, Gabrielle.
(to Agranon)
Go on.

AGRANON

I am Agranon. I am the Prince and Heir Apparent of Colonus.
(pointing)
May I sit down?

XENA

No. Keep talking.

That took him by surprise. He was already starting to sit. He straightens up. Gabrielle pulls the bag of coins to her, opens it, runs her hands through the contents and reacts, suitably impressed.

AGRANON

I... I'm not sure where to begin.

XENA

Who did you want me to kill?

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED: 2

3

AGRANON

No one! Unless, you have to... May I
please sit down?

This time, Xena nods and Agranon sits.

XENA

You're new at this, so listen up:
anyone walking into a place like this
with a bag of gold is looking to live
a short life with a messy death.

*
*
*

AGRANON

I don't care! I've got to get her
back!

GABRIELLE

Her?

AGRANON

My fiancée. She's been abducted. If
she's not returned, there will be a
war.

Gabrielle shoots a look to Xena.

AGRANON

Our families... our kingdoms have
been in disagreement for centuries, no
one really knows why. But our marriage
was supposed to change all that.
Boeotia and Colonus. were going to be
united by our union.

GABRIELLE

(in awe)

That is so romantic!

(then)

But who kidnapped her?

AGRANON

The King of Boeotia thinks we did it.
My own father thinks they did it to
have an excuse to attack us.

XENA

And who do you think did it?

At that moment, a GREASY BAD GUY staggers toward the table,
unmindful that he's positioned himself in line with Xena's
legs resting there. Without batting an eye, Xena kicks him
halfway across the room. This time, Gabrielle sees it;
reacts; then recovers.

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED: 3

3

GABRIELLE

Sorry. That kind of thing happens sometimes. You were saying?

AGRANON.

I think Jana was taken by someone else, someone whose livelihood would be destroyed if this marriage took place.

XENA

Does this "someone" have a name?

AGRANON.

Mezentius. He's an arms dealer who operates from the walled city of --

XENA

-- Trachis, yes. I've heard of Mezentius.

AGRANON.

I imagine you might have. Trachis seems to be a crossroads for murderers and mercenaries.

GABRIELLE

No offense taken.

AGRANON

Uh... sorry. You must help us. We're talking about two nations going to war at any moment!

XENA

I don't work for nations. I don't work for money.

(then)

I won't work for you. Gabrielle?

Xena stands and starts to go. Gabrielle stands as well. But Agranon makes a risky move and grabs Xena by the arm. Surprisingly, she doesn't unjoint him like a chicken. Now, though, the pretense is gone. This is a lost man pleading for his love.

AGRANON

(blurting)

Please!... please... You're right, I don't know what I'm doing. All I know is the woman I love more than my own breath, my Jana. I love her. I'll die for her if I have to. Ask anything of me, and it's yours!

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED: 4

3

There is a beat where Xena regards him. Gabrielle looks at her expectantly.

XENA

First... there are hungry people in
this town who could use that gold.

*
*

She reaches out and grabs an embroidered emblem of state on his coat and rips it off.

XENA

I'll take this.

(then)

You'll get your Jana back.

As Gabrielle reacts with glee, and Agranon, overwhelmed, drops back into his chair, we:

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

4 INT. TAVERN - DAY - LATER

4

A little bit different, except that we can see most of the people remaining are well-behaved and seem to keep their distance.

GABRIELLE

Why don't I like the sound of this?
(thinking aloud)
You're going into a place known the world over as the den for cutthroats, thieves, and mercenaries and you're not even wearing a disguise?

XENA

I don't need a disguise. They'll remember me. And I think I can use that to my advantage. Besides... in a strange way it'll be nice to see some of them again.

*
*

GABRIELLE

You're terrible at reassurance, did anyone tell you that? I don't want you going in there and... you know... deciding you like it.

XENA

It won't happen. I'm going in, I'm getting the girl, I'm getting out.

At that moment, Agranon enters.

AGRANON

I did as you said. I gave out the gold to the poor. Now what do you need me to do?

Xena shoots a look to Gabrielle.

GABRIELLE

(resigned)
You're to stay here and keep me company while we wait.

XENA

I'll be back as soon as I can.

And she heads toward the door, with tavern patrons excusing themselves from her path respectfully. Agranon looks to Gabrielle. She gives him a reassuring grin.

DISSOLVE TO:

5 EXT. ROAD - DAY

5

Xena riding her horse along the road. We FOLLOW HER for a beat, then she stops and looks off at:

TRACHIS

The ol' Den of Inequity itself. Impressive, in a dark, unkempt sort of way. Guards at the front entrance; sentries posted at intervals upon the massive walls.

BACK TO SCENE

Xena gets off the horse. She takes her weapons and then removes the halter from the horse.

XENA

Go on. I'll call for you later.

A short whistle and the horse moves off into the woods. Xena turns and begins walking toward Trachis.

CUT TO:

6 INT. MEZENTIUS' OFFICE - DAY

6

A relatively grand affair with a huge table, maps, displays of armaments. MEZENTIUS stands next to his desk. A man, ANTONIUS, leans over the desk, signing a document. Near the wall, is MARCUS, in his 30's, handsome. Mezentius is well-dressed, in his 40's, and cold as steel. No matter what stirs on the surface, the man is pure snake underneath. Antonius is a diplomat in his 60's.

ANTONIUS

And you are certain the weapons will be delivered to Boeotia immediately?

MEZENTIUS

As soon as my people can produce them. Kidnap your Princess, did they? Colonus scum! War is war... but this... This is family! There is a line you just don't cross over! You'll get the best of my stock, believe me.

ANTONIUS

I must confess, I was concerned over your reputation, Mezentius. But you seem to be a man of honor. And I appreciate your concern over the loss of our sweet Princess.

He holds up his hand.

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED:

6

MEZENTIUS

(sincerely)

I... I know what it's like to lose a loved one.

With a handshake and a deep bow, Antonius exits the room. Mezentius picks up the document, blows on it to dry the ink, then rolls it up. He turns to Marcus.

MEZENTIUS

Is the "Princess" here yet?

MARCUS

She was brought in this morning.

MEZENTIUS

We'll tell the emissary from Colonus that it's half the gold up front. What do you think, Marcus?

MARCUS

I think you're going to be very rich.

Off Mezentius' smile, we:

CUT TO:

7 INT. PUB - DAY

7

The Trachis pub is pretty busy, chockful of MARAUDERS, young and old, unwashed and drunk, great faces and great builds, lots of raw sexuality. Snatches of conversation are heard:

BRISUS

(pointing to a buddy)

And Dictys here cuts him all the way from his neck to his gullet --

The speaker and listeners guffaw as DICTYS grins cockily. At another table, LOQUESTO and HIS FRIEND converse tipsily. Another slime, BRISUS, drinks lustily next to them.

DICTYS

He said I grabbed her! She was asking for it, for Dionysus' sake!

BRISUS

Speaking the language of love, was she, Loquesto? Yeah! Long live Dionysus!

XENA (O.S.)

(loudly, demanding)

Long live who?

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED:

7

Xena stands in the entrance of the pub, posing, bad-assed. A split-second of silence before the pub erupts in wild cheers. Xena saunters in, playing the role of the conquering hero as she's slapped on the back, playfully shoved (which she returns, forcefully), hugged around the shoulders.

MARAUDERS

(various ad-libs)

Xena!... She's back!... Where in Hades have you been?... (etc.)

Brisus steals her away from the crowd, an arm around her shoulder. Others follow.

BRISUS

Xena, what happened to you? You disappear, then there's talk all over the place that you've been working for peasants! For no profit!

*

As the others chime in that they've heard it, too, Xena grins: she's prepared herself for this one.

XENA

All for the cause, boys, all for the cause. It's called "gaining their trust." Once you do that --

In an instant, Xena flips and pins Brisus to the floor, her knife at his throat.

XENA

(softly, close and sinister)
-- you've got them right where you want them. There's profit to be made!

Brisus' fear is barely concealed as he eyes Xena's glinting knife. Then Xena grins, takes the knife away, and offers Brisus a hand up. Onlookers guffaw; Brisus takes the joke in stride.

BRISUS

That calls for a drink!

As Brisus guides Xena toward the bar, she surveys the room, her gaze falling upon a HUGE GUY ripping the flesh off the leg of a raw pheasant with his teeth; a SKINNY GUY scratching his chest with the necklace he's wearing, composed of the bones of severed hands.

BRISUS

So all that stuff about fighting for peasants and farmers --

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED: 2

7

XENA
(exasperated)
-- was Draco's payback for my trouncing
him. Enough already!

BRISUS
And why would you go after Draco?

A beat of silence as everyone considers this. Xena's eyes
turn dark.

XENA
'Cause he went after my mother!

Another beat, then there's a collective burst of macho
agreement: you don't go after anyone's mother. A lot of
guys clink mugs with Xena and drink. Suddenly a VOICE is
heard at the bar, behind Xena's fans.

MARCUS (O.S.)
(loud, challenging)
You expect us to believe that?

Xena almost chokes on her drink as the entire room goes
silent. Fear flashes in her eyes, but she pulls it in,
slowly stands and turns to face her accuser. The assembled
marauders get out of her way; she and Marcus meet one
another's cold, challenging eyes.

XENA
You've got something to say to me?

MARCUS
(scoffing)
I've got something to say about your
mother...

Xena begins walking toward him, her eyes flashing
murderously. Then Marcus stands as well. The crowd smells
a bloodbath: dread fills some eyes, while others glint with
excitement. Then Xena and Marcus stand face-to-face. And a
faint twinkle plays in Marcus' eyes.

MARCUS
(warmly)
How is your mother, Xena?

The twinkle's now in Xena's eyes, too, as she takes another
step and the two are in one another's arms, wrapped in a
huge hug.

XENA
Marcus! It's been too long...

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED: 3

7

They laugh, thrilled at the chance meeting, in that moment forgetting that there's anyone else in the world. The bloodthirsty marauders drift off, disappointed.

CUT TO:

8 INT. TAVERN - DAY

8

Gabrielle and Agranon sit at a table, talking. Agranon wears a worried look. Gabrielle is interrogating him..

GABRIELLE

So how did you two meet?

AGRANON

I was out for a ride --

GABRIELLE

In the woods, I bet, on a moonlit night.

AGRANON

No. It was a hot summer day. And no woods. I had stopped by an old burnt out farm.

GABRIELLE

Oh. A ruin. How romantic. It was love at first sight I bet.

AGRANON

You're right about that. I was bent over a spring getting a drink when her refection suddenly appeared. I thought it was the water goddess, Panope. Then I looked up and I saw it was someone far more beautiful. She smiled.

(with a sigh)

From that moment on, I dedicated my life to making that smile appear as often as possible.

GABRIELLE

(slayed)

Oh, that's just too beautiful. Did you tell her father this?

AGRANON

No.

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED:

8

GABRIELLE

Really? Well, you must. Once he hears that story, he's got to believe you would never have kidnapped her! Let's go.

She stands to exit.

AGRANON

Gabrielle. You don't understand. There's no way I'll ever reach him. Our kingdoms are about to go to war.

GABRIELLE

That's the point. They're talking politics, when this is all really an affair of the heart. I'll get you in. I'm very persuasive when I want to be. Come on.

As Gabrielle leads Agranon out of the bar, we:

CUT TO:

9 INT. PUB - DAY

9

At the bar, Marcus casually pulls out a chair for Xena.

MARCUS

So, I can't believe how incredible you look. Where've you been all this time? I lost track of you after the raid on Sympius.

*
*
*

XENA

That was a while back. I've been keeping busy. Here and there.

*
*
*

MARCUS

I've wondered. It seems you don't hear about the great Xena conquests anymore.

*
*
*

XENA

I don't care much for popularity.

*
*

(then)

I just came from Lerna. The King there had a baby I ransomed.

MARCUS

(abruptly)

I've missed you, Xena. I've thought about you a lot.

*
*
*

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED:

9

XENA
(a bit shaken)
I've thought about you, Marcus.

*
*
*

MARCUS
Have you?

*
*

XENA
(sincerely)
Yes. Many times.

*
*
*

MARCUS
Thoughts of anger? Or... what we had?

*
*

XENA
Both.
(changing the subject)
I heard that Boeotia's going to war. I
smell profit.

*
*

MARCUS
(giving in)
I guess a baby's ransom can't support
an Army for long.

*

XENA
Not mine.

Before Marcus can respond, a VOICE BOOMS LOUDLY.

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED:

9

MEZENTIUS (O.S.)

Dictys!

Marcus and Xena join the rest of the pub's patrons in looking toward Mezentius as he stands just inside the pub, flanked by FOUR BODYGUARDS, looking at Dictys sitting at his table. Mezentius is holding a large CLUB down at his side.

MEZENTIUS

I'd like some words with you.

DICTYS

What about?

MEZENTIUS

A case of my new arrows... a cart full of spears... They're missing.

DICTYS

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

The Guards have surrounded Dictys. There is no escape. Mezentius is hitting the club into his palm in a threatening manner. *

MEZENTIUS

Of course not. I know you stole them. But I also know you have someone on the inside working for you. And the idea that someone would betray me... *

With that, he SWINGS THE CLUB into one of the Guards. At the same moment, another guard puts a dagger into the back of the other guard. Where there were four guards, there are now only two standing. Dictys watches, fear on his face. Mezentius leans close, staring into his eyes. *

MEZENTIUS

You're afraid of me... that's good. And you turned two of my men. That's smart.

A beat, then Mezentius backs off.

MEZENTIUS

Stop by my office tomorrow and you'll have a job. Otherwise, get out of Trachis.

With that, Mezentius turns and walks out. The pub comes back to life as the two bodies are dragged away. Unruffled, Marcus swigs his ale.

XENA

Mezentius.

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED: 3

9

MARCUS
(smiling)
He's my boss.

XENA
Did he kidnap the Princess?

Bam, that hits him right between the eyes. Marcus is a good poker player, but he flinches before he takes his next swig of ale.

MARCUS
Let's just say he has all the angles covered.
(then; smiling)
You are so good.

CUT TO:

10
THRU OMITTED
11

10
THRU
11

12 EXT. COURTYARD (MEZENTIUS' COMPOUND) - DAY

12

Marcus and Xena walk past a water well in the courtyard on their way to Mezentius' office.

*
*

MARCUS
I won't guarantee his mood... although he's usually pretty happy after he's killed someone.

XENA
I don't care if he's doing backflips, I need to talk to him.

MARCUS
I'm giving you fair warning, Xena, the guy can charm the song out of a siren.

XENA
As I remember, I wasn't too bad at it myself.

*
*
*

MARCUS
(laughs)
Don't you dare bring that up! That wasn't charm! You tricked me!

*
*
*
*

XENA
What trick? You said you'd do anything for me. I just called your bluff.

*
*
*

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED:

12

MARCUS
(thinking)
Somewhere there's this cyclops still
wondering who pulled his teeth out.
You don't still...

*
*
*
*
*

XENA
I got rid of them a long time ago.

*
*

MARCUS
(mock-serious)
A lot of effort went into that gift.

*
*
*

They laugh. Suddenly, the office door bursts open and the bodyguards come out, virtually dragging Jana by her elbows through the courtyard and up a winding staircase. Jana is too stunned even to cry; when she and Xena lock eyes for an instant, the young girl's are like a zombie's. Mezentius appears at the door, Lester a step behind him.

*

MEZENTIUS
(to the guards)
Have her bathed and perfumed and taken
to my chambers.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED:

12

MEZENTIUS (cont'd)

(to Lester)

It's just as easy to kill her in the morning...

Hearing this, Xena reacts with barely concealed alarm as Mezentius turns to go back into his office. Marcus calls out:

MARCUS

Mezentius!

MEZENTIUS

(turning)

Ah, Marcus. Why didn't you tell me the girl was such a beauty? I'm going to have a fine time with her.

MARCUS

Mezentius, I'd like you to meet an old friend of mine, Xena --

MEZENTIUS

(eyes narrowing)

-- the Warrior Princess.

(to Xena)

Yes. I know who you are. And I know why you're here.

(bellowing)

Guards!

And in an instant, SIX MARKSMEN appear and surround Xena, their bows drawn back, their arrows trained directly on her. As she and Marcus exchange glances of disbelief, we:

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

13 EXT. COURTYARD - DAY

13

Xena's still surrounded by the marksmen, but playing it cool; Marcus looks concerned, and Mezentius, simply smug.

MEZENTIUS

The Great Warrior Princess... I'm honored. I saw you at the tavern and I had to think, "What would bring Xena here? What do I have that Xena could possibly want?" The answer was obvious.

XENA

Make it more obvious.

MEZENTIUS

You think I'm stupid? You don't think I heard what you did to Excalus? You stole all his weapons and ransomed them back to him! It was brilliant!

A split second pause as Xena registers that Mezentius knows nothing of her true intent. She smiles.

XENA

I had a good day. I take it you're not as easily fooled.

MEZENTIUS

Not by you; not by anyone.

XENA

(to Marcus)

You were right, Marcus. He's sharp.

(to Mezentius)

You know you can't kill me. My Army would swarm over this place like ants on honey.

MEZENTIUS

Kill you? Far from it. It's people like you who make people like me.

XENA

Then call off your dogs. And maybe we can talk business...

*

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED:

13

MEZENTIUS

(grinning)

Business...!

(then)

Business. Yes. . One hour. In my office. Marcus, don't let her out of your sight.

Mezentius disappears into the office. The marksmen retreat, grumbling: they'd have loved to skewer Xena. Xena looks at Marcus, who returns her gaze, somewhat rattled. He exhales in a rush.

XENA

So? Show me around.

CUT TO:

14 EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

14

Gabrielle and Agranon walk along on their mission.

GABRIELLE

Don't worry. We'll reason with him.

AGRANON

I don't know if he's gonna be in a very reasonable mood.

GABRIELLE

Listen, a sensitive guy like you would only fall in love with a very special girl. And anyone who raised that special girl is probably special himself and therefore reasonable. That makes sense, doesn't it?

AGRANON

(lost)

I think so.

Four soldiers appear in the road ahead. Agranon reaches for his sword but Gabrielle stays his hand.

GABRIELLE

Let me handle this.

She steps forward to confront the soldiers.

GABRIELLE

Take us to the King.

SOLDIER #1

Who are you?

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED:

14

GABRIELLE
My name is Gabrielle and this is
Agranon, Prince of Colonus.

In the blink of an eye the four soldiers have surrounded Gabrielle and Agranon. Their swords are drawn. One of them disarms Agranon.

SOLDIER #1
Alright, let's go.

Agranon throws Gabrielle a look.

GABRIELLE
Perfect. We're getting into the
castle.

Off Agranon's dubious look, we:

CUT TO:

15 EXT. PATH IN FRONT OF WAREHOUSE (MEZENTIUS' COMPOUND) - DAY

15

Mid-tour, Marcus points to the door of a large building.

MARCUS
That's the weapons warehouse. Also
where we're assembling the shipments
for the Boeotian war.

Xena nods. As they continue on, they come to the door of another building. Marcus opens it and ushers Xena in.

MARCUS
And then there's my favorite place in
the compound...

16 INT. GROTTA - DAY

16

This is a room built out of the rock that is actually a grotto. Tropical plants thrive here due to the warm steam coming off the water in the middle of the room. A hot spring feeds this grotto. Light is provided by a window atop some rocks set in the wall. Hef would be jealous.

Through a large wooden door enter Xena and Marcus.

XENA
Very nice.

She walks over to the water, sits at the edge and runs her hand through the water.

(CONTINUED)

16 . CONTINUED:

16

MARCUS

Mezentius discovered this hot spring
underneath his fortress two years ago.
It heats the whole building. This room
has its uses, too.

XENA

I'll bet.

Looking at one another, it's hard for either of them to miss
the chemistry. The steam rises off the water, caressing
them both.

MARCUS

You look just as beautiful as I
remember.

XENA

And what do you remember?

He moves closer to her. He puts his hand in the water as
well.

MARCUS

Everything. Every smell. Every sound.
every... touch.

He has taken her hand under the water and pulls it up to a
kiss. She pauses as the warm water slides down her arm,
sending shivers through her flesh.

MARCUS

Do you remember?

She nods. She pulls her hand free.

GROTTO WINDOW - XENA'S POV

through the grotto window, Jana, dressed in a new gown,
being dragged across the yard outside.

BACK TO SCENE

XENA

Uh... I think it's time we got back to
Mezentius.

(smiling)

We can talk about this later.

*
*

And he stands, gesturing Xena to precede him out of the
room.

CUT TO:

17 EXT. COURTYARD - DAY

17

As Marcus and Xena approach Mezentius' office, Mezentius is heading to the staircase where Xena saw Jana disappear.

XENA

We had a meeting, Mezentius.

He shoots a look up at the door where the delight awaits.

MEZENTIUS

I'm busy. It'll wait.

XENA

No, it won't. We meet now.

Mezentius stops cold: people don't talk to him like that. Mezentius takes a beat to regard this woman. Another look to the door... another to Xena...

CUT TO:

18 INT. MEZENTIUS' OFFICE - DAY

18

Moments later. Mezentius sits behind his desk, dangerously impatient. Xena stands in front. Marcus hovers anxiously near the door.

XENA

I want to make you an offer, and I want to give you some advice. Both are worth a fortune. Neither comes free.

MEZENTIUS

I don't make investments without examining the goods. I don't intend to start now.

XENA

Very well.

(pacing)

Colonus and Boeotia are about to go to war. Boeotia's army is far better -- it'll be over in a month.

MEZENTIUS

Poor Colonos.

XENA

(shrugging)

Poor arms dealers. You'll be winding down before you've finished gearing up.

MEZENTIUS

I'm listening.

(CONTINUED)

18 CONTINUED:

18

XENA

(sitting)

I can keep the war going indefinitely.

MARCUS

(to Mezentius)

Interesting. I think I know where
she's going.

*
*
*
*

Mezentius sits back, silent. He gestures for her to go on.
She smiles back, silent.

MEZENTIUS

There might be a deal here. Go on.

*

XENA

I don't care who wins. My men will
fight for one side, then the other.
I'll keep them way too busy to figure
out that you have the Princess.

Mezentius shoots a look at Marcus.

MARCUS

She figured that one out. I didn't
tell her.

MEZENTIUS

(to Xena)

I don't need you for that. The girl
will be dead by tomorrow. Her body
found by her family, the apparent
victim of the Colonus barbarians.

(smiling)

Your offer is shallow at best. No
deal.

XENA

Which brings me to my advice.

(for effect)

The girl's worth far more to you alive.
When the war's over the victor'll pay
his treasury to have her back. Either
as a daughter or a trophy.

MEZENTIUS

Intriguing...

(beat; considering)

So you're offering your army, your
advice, and a lengthy war. What will
all of this cost me?

XENA

Weapons for my Army and half your
profit -- from the war and the ransom.

(CONTINUED)

18 CONTINUED: 2

18

Mezentius laughs at the absurdity of it.

*

MARCUS
(cautioning)

*

Xena...

*

*

(CONTINUED)

18 CONTINUED: 2

18

MEZENTIUS

Why stop at half?

XENA

Push me and I won't.

MEZENTIUS

I wouldn't dream of it. Very well. A deal.

Suddenly, SHOUTS are heard. Mezentius cocks an ear to listen.

GUARD #1 (O.S.)

Stop her!

GUARD #2 (O.S.)

Hold it right there!

Mezentius strides out of the office; Xena and Marcus follow.

19 EXT. COURTYARD - DAY

19

Overlooking the courtyard, Jana stands precariously on the shallow edge of a balcony, holding the railing with one hand and holding a dagger in the other. Her large skirt blows a bit in the wind. Two guards stand on either side of her, waiting for an opportunity to grab her. However, the narrow ledge and the dagger are holding them at bay. Several other people have gathered below and are watching. Xena, Mezentius and Marcus arrive.

MEZENTIUS

What's going on here?

Someone points up to the ledge. They look up. Mezentius is not angry. In fact, he is rather amused.

MEZENTIUS

Well, look at this.

One of the guards near Jana makes a move toward her. She slashes at him and slices his hand. He loses his balance, barely regaining it in time. The crowd below cheers... and not necessarily because he saved himself.

JANA

Keep away from me! I'm warning you!
I'll take you with me if I have to!

MEZENTIUS

The sheep has fangs. Good.

(CONTINUED)

19 CONTINUED:

19

XENA

How did she get out there? Wasn't she under guard?

MARCUS

Why? Where in Trachis could she go to?

The other guard makes a grab for her. This time, he almost gets her. But she ducks away and he falls. His body landing right at Mezentius' feet. The crowd erupts in laughter and applause. Now, Mezentius is getting annoyed.

MEZENTIUS

This is getting tedious.

He grabs a bow and arrow from a guard and aims it up.

MEZENTIUS

I'll bring her down.

XENA

Wait! Let me handle this.

(off his look)

Worth more alive, remember?

And with that, she is gone. Mezentius lowers his arrow. He turns to Marcus.

MEZENTIUS

This Xena is a strange woman. I like her energy. I really hope I don't have to kill her.

INTERCUT - THE BALCONY

Xena arrives on the scene.

XENA

(to guards)

Get back. Now!

They move back as Xena walks out onto the ledge. Jana turns to her and holds the dagger at her. Xena's demeanor is calm.

JANA

Stay back! I swear I'll use this.

XENA

Do you think I'd let you get close enough?

Jana thinks, then holds the dagger to her own throat.

(CONTINUED)

19 CONTINUED: 2

19

JANA
I'll do it. I'll take my own life.

XENA
You're going to cut your throat and
jump? That's overdoing it a bit, don't
you think? Sit. Come on.

Xena sits on the ledge. Jana takes a beat, then sits.

JANA
(warningly)
I can still jump.

XENA
You can still jump. Whenever you want.

JANA
I'm not going back to that man. I'm
not going to let him... take me.

XENA
Neither am I. Agranon sent me.

A brief flicker of hope flashes across Jana's face, then:

JANA
You lie!

XENA
Come off the ledge and I'll prove it to
you.

JANA
There's only one way I'm coming off
this ledge and that's straight down!

XENA
Have it your way.

And, with that, Xena PUSHES JANA OFF THE LEDGE!

INTERCUT all the looks of amazement: from Mezentius, Marcus,
the crowd and, most importantly, from Jana as she teeters
off balance and starts to fall. She drops her dagger as her
skirt billows and she falls...

Xena pulls her breast dagger and jams it down THROUGH JANA'S
SKIRT INTO THE LEDGE. Jana jerks to a halt just below the
ledge.

The crowd below cheers!

Xena reaches down and slaps the "pinch" on Jana. She
slumps.

(CONTINUED)

19 CONTINUED: 3

19

Xena grabs the back of her bodice and as she pulls her up onto the ledge:

JANA
I... I can't move!

XENA
You'll be all right.

Xena has Jana up on the ledge. Xena takes the embroidered emblem from under her belt and shows it to her.

XENA
Does this look familiar? Agranon.

JANA
He did send you!

XENA
(nodding)
Do you know where the grotto is?

JANA
The hot spring? They took me there to prepare for that awful man...

XENA
Meet me there tonight, when the moon's in the western sky.
(she undoes the pinch)
Now, go inside.
(then)
Trust me, Jana.

Jana nods. She stands and Xena helps her inside.

CUT TO:

20 EXT. COURTYARD - DAY

20

Moments later, Xena swaggers down the steps into the courtyard where Mezentius and Marcus, and other bystanders, wait.

XENA

Did I protect our investment,
Mezentius?

MEZENTIUS

You protected my property, yes.

XENA

Good. Now don't ruin things by letting
your passion overcome your senses.

MEZENTIUS

(to Marcus)

Your friend can be quite insulting at
times.

MARCUS

Perhaps. But I found it's best to
listen when Xena speaks.

MEZENTIUS

(mildly annoyed)

You've found that, have you?

MARCUS

Well... There is a reason for her
success. She knows what she's doing.

MEZENTIUS

(a beat; then to Xena)

Go on.

XENA

The Princess loses half her ransom
value if you go to her.

(then)

Isn't half a ransom worth a cold bath?

MEZENTIUS

You seem to know a lot about this.

XENA

I've dealt with the situation before.
And I've dealt with men like you.
Though not as good-looking, I admit.

(CONTINUED)

20 CONTINUED:

20

MEZENTIUS
I'll consider the advice.
(then)
And you, Marcus... don't let your
passion overcome your senses... or
loyalties.

*
*
*
*

Mezentius goes back into his office. Xena and Marcus
exchange a look. He smiles at her.

*

21 EXT. PATH IN FRONT OF WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

21

Xena steals along the moonlit pathway. Ahead of her, we can
see the entrance to the warehouse. And, more importantly, a
guard. Xena pauses.

CLOSE ON GUARD

As the chakram digs into the wall next to him. Startled, he
looks into the darkness. Then, he turns his attention to
the chakram in the wall. He tries to pull it out, but it
won't budge. A dull "THUD" is heard and he drops, Xena
behind him, her fist following him down. She grabs the
chakram and dislodges it with a twist. She heads:

22 INT. WAREHOUSE - ON ENTRANCE - NIGHT

22

Xena enters the dimly lit warehouse. She walks further in, past crates and piles of implements of war -- spears, shields, arrows, bows -- until she reaches the SHIPPING AREA: a roped-off space in which are stacked many crates, some as long as six feet. She steps into the area, and surveys the scene.

Xena pries the top off one of the long crates and unloads the objects inside... arrows, bows, etc. She then looks inside it, feeling the sides and testing it's strength. Satisfied with it, she repacks the crate and moves toward the exit. As she turns to leave, she runs into:

MARCUS!

He looks at her suspiciously.

MARCUS

What's going on, Xena? What happened to the guard?

XENA

I wanted to see what the inventory looked like. If my men are going up against these weapons...

MARCUS

If you had wanted to see them, you could have asked me. Tell me the truth.

She pauses for a beat, when:

MEZENTIUS APPEARS

Three bodyguards behind him. Their swords are drawn.

MEZENTIUS

Faith in the people I work with certainly is in short supply these days...

Off this, we:

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

23 INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

23

Xena, Marcus and Mezentius are where we left them at the end of Act Two.

MEZENTIUS

And what side of the coin do you fall on, Marcus?

Marcus finds his voice.

MARCUS

Yours, of course. "Know your enemy," Mezentius. Xena's Army will go up against these weapons. I thought she should get to know the inventory.

XENA

And your security. Pretty lax for a man like you, Mezentius.

(then)

Your weapons are impressive. Too impressive. I don't want my men dying needlessly.

MEZENTIUS

That's your problem. However it might appear to you, do not deceive yourself that ours is an equal partnership.

XENA

I wouldn't dream of it, Mezentius.

MEZENTIUS

A wise choice.

XENA

As long as it's equal pay.

Mezentius gives a dry laugh as he and his bodyguards disappear into the shadows. A moment later, the SOUND of the WAREHOUSE DOOR OPENING AND CLOSING is heard (O.S.) Now Marcus turns to her.

MARCUS

You were going to steal weapons, weren't you?

XENA

I'm sure it's not the first time it's been done.

(CONTINUED)

23 CONTINUED:

23

MARCUS

(smiling)

No. In fact, it's still being done.
I've been scrounging weapons ever since
I got here. You have to know how to
juggle the inventory.

XENA

How do you get them out of the city?
This place is pretty tight.

Off his grin, we go to:

24 EXT. COURTYARD - NIGHT

24

Near the water well. Marcus brings Xena up to it and leans
on it.

MARCUS

(smiling)

This is one of four water wells in the
city. Only this one... isn't quite
what it seems.

XENA

A back door right out in the open...
I'm impressed.

MARCUS

I've never told anyone that. Never
trusted anyone...

(beat)

You know, all that talk about you
changing, trying to leave all this...

XENA

(exasperated)

Not you, too, Marcus!

MARCUS

No, I didn't think you did, but... I
tried to leave it. Once.

*

Xena regards him, stunned.

XENA

What happened?

MARCUS

I was with a raiding party. Some old
man was begging us to spare his
grandson, who was crippled.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

24 CONTINUED:

24

MARCUS (cont'd)

One of my men said okay... and cut the kid's head off.

(off Xena's flinch)

And, I swear, for some reason, I thought of you. Because you could be as vicious as the next guy, but you never killed defenseless people. I always respected that, but I didn't get it 'til that day. So I walked away. I thought for good.

XENA

Obviously you came back.

MARCUS

(rationalizing)

I wasn't cut out for it, pure and simple. And the hatred... if you could have seen the hatred in some of those eyes.

*

Her eyes glistening with unexpressed, and inexpressible, empathy, Xena shakes her head.

MARCUS

(lightly)

So I said, fine. It's not me. And I came back.

(then)

The old Xena would have lopped my head off for a story like that.

XENA

The "old" Xena?

MARCUS

Yeah.

(then, as if realizing)

Yeah. The old Xena. There's something different about you now. Back then... what was it? You were determined, like you always had to prove something. But now...

XENA

But now?

MARCUS

It's hard to say. Now, it's like you have the answer and I never even found the question.

*
*

A beat as they look into each other's eyes. Then, his gaze never wavering, he takes Xena in his arms.

(CONTINUED)

24 CONTINUED: 2

24

He's about to say the words... but instead, he kisses her.
As she melts into his embrace:

CUT TO:

25 INT. CASTLE DUNGEON - NIGHT

25

Gabrielle paces and Agranon sits awaiting their fate.
Agranon looks very tragic but Gabrielle is still the picture
of optimism.

GABRIELLE

What we have here is a failure to
communicate. No one talks. That's the
problem. When I meet the King, I'll
explain that this whole war thing is
just a terrible misunderstanding. We
can work it out. I'm sure of it. The
key is to meet him.

*

The door bursts open and the Soldier enters.

SOLDIER #1

Noon tomorrow.

GABRIELLE

To meet the King?

SOLDIER #1

The executioner. Negotiations have
broken off. The war has begun. You
two will be the first casualties.

The soldier exits, leaving Gabrielle and Agranon to cope
with this devastating news.

CUT TO:

26 EXT. COURTYARD - NIGHT

26

Marcus and Xena are still kissing. He's totally into it,
but she's a wreck: there's nowhere she'd rather be than
where she is, but there's a much more urgent matter to
attend to.

XENA

(a whisper)

Marcus...

MARCUS

Mm?

(CONTINUED)

26. CONTINUED:

26

XENA
I can't do this. Not now.

As she speaks she extricates herself from his arms. Before he even has a chance to respond, she kisses him once more on the lips and dashes away.

CUT TO:

27 INT. GROTT0 - NIGHT

27

A frantic Jana opening the door to admit Xena. As Xena closes and bolts the door behind her, Jana collapses at her feet.

JANA
Where were you???

XENA
I'm here now. Let's go.

As Xena pulls Jana up by her shoulders, suddenly there's a THUMP ON THE DOOR as someone, attempting to get in, is stopped by the bolt.

MEZENTIUS (O.S.)
Who's in there?!

XENA
(a whisper)
Mezentius!

Xena quickly leads Jana to the window, hoists her up.
But --

JANA
I can't! The frame's too narrow!

Xena quickly scopes around, looking for another escape, or a place to hide. RAGEFUL POUNDING begins on the door. Thinking fast, Xena reaches for a robe.

ANGLE - ON DOOR

The pounding continues.

MEZENTIUS
I demand to know who's --

The door opens:

WIDEN - INCLUDE GROTT0

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED:

27

to reveal Xena dressed in the robe. Mezentius, too, is wearing a robe and is a bit surprised to see her here. The guards behind him crane their necks a bit to look in.

XENA

Marcus said it would be all right to use the spring.

MEZENTIUS

His timing could have been better.

(thinking)

Or, perhaps, couldn't have been better.

He enters the room. Xena backs up to the edge of the spring. Meanwhile, her head just above the surface under the edge, is Jana, wide-eyed and panicky.

INTERCUT Mezentius and Xena with Jana in the tub.

XENA

I don't usually have an audience.

MEZENTIUS

I'm not an audience. I'm a business partner. And I have something of interest for you. Please... go ahead.

A beat, then Xena realizes he's not taking off.

JUDICIOUS ANGLES

as Xena slowly DROPS THE ROBE. And playing the role to the hilt, she's wearing nary a stitch underneath.

JANA

As Xena drops the robe over the edge of the pool and over Jana's head, hiding her.

BACK TO SCENE

Mezentius tries to keep his cool as Xena casually steps back into the pool and relaxes.

XENA

Go on. If you can remember.

MEZENTIUS

I've just had word that Agranon, the girl's betrothed, has been taken captive by Boeotia.

There is a "gasps" from underneath the robe. Xena covers, swishing some water around --

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED: 2

27

XENA
That could be useful. Are they going
to ransom him?

The robe covers the surface, and then the outline of Jana's
face breathing fresh air through the material can be seen.

MEZENTIUS
Even better. They plan to execute him
and his companion tomorrow.

Companion? Xena notes the comment.

MEZENTIUS
(with glee)
This war is going to be a bloodbath!
Great way to start, isn't it?

XENA
(abruptly)
Then I'd better get ready to fight it.
After I finish my bath. *

MEZENTIUS
Xena... this pool is not just for one
person...

Xena shakes her head ruefully.

XENA
The last time I discussed business in a
hot spring with a handsome man, I
almost lost a war. Now, go. *

MEZENTIUS
Perhaps another time. *

XENA
Count on it. *

Mezentius grins and goes. Xena jumps from the pool, bolts
the door, and pulls Jana from the tub. Handing her a dry
robe: *

XENA
We've got no time to lose...

As Jana dries herself off, Xena goes for her clothes and we:

CUT TO:

28 INT. PUB - NIGHT

28

Marcus walks in and signals to the Barkeep for a drink.
Brisus walks up to him, mug in hand.

BRISUS

Have you heard the latest news on Xena?

MARCUS

No, but I'll bet you're gonna tell me.

BRISUS

I just talked to a trader who came from
Lerna. He said she was there.

MARCUS

She told me. She ransomed a baby to
King Gregor and made a bundle.

BRISUS

What...? Ransomed to the King? No,
no, Marcus! She rescued the baby!
She didn't kidnap it!

MARCUS

No. You've got it wrong.

BRISUS

Yeah... I'm sure you want to believe
that.

MARCUS

Is that supposed to mean something?

BRISUS

She's got you fooled, Marcus. She's
running something right now and you're
falling for it like a good little
lovesick puppet.

Marcus backhands Brisus, sending him to the wall. Brisus
pulls his sword, but Marcus is on him. He crushes Brisus'
hand, forcing him to drop his sword. At the same time, he
slams his forearm into Brisus' neck, pinning him to the
wall.

BRISUS

(in fear)

Marcus! This guy worked for Nemos,
the King's Advisor! She killed him
because he wanted to grab the kid and
blackmail the King. I swear it!

Marcus slowly releases him. Brisus shakes his head and
massages his throat.

(CONTINUED)

28 CONTINUED:

28

BRISUS
Where's the profit? I just don't get
it.

*

Marcus thinks on this.

*

CUT TO:

29 INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

29

In the shipping area, Jana, wet-haired, is stepping into the
crate Xena had been emptying when sprung by Marcus.

XENA
You'll be shipped out this morning.
Right to your father's encampment.

JANA
(lying in the box)
I hate little places.

XENA
Then you'd hate a coffin even more.

(CONTINUED)

29 CONTINUED:

29

Xena is about to place the top on the box. Jana looks up at her fearfully. Xena softens; holds her hand for a moment.

XENA

Trust me.

Jana squeezes her hand, then nods and settles in the box. Xena nails down the lid loosely at the four corners. As she strikes in the last nail, Marcus appears.

MARCUS

Hi.

XENA

(startled)

Oh!... Hi.

INTERCUT XENA AND MARCUS WITH JANA IN THE BOX

MARCUS

What's in the box?

XENA

The box? Well... the bows.

Xena regards Marcus' suspicious face unflinchingly. In the box, Jana's face reflects her alarm.

XENA

And some arrows for weight.

MARCUS

Bows and arrows. Like these...?

From a pile of supplies, Marcus picks up a bow and an arrow that has twelve barbs attached to the shaft. The arrowhead is also a bit larger than usual.

XENA

Of course.

MARCUS

(stringing the bow)

I didn't think you'd seen this arrow yet. We just developed it. It goes through a wood shield like a dagger through butter. And leaves a hole as big as your fist.

Marcus arms the bow.

MARCUS

Let me show you. Here... this'll make a good target...

(CONTINUED)

29 CONTINUED: 2

29

And as Xena looks on, barely hiding her alarm, Marcus draws back the lethally sharp, barbed arrow and aims it right at the box where Jana is hiding.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

30 INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

30

Marcus aims at the box. Xena tries to keep her alarm at bay.

INTERCUT with Jana in the box.

Xena moves toward him, her feminine side at work. *

XENA

Marcus... you can show me that later. *
Right now... we're alone. We should *
take advantage of the time we have. *

She gently places her hand on Marcus' outstretched arm, pushing it so that the bow and arrow point toward the ground. He lets her do it, slackening his bow. *

MARCUS

Now?

(on her nod)

Here?

(on her nod)

No.

He aims his arrow once again.

XENA

Marcus...

MARCUS

Are you afraid I might hit the Princess?

Marcus lets fly the arrow, and Xena reacts as only she can: an instant before its lethal, barbed shaft hits the box, she catches it by the feathers. Marcus grins bitterly.

MARCUS

I knew you'd catch the arrow if she was in there. *

He moves toward the box. Xena drops the arrow, and meets him in the middle, shielding the box.

XENA

Marcus, please. I have to save this girl and stop a war. I couldn't risk telling you.

(CONTINUED)

30 CONTINUED:

30

MARCUS

Yeah, especially when I was far more useful being your stooge with Mezentius.

(and)

Did you have a good laugh, Xena? Huh? At your old buddy who couldn't make it on the outside?

XENA

No, Marcus. It hurt. Because I care about you. I haven't stopped caring. You're still a part of me.

MARCUS

Then why the deception? Why couldn't you have told me the truth and asked for my help?

XENA

Because I wasn't sure how much you cared. Now I know. It's in your eyes.

(then)

Come with me now.

Marcus stares at her in disbelief.

XENA

How many of us are left from the old days? Most of them are dead! I don't want to stand by your grave, Marcus.

MARCUS

You're not better than me.

Seeing the chink in his armor, Xena dares to approach him.

XENA

You're right! If I can do it, you can.

MARCUS

What makes you think I want to?

XENA

What made you think you wanted to? A little boy and his grandfather? It's so simple, Marcus. You just do one thing... one good thing for no other reason except that you know it's good. That's the first step.

(CONTINUED)

30 CONTINUED: 2

30

MARCUS

(a beat)

I'm not that strong...

XENA

I'll be there... Trust me.

*

For a moment, Marcus seems lost: the choice should be clear, but the stakes are so high. And when it all shakes out, all that's left is the pain of an infinitely bruised ego. His face clears.

(CONTINUED)

30 CONTINUED: 2

30

MARCUS

(coldly)

No. It's too late, Xena. I'm taking the girl.

Marcus pulls his sword and turns to call out:

MARCUS

Guards! In the ware --

That's as far as he gets before Xena snaps her foot forward, launching Marcus' sword to the ceiling. Continuing her move, she spins and brings the side of her foot smashing into Marcus' face, dropping him. She then catches the sword and swipes it upwards toward Jana's crate, hitting the edge and knocking the top off. Xena reaches in and grabs her.

XENA

We've got to get out of here!

As Jana pulls herself from the crate, two Guards appear. Xena faces them. They aren't so sure they want to take Xena on. As one, they charge. Xena drops and spins, her right leg outstretched, catching both of them in an ankle sweep. They drop on their butts. Xena grabs Jana and moves her to another area, behind some crates.

XENA

You'll be safe here.

JANA

For how long?

XENA

Don't ask silly questions.

More Guards have appeared. We can now hear the shouts of men rushing to the warehouse. Meanwhile:

30A INT. GROTTA

30A

Mezentius has entered the pool area and is about to remove his clothes for a relaxing soak when he HEARS the ruckus outside.

MEZENTIUS

What... is going on?

He heads toward the door.

MEZENTIUS

Marcus! Somebody find Marcus!

31 OMITTED

31

31A INT. WAREHOUSE - CLOSE ON MARCUS

31A

He is still on the floor, dazed. The sounds of battle move about him as:

WIDER

Xena leaps and flips from stacked crate to stacked crate, avoiding the growing number of guards beneath her. Someone pushes a pike in her direction and she deflects it with her sword. She looks up to see:

TWO GUARDS

with bows and those deadly razor-shaft arrows.

XENA

reacts as the arrows fly toward her. She drops her sword and grabs one arrow... then the other by the feathers.

THE TWO GUARDS

stare in amazement.

XENA

smashes her fist into the crate beside her and pulls out a bow. She flattens the bow and puts BOTH ARROWS on it and launches them at:

THE TWO GUARDS

The arrows fly toward them. They just saw Xena catch them, so they try to... and grab the razor-edged shaft. In a feature world, we would see detached fingers hit the ground. Here in TV, we see intense pain on their faces.

BACK TO SCENE

Xena leaps into the middle of the remaining guards. Two rush her from either side. Xena jumps straight up, her legs splitting as the two men collide under her. She drops so that each leg is supported by each man's shoulder: forming a bridge between the two. She punches one, then the other. They slowly sink to the ground as she lightly steps off of them and picks up one of the guards' swords.

MARCUS (O.C.)

Drop the sword, Xena.

Xena turns to find:

MARCUS

(CONTINUED)

31A CONTINUED:

31A

holding Jana.

*

XENA

You're not going to hurt her..

MARCUS

Don't bet on it.

XENA

She's no different from the innocent
grandchild of a desperate old man.
Come with me, Marcus.

Doubt flashes in Marcus' eyes. He doesn't know... he wants
to go... so badly...

Suddenly, from behind Marcus, two of the guards have come
to. They charge Xena. As she braces to take them,
Marcus yells and intervenes. He takes one down quickly
as the other falls victim to Xena's sword. She looks at
him, but before he has a chance to respond to her look:

*
*
*
*
*

MEZENTIUS

I'll have my war if I have to kill
every last one of you!

Marcus, Xena, and the terrified Jana look up to see
Mezentius drawing back his bow.

JANA

(tilting out)

NO!

Jana attempts to run. Unfortunately, this draws
Mezentius' attention. Mezentius lets his arrow fly. Both
Xena and Marcus look on, horrified; both run toward her, but
Marcus gets there first. He grabs Jana and spins his body
in front of hers --

*
*
*

XENA

(horrified)

Marcus!

-- and takes the arrow. He drops to the ground, mortally
wounded. Xena's eyes are wide with pain and rage. With a
scream, Xena's chakram flashes through the air, slicing
Mezentius' windpipe. He drops to the ground, gurgling his
last breath.

*

Xena kneels down to Marcus and holds his head in her arms.
His voice is faint.

XENA

(in despair)

I could have saved her.

(CONTINUED)

A CONTINUED: 2

31A

MARCUS

(a weak smile)

I know. But I had to. I had to
prove I could.

(beat)

That was it, wasn't it? That was the
one step you meant.

XENA

(heartbroken)

Marcus, please... Don't make me stand
by your grave...

With his last bit of energy, he puts a finger to her lips as
if to silence her. He smiles... And he dies. A moment as
Xena closes her eyes in pain. Then she stands, holds her
sword in her hand, and faces her former comrades who have
gathered in the courtyard. No one in their right mind would
dare... They begin to wander off as we stay on her...

32
THRU OMITTED
39

32*
THRU
39*

40 EXT. RIDGE - DAY

40

It's sunset. From a distance we see a torch-lit funeral
procession. Behind the wrapped body walks a stoic Xena;
behind her Gabrielle, Agranon and Jana, the latter with
their arms around one another; then others. A VOICE SINGS
HAUNTINGLY. Continue as we go to:

41 EXT. FIELD - NIGHT

41

In the general vicinity of the funeral ridge. Torches are
seen here and there. Xena, Jana, Agranon and even Gabrielle
sit quietly before a campfire. Xena keeps to herself as she
finishes the last few notes of the song we have been
listening to. A beat, then Gabrielle turns to Xena.

GABRIELLE

I wish I could have met him. I'm
sorry.

Xena nods.

XENA

He was my friend.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

41

GABRIELLE

(sincerely)

To be remembered that way is a good
thing.

*
*
*

Xena stands and walks out of the camp.

ON XENA

Standing alone, she looks small against the landscape, even
vulnerable as she looks up into the sky. A gentle breeze in
the still night wraps around her.

XENA

My friend... my friend...

FADE OUT.

THE END