

XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS

"The Greater Good"

Written by
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Executive Producers
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SHOOTING DRAFT
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Prod. #76924

XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS

"The Greater Good"

CAST LIST

XENA
GABRIELLE

SALMONEUS
TALMADEUS
NESS
KALUS
PHOTIS
GORNEY
OLD MAN
WARRIOR #1
WARRIOR #2

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XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS

"The Greater Good"

SET LIST

INTERIORS:

TALMADEUS' TENT
TALMADEUS' TENT - BURNED
TALMADEUS' TENT - SLIGHTLY REPAIRED
WATER FACTORY

EXTERIORS:

CLEARING
ROADSIDE WELL
ROAD
ROAD NEAR WELL
PATHWAY
ROAD TO FACTORY
WATER FACTORY
TALMADEUS' CAMP
WOODS

Prod. #76924

XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS

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CHRONOLOGY

DAY 1
NIGHT 1

SCENES # 1 - 23
SCENES #24 - 30

DAY 2

SCENES #31 - 35

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XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS

"The Greater Good"

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 EXT. CLEARING - DAY - ON GABRIELLE

1

She literally rolls into frame and pops up, her staff at the ready. Her look is intense as she moves the staff back and forth, looking for an opening. It's like the opening of DREAMWORKER (if any of us can remember that long ago), except this time, she looks as if she knows what she's doing. She gets a sly smile on her face, the kind brought on by the knowledge of ultimate victory over an opponent. She suddenly breaks into a choreographed frenzy of staff-swinging; she has obviously learned her defense well. She finishes with the staff locked under one arm at the ready, her other arm out in a defensive position.

GABRIELLE

Hah!

A BEAT, then:

WIDER

to include a very bored Argo. She just looks at Gabrielle and goes back to eating grass.

GABRIELLE

Want to try it again? Okay...

She moves the staff smartly to a ready position in front of her. Then:

GABRIELLE

Hah!

She drops into a half crouch, the staff moves to an attack position, when we HEAR a LOUD WHISTLE. Argo looks up; Gabrielle reacts.

GABRIELLE

Uh, oh...

Argo KICKS OUT to the side and HITS THE STAFF. It goes flying out of Gabrielle's hands, spinning through the air and into the hands of:

XENA

who has emerged from the woods and holds the staff. She has a smile on her face.

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED:

1

GABRIELLE

I hate it when you do that! I have to practice.

XENA

Not on my horse. What happened to attacking tree stumps?

GABRIELLE

Argo has less splinters. And she doesn't fight back... usually.

XENA

I wish the two of you could just get along.

GABRIELLE

It's not like we're at constant war or anything. Argo just doesn't... like me.

Xena walks over to Argo and rubs her neck.

XENA

Sometimes you have to have patience with things that annoy you.

GABRIELLE

I never said she annoyed me.

XENA

(smiling)

I wasn't talking to you.

GABRIELLE

Funny! Very, very funny!

XENA

There's a road on the other side of these trees. I'll meet you there. Bring Argo.

GABRIELLE

Hold on... you're trying to teach me a lesson, aren't you? Leave me with Argo and I'm supposed to learn how well we can get along, right?

XENA

Not really. But if you don't want to be alone with her...

GABRIELLE

Hey! I'm not afraid of her. You go on, we'll catch up.

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED: 3

1

And Gabrielle turns away to pick up her bundle. Out of her sight, Xena whispers something to Argo. Argo reacts, but Xena gives her a look. Argo bows her head. Then:

XENA

Make sure the saddle is tight.

And she sprints off. Gabrielle looks at her go.

GABRIELLE

Make sure the saddle's tight?

As she ponders this, Argo comes up and puts her nose under Gabrielle's hand. She reacts, at first pulling away. Then, she tentatively rubs Argo's nose. Off this, we:

CUT TO:

2 EXT. ROADSIDE WELL - DAY

2

Xena stops to get a drink of water. A BEAT, then she spins to find PHOTIS running up to her. Photis is a young girl of twenty who wears simple clothes and carries a water flask like a purse. She looks frantic.

PHOTIS

Are you Xena?

XENA

Yes.

PHOTIS

Thank the gods!

(burp!)

Sorry. Talmadeus is trying to take Lord Seltzer! He's attacking the factory! You have to save him! He's the most wonderful, giving, unselfish man the gods ever sent to our valley. If it weren't for him, we'd still be living hand-to-mouth. Please!

Xena turns and whistles... long and loud.

3 EXT. ROAD - DAY

3

Gabrielle has her foot in the stirrup. She pets Argo on the side.

GABRIELLE

Okay... this is good. I knew we could get along. Xena will be so surprised when --

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED:

3

Argo's ears prick up and, with a whinny, she is off, dropping Gabrielle in the dust.

GABRIELLE

Hey! You stupid, conniving, four footed, daughter of a...
(at a loss)

...mare!

But we go to:

4 EXT. ROAD NEAR WELL - DAY

4

Argo comes running up the road. She doesn't slow down as Xena leaps into the saddle and heads off toward:

5 EXT. WATER FACTORY - DAY

5

This place looks trashed. Out in front there are carts loaded with large kegs. There is a large water tank on stilts in this open area. At the moment, the kegs (not the water tank) are being axed by the men. As each one is axed, the water bursts out under it's own pressure. Suddenly, NESS, Talmadeus' second-in-command, comes out of the factory. He is leading two of his men who are pulling a figure along with them. The figure has a bag over his head. Ness steps forward and signals his men. They stop what they're doing.

NESS

We have him! Talmadeus will reward us all tonight!

(to the figure)

He wanted your head by nightfall.

It's going to be the centerpiece on his dinner table.

*

With that, he rips the hood off the figure's head. It is SALMONEUS!

SALMONEUS

Are you sure he didn't want flowers? I can get you some lovely orchids, perfect for this time of year! Please! I look terrible with an apple in my mouth!

Ness ignores him. He drags Salmoneus from the steps of the factory as he signals to his men in regards to the factory:

NESS

Burn it down!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

5

His men draw back bows with flaming arrows on them.

Suddenly, the burning tips of the arrows are CHOPPED OFF one by one as the CHAKRAM goes spinning down the line. The men react.

NESS

Swords!

The men pull their swords as the chakram ricochets off a rock and returns... chopping all the blades in a line as well. Xena's yell is heard and she comes charging into the group, flipping off Argo and landing among the men.

SALMONEUS

Xena!

She turns, gives him a quick beat of an "I should have known" look, then begins her attack, moving this way and that, as these men with stunted swords try to get in an even shot.

NEARBY TREES

Someone is in here. We can't see who it is, though. Only snippets of a (female) hand, a small one-handed crossbow and the colorful dart that is mounted on it. The crossbow comes up and aims...

BACK TO SCENE

Ness is dragging Salmoneus toward the woods.

SALMONEUS

Xena! Some assistance here! Hello!
Important person being kidnapped!

Xena looks over, sees Salmoneus and Ness, and whistles. Argo kicks out and Ness goes sailing. Salmoneus reacts and hides behind Argo.

With Ness down, the rest of the men begin to give up the cause. Two of them grab Ness and pull him into the brush. They're on the run.

Xena starts to give chase when, suddenly, something hits her in the neck. She grabs for it, spins, her chakram immediately out as she scans the trees. Nothing. Relaxing, she examines the object: the dart. She smells the tip. A worried look crosses her face, as we:

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

6 EXT. WATER FACTORY - DAY

6

Salmoneus is wandering around, telling people to move things, clean up, top off kegs, and the like. Gabrielle stands over to the side, examining one of the kegs. Argo is next to an open barrel and seems to be drinking from it.

XENA

She's walking near the edge of the woods, scanning it, looking for signs of the attacker. She pauses and examines the dart again. Touching the tip, she tastes it, then spits it out. Whatever is going on, this confirms her theory and she doesn't like it. She touches her forehead... it's slightly wet.

Gabrielle walks up to her. She holds a flask.

GABRIELLE

You know what this is, don't you? It's just water. Fizzy water.

She takes a drink.

GABRIELLE

He's making money selling water!
(burp!)
Excuse me!

Xena turns and calls to:

XENA

Salmoneus!

He rushes over to her quickly.

SALMONEUS

Ix-nay on the Almones-Say. Here I'm know as Lord Seltzer!

XENA

Why is Talmadeus after you?

SALMONEUS

After me? Why, for my secret elixir! When I came here, these people had no energy, no zip, no spirit! Let's face it; their get-and-go never got up to go anywhere. Until my magic elixir! People felt better, productivity went up. Living conditions were improved...

*
*
*
*

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED:

6

XENA

And, of all people, they gave you the credit.

*

GABRIELLE

Any baby will tell you that burping makes you feel better. Of course, babies aren't in it for a profit.

*

*

SALMONEUS

You really haven't done anything about your sarcasm, have you? It's not an attractive trait.

XENA

What did you sell to Talmadeus?

SALMONEUS

(off her look)

Sell? Uhm... Okay, maybe there was one little transaction. I sold him some talgamite swords and belt buckles.

GABRIELLE

What's talgamite?

XENA

It looks and feels like metal. Until it gets wet. Then it dissolves.

SALMONEUS

How was I to know it was going to rain on the big battle? The swords and belt buckles melted and...

GABRIELLE

One big naked defeat.

SALMONEUS

It was ugly. And he is so mad!

(looks around; lowers voice)

So you've got to get me out of here! He's not going to rest until he has me drawn and quartered!

XENA

We're not going to leave these people at his mercy. He'll kill them all. You got them into it, you're staying until they're out of it.

SALMONEUS

Pleading and begging is not going to change your mind, is it?

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED: 2

6

At that moment, GORNEY, the shop foreman, tips a barrel over. The large CORK in the lid FLIES OFF and hits Salmoneus in the side of the head. He turns.

SALMONEUS

Gorney, be careful! That water's under pressure! When will I learn? If you want something done right, buy the right people.

And he moves off. Xena and Gabrielle walk over to Argo.

GABRIELLE

How does he manage to do it? Stay alive, I mean. He must have a guardian Moirae. So, what's the plan?

XENA

The plan is to make Talmadeus realize what he's up against.

*
*

Off this, Argo BELCHES. React, then:

CUT TO:

7 INT. TALMADEUS' TENT - DAY - CLOSE ON CLENCHED FISTS

7

It seems to be a bit of arm wrestling going on. The hands are big and meaty. One of the hands shows signs of repeated scarring on the back. In the background, we HEAR GRUNTS and GROANS as the fists waver one way, then the other.

WIDER

where we meet TALMADEUS with his hand clenched with the second-best arm wrestler in the camp, the man with the scarred hand. The reason for the scarring is apparent. On the table, where the defeated's hand would fall, is broken glass. The muscles flex. A BEAT, then Ness comes in and kneels.

NESS

Lord Talmadeus.

TALMADEUS

Where's Salmoneus?

NESS

We had him at his factory when this woman showed up. She fought with the strength of Ares and the speed of Hermes.

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED:

7

Realization comes over Talmadeus' face and he slams his opponent's fist into the glass.

TALMADEUS

Xena!

The opponent reacts with a painful SCREAM. Talmadeus enjoys it and presses his hand into the glass just a beat longer than he should, then releases it. The opponent cradles his wounded hand in the other and exits. Talmadeus stands to his full six-foot-five and turns toward Ness. He grabs him by the neck and slowly, almost gently, lifts him to his feet.

TALMADEUS

I was with Xactius when he went up against Xena. The tricky bitch wiped out half his army. What could possibly interest her here?

NESS

Perhaps she's after the elixir.

TALMADEUS

You fool. There is no elixir. It's just spring water.

(then)

No matter. I want Salmoneus!

NESS

Is that wise? With Xena in the picture? What if she wants Salmoneus, too?

Talmadeus grabs Ness by the throat, not so gently this time, and speaks directly into his face.

TALMADEUS

This man... this man's blood is mine to enjoy, not Xena's. He made a defeat out of a certain victory. He made a fool of my army. And he made a fool of me! There is no creature on earth, nor god from Olympus that will keep me from feeding his broken body to vultures... while he's still alive. I've sworn this. And if I have to go through a dozen Xenas to get his neck in my grasp... I will.

He pushes Ness aside, grabs up an axe and lets it fly. Ness dodges, but he needn't have... the target wasn't him. It was a thick piece of wood.

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED: 2

7

On the wood face, we can see the burned-in outline of an unmistakable figure: Salmoneus. The axe buries itself between Salmoneus' eyes. From the look of the wood, it's not the first time it's been hit by an axe. Off this:

CUT TO:

8 EXT. PATHWAY - DAY

8

Talmadeus (mounted, in the lead) and his men (on foot) travel up the path. They watch the trees carefully. Xena steps out from the woods behind them. She doesn't do anything, just walks behind them for a bit. Ness turns around to say something to his men and sees her in the back. She waves at him, smiling. With a SCREAM, he charges through his men at her. The men, however, don't know what to make of this. The second-in-command is attacking them? They pull their swords and try to deflect him as he runs at them.

Talmadeus turns in his saddle and sees:

TALMADEUS

Xena!

Just as Ness connects with Xena: his chin, her fist. The other men turn, but they are in a bad position; she's in between them, like a whirling dervish, moving down the line, punching each one of the men.

Talmadeus jumps down from his horse and pulls his sword. With a YELL, he attacks her. Xena turns, draws her sword, and deflects his blow. The men watch as their leader goes at her. At first, this seems to be the typical Xena fight; she is just too good for her opponent.

INTERCUT - GABRIELLE - FROM WOODS

She's watching the fight, enjoying it.

BACK TO SCENE

Now, something strange happens. Xena is locked blade-to-blade with Talmadeus when, with a mighty push, he shoves her back ONTO THE GROUND. A BEAT as everyone reacts to this. Xena takes a deep breath. There is a trickle of sweat running down her face. She gets back up, a little more slowly than we are used to. Talmadeus charges. Xena defends. The blades clash again, and, again, she is knocked back, this time to one knee. Xena touches her neck where the dart hit her. Her breath is labored.

(CONTINUED)

a CONTINUED:

8

GABRIELLE

is suddenly concerned.

GABRIELLE

Something's wrong...

BACK TO SCENE

Xena stands to her feet. Her legs are wobbly. Talmadeus presses his advantage. Xena is purely on the defensive now and she's being beaten. Talmadeus is screaming with joy.

GABRIELLE

is almost beside herself.

GABRIELLE

What's going on? What's happening?

BACK TO SCENE

Xena tries to throw a side kick into Talmadeus. But it's slow, as if the end of her leg is a dead weight. Talmadeus GRABS HER LEG and kicks the other out from under her. Her sword drops to the side. She looks over to her sword; too far away. Then she looks up, helpless, as Talmadeus stands over her, his sword ready.

TALMADEUS

I'm the man who killed Xena!

His sword raises...

GABRIELLE

takes her staff by one end, SWINGS IT WIDE and THROWS IT.

THE STAFF

spins through the air like a helicopter blade.

TALMADEUS' WRIST .

The staff hits him solidly in the wrist, causing the sword to fly away.

BACK TO SCENE

as Xena kicks out weakly. Talamadeus is taken by surprise and her almost useless foot manages to hit his ankle, knocking him off balance. Talmadeus' men start to move forward. Xena WHISTLES loudly, as:

Gabrielle runs out of the woods to retrieve her staff, as:

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED: 2

8

Argo comes bounding into the area. Xena stands shakily, her legs almost gone. She grabs the saddle.

XENA

Gabrielle!

Gabrielle takes no time in running for Argo and leaping onto her sideways, holding onto Xena for dear life as Xena WHISTLES and Argo bounds off into the brush.

Ness runs up to Talmadeus.

TALMADEUS

Did you see that? I had her. I had her!

NESS

Maybe it's a trap!

TALMADEUS

No! I saw the fear in her eyes! She's running for her life!

Off his glee, we:

CUT TO:

9 INT. WATER FACTORY - DAY

9

Xena lies sitting up with her back against the wall as Gabrielle helps to remove her outfit. Xena is in her undergarment now. Gabrielle is not happy with her friend.

GABRIELLE

This was really a stupid time to try and keep something from me!

XENA

I didn't know how much Tolmic poison was on the dart...

GABRIELLE

I don't care. If there was even a chance of you being sick, you should have told me! You could have gotten killed!

XENA

Gabrielle... yell at me later.

GABRIELLE

How bad is it?

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED:

9

XENA

I still don't know. My legs are almost useless... I can't feel my feet. My arms will probably go next.

GABRIELLE

But... but you're going to pull through, right? I mean... it's not...

XENA

It's going to get worse before it gets better. *

Salmoneus walks up with a determined look on his face. He holds one of his flasks with a wooden nozzle on the end.

SALMONEUS

Okay. I've been thinking about this and I've made some decisions.

GABRIELLE

You have?

SALMONEUS

Yes. Someone has to take charge. It's a time to be decisive and take command. Someone has to step forward and take the initiative to get us out of this mess! Now... any suggestions on where we could find that person?

He shoots some water into his mouth with the flask nozzle.

GABRIELLE

We've got the person right here. Xena's going to be all right.

SALMONEUS

I know that. You know that. But Talmadeus... he's got a different slant on the deal. He thinks you're... well, he thinks you're... the way you are.

XENA

Then we'll just have to convince him that I'm okay.

SALMONEUS

And you propose to do that, how?

A BEAT as Xena looks to Gabrielle. She returns the look.

VARIOUS ANGLES

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED: 2

9

that repeat the shots from the opening credits: black boots being laced; leather skirt being adjusted; and, finally, hands lifting out of a bowl with some black liquid all over them. Then:

BACK TO SCENE - ON GABRIELLE: WARRIOR BARD

Gabrielle is wearing Xena's clothes and armor; her hair is jet black. She strikes a pose.

GABRIELLE

What do you think?

INCLUDE XENA AND SALMONEUS

Salmoneus is appraising her, nodding his head. Then, the breastplate slips a bit and droops.

SALMONEUS

I think... I'd like a grave underneath a shady tree.

Off that, we:

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

10 INT. WATER FACTORY - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

10

Gabrielle is pulling the breastplate back into place.

GABRIELLE

Okay, so it's a little big. Tighten it for me.

Salmoneus crosses to adjust the straps in the back. Gabrielle picks up a small barrel top and looks at it. *

XENA

Talamdeus is sure to attack us. We're going to be ready. And when Gabrielle makes an appearance as me, it should be enough.

GABRIELLE

I just stand there, wave this fake chakram and give that yell thingie of yours. *

She holds the small barrel top like a chakram. *

SALMONEUS

And can you give that yell thingie?

Gabrielle clears her throat and lets loose with a mighty...

GABRIELLE

Yelp! Yelp! Yelp!

SALMONEUS

(to Xena)

This is not going to fool Talmadeus!

And he gives a tug to the straps, tightening them. Gabrielle reacts, going into a YIP YIP that sounds vaguely similar. Even Salmoneus is impressed.

SALMONEUS

Okay. That could work.

XENA

Salmoneus, round up your workers. We're going to have to move fast.

SALMONEUS

Done.

He heads off. Gabrielle kneels next to Xena. She feels Xena's forehead, but Xena shakes her hand away.

(CONTINUED)

10 CONTINUED:

10

XENA

Gabrielle, listen carefully. I know you've been in battles before, but this will be different. You have to stay focused. Let the world disappear, let me disappear from your thoughts. Focus. I want you riding in and out quickly.

*
*
*

GABRIELLE

Riding? That would mean... Argo. She doesn't like me.

(then)

I know. I have to forget that.

Gabrielle tightens the laces on the boots.

XENA

Argo doesn't hate you. I thought you had a pony when you were young.

GABRIELLE

I did. His name was Tympani. He was about this high...

(four feet)

...and he had a beautiful golden mane and little white spots right above his eyes that made him look like he was always asking you a question. I only tried to ride him once. It didn't work out, for either of us. Still... he used to follow me around everywhere. I even let him sleep in my room a couple of times.

XENA

Did you leave Tympani with your sister?

GABRIELLE

No. One day, he got real sick. I thought he might get better but...

(beat)

That's the trouble with things you love. Sometimes they just... leave you.

Xena puts her hand on Gabrielle's arm. Gabrielle attempts a smile. Of this, we:

CUT TO:

11 EXT. FACTORY - DAY

11

Salmeoneus is here with Argo. A few of the workers are cleaning up the kegs, carefully stacking them.

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED:

11

Gabrielle comes walking out of the factory. Argo gives a double take.

GABRIELLE

(to Argo)

Yes, it's me. We need to call a truce, okay? Understand?

She straps her staff to the saddle. Then, she carefully mounts up.

GABRIELLE

Okay. Stand back. I'm going to give her the "gallop" whistle.

Salmoneus stands back. Gabrielle sets herself... takes a deep breath... then, whistles loudly! Argo sits back on her haunches.

SALMONEUS

I must have a different definition for the word "gallop." I thought the whistle was this...

He gives a whistle. Argo leaps to her feet... and begins circling. Gabrielle fixes a stern look on Salmoneus, her head staying toward him as Argo walks around.

CLOSE ON A BIRD

watching all this, his head following the movement of Argo. He lets out with a whistle.

BACK TO SCENE

as, you guessed it, Argo straightens out and bolts for the forest, Gabrielle hanging on. Off this:

DISSOLVE TO:

12 EXT. ROAD TO FACTORY - DAY

12

Ness and his men are marching up the road. One of his seconds, KALUS, moves over to him.

KALUS

How certain are we that Xena isn't going to interfere?

NESS

You saw her go down. Talmadeus defeated her. She's probably halfway to Athens by now.

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED:

12

Suddenly, a loud WHISTLE is heard. The men freeze.

KALUS

What's that?

A fairly convincing WAR CRY is heard, then Argo comes bounding out of the woods and right through the middle of them, the figure of a Warrior Bard clinging desperately to her saddle. The men are knocked to the side as Argo heads down the path. Another WHISTLE and Argo stops, almost throwing his passenger. The men recover as Argo turns and faces them. Gabrielle raises herself up.

GABRIELLE

Thought you'd come back for some more, did you? You fell for my little trick and I have you just where I want you!

KALUS

(to Ness)

Does she seem smaller than before?

GABRIELLE

This is your only warning. Talmadeus will lead you to your death! Leave this valley forever or suffer the wrath of Xena! Up, Argo!

A mighty WHISTLE... and Argo bows. Confused reactions.

GABRIELLE

Uhm... I always bow to my enemies before I destroy them.

Another WHISTLE and Argo stands up.

NESS

She's bluffing! Get her!

And the men give chase. Gabrielle WHISTLES again. This time, Argo spins and heads toward:

13 EXT. THE FACTORY - DAY

13

All the windows are shuttered. Argo and Gabrielle position themselves next to the water tank. Ness and his men enter the area. Gabrielle holds up the fake chakram. *

GABRIELLE

Your last warning.

NESS

The man who gets her, gets her! By Talmadeus' orders! *

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED:

13

And they charge. Gabrielle throws the fake chakram over their heads, as: *

CLOSE - ON XENA

who is watching from one of the windows. She has her chakram out and throws it!

BACK TO SCENE

The real chakram sails past the fake chakram toward the men. They duck as it ricochets and SLICES THROUGH THE WATER TANK. The pressurized water SPRAYS OUT in a concentrated stream. (NOTE: Gabrielle is off to the side so no water touches her.) Ness and his men are hit by the torrent of water. This confuses and blinds them. *

XENA

Ready...!

The shuttered windows of the factory open and at the windows are villagers, each armed with flasks. In the end of each flask is a cork with a sharpened stick.

XENA

Now!

The villagers SHAKE THE FLASKS, then aim them at the men. The pressure SHOOTS THE CORK-DARTS AT:

NESS' MEN

They all react as these stingers hit them all over. Gabrielle WHISTLES and charges back through, knocking a few more down until she is next to the factory. Another wave of cork-darts are on their way, but the men have had enough. They run away.

The villagers cheer.

14 INT. WATER FACTORY - DAY (CONTINUOUS) - ON XENA

14

She rolls over and leans next to a barrel. She looks exhausted. She knocks on the side of the barrel. The top of the barrel rises with Salmoneus' head underneath.

SALMONEUS

Did we win?

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED:

14

XENA
We won the first battle.

SALMONEUS
First battle?

With that, he lowers himself back into the barrel.

CUT TO:

15 INT. FACTORY - DAY - NEAR CRATES

15

Xena is on a stretcher, being brought to this area by Gorney and another man. Photis is with them. Salmoneus is acting like an aircraft carrier flagman, directing them into this area. Photis carries a bunch of small pouches on ropes.

SALMONEUS
Closer... Careful... Watch the
kegs...

The men set Xena down. Photis sets the pouches next to her.

PHOTIS
I can't tell you how much we appreciate
what you're doing, Xena. Lord Seltzer
means the world to us.

GORNEY
We don't have much to offer, but it's
all yours for the asking.

XENA
That's okay. I'm sure Lord Seltzer is
more concerned with his people than
himself.

SALMONEUS
(uncomfortable)
Indeed. Now, back to work. I want all
those corks picked up and inventoried.

They move off.

SALMONEUS
Sweet people... not a business brain
among them.

He starts to shoot some more water into his mouth with the water flask nozzle. It points the wrong way and the water hits Xena. Salmoneus reacts and lays the flask at her side.

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED:

15

SALMONEUS

If you'll just give me a few minutes to make my peace with the gods...

Gabrielle enters and heads straight for Xena.

GABRIELLE

I made sure guards were posted, like you said.

XENA

Now, make sure that this factory is cleared out of everyone else. Tell them to go home, board up their houses and stay inside. Talmadeus' focus right now is here.

GABRIELLE

Can you stop thinking about everyone else for a second? Isn't there anything I can do for you?

SALMONEUS

Chicken soup!
(off their reactions)
That's what you need. Some of my patented chicken soup. Yes? Soup is good food, trust Salmoneus. Let's see... lots of chickens around here. I just need a knife.

XENA

Take my breast dagger.

He starts to reach toward her breasts.

XENA

(calmly)
My breast dagger is in my pouch.

SALMONEUS

Ah. Perhaps a name change of that particular equipment might be in order.

He heads off. Gabrielle sits next to Xena.

GABRIELLE

I'm worried about you. I mean, are you sure there isn't something that can fight this poison?

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED: 2

15

XENA

(intense)

Don't worry about me. What did I tell you? Focus! We have Talmadeus on his heels... You have to hit him at his camp. A direct attack will really make him cautious. Take these...

She reaches out to grab the ropes on the pouches, but her hands have to struggle with them. Gabrielle helps, then:

GABRIELLE

Xena... Are you going to die?

XENA

The poison just has to run its course. I'm going to be okay.

Gabrielle stares into her eyes and doesn't like what she reads.

GABRIELLE

No... Xena, please. I don't... I don't want the last thing you tell me to be a lie.... if it is the last thing...

Xena struggles with the answer. Finally:

XENA

It's possible... it's a very strong poison. It could... take me.

GABRIELLE

This can't be happening... Not to you.

Xena grabs her hand.

XENA

Gabrielle, this isn't about me. It's about these people. That's why we're here. People like this used to be my victims. I keep that in mind every time we come up against warlords like Talmadeus. It's the greater good. Remember that.

Gabrielle nods, her emotions in turmoil. She picks up the pouches and starts to rise, but Xena stops her.

XENA

Gabrielle... If... if it does happen... now, or whenever...
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED: 3

15

XENA (cont'd)

I want to be taken back home and buried
next to Lyceus, my brother.

Gabrielle can barely speak. She can only nod.

XENA

Go. I'll be here when you come back.

Gabrielle stands and exits with the pouches. Salmoneus
watches her walk by.

16 INT. FACTORY - NEAR DOOR - DAY

16*

Gabrielle is about to exit through the door. Salmoneus can
see her distress. *

SALMONEUS

(re: Xena)

She'll be okay. She's strong. And
with my chicken soup racing through her
body, she'll be as good as new.

She tries to smile at him and exits. *

CUT TO:

17 EXT. TALMADEUS' CAMP - DAY

17

All seems quiet. Several guards mill about, but there is
nothing to fear. Talmadeus and Ness exit one of the tents.

TALMADEUS

I don't care if she is back. She's
not going to keep me from Salmoneus!
I've beaten her once, I can do it
again.

Then, in the distance, a horrifying WAR YELL is heard. As
it echoes away, the men stare off into the darkness in fear.

VARIOUS VOICES

That's her! / Where'd it come from? /
Over here! / No, it's by the river!

TALMADEUS

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED:

17

comes out of his tent and listens. Then, something illuminates his face. He looks up to see:

A FIERY OBJECT

streaking across the sky and into his tent! His tent bursts into flame as more objects fly through the air. Men start SCREAMING and running this way and that, trying to put out the fires.

TALMADEUS

It's Xena!

No, it's:

GABRIELLE

She's got a torch stuck in the ground. She holds a pouch by the rope, ignites it with the torch, and swings it, letting it go and watching it sail off. She grabs another, as we HEAR her war yell again. Meanwhile:

18 INT. FACTORY - DAY

18*

Salmoneus enters the front door holding a chicken. He starts to announce his arrival when a beefy hand goes over his mouth and pulls him through the door. A loud THUD is heard.

*
*
*
*

CUT TO:

19 EXT. TALMADEUS' CAMP - DAY

19

Fire all over the place. The men are in utter confusion, running back and forth from a water trough as Talmadeus tries to keep control.

(CONTINUED)

19 CONTINUED:

19

TALMADEUS

More water! Save my tent first! Get
the guards back in place before...

A mighty WAR YELL is heard and Talmadeus sees a figure on horseback racing into the camp, swinging a staff. Talmadeus reacts quickly, grabbing a tent pole from behind him and swinging it at Argo's knees. Argo reacts, jumping over the pole.

Unfortunately, Gabrielle wasn't prepared for that maneuver. She loses her grip and flies off Argo, landing in the water trough. Immediately, men surround the trough as Gabrielle stands... her golden hair reflected in the sun.

CUT TO:

20 INT. FACTORY - DAY

20

The factory is deserted except for Xena. She tries to pick up her sword, but her grip is weak. She tries again, and drops it. Her movements are labored and her breathing is shallow. She is trying to concentrate. Behind her, the front door opens silently and we SEE Nymis and Kalus enter, weapons drawn...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

21 INT. FACTORY - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

21

Behind Xena, silently, Nymis and Kalus approach, spreading wide to surround her. The chicken runs through the door. Nymis silently kicks it aside.

The chicken runs past Xena. She notices it; wipes her brow; and reaches for something to drink. She grabs the seltzer flask Salmoneus left.

Nymis is almost upon her. He raises his sword... Xena spins, aiming the seltzer flask, and hitting Nymis in the eyes with it's concentrated stream. He is momentarily blinded as Kalus rushes Xena.

Xena grabs a rope, puts the noose around the nozzle of the seltzer flask, wraps the other end around her wrist, and starts swinging it in a circle. It connects on the side of Kalus' head, knocking him to the ground. Continuing the swing, she wraps the rope around Nymis' feet, dropping him to the ground. He reaches desperately for his dropped sword, but it is just out of reach. Xena is trying to hold onto the rope, keeping him from getting the sword, but her hands aren't responding well. He reaches... almost has the sword... Xena suddenly rolls over on her back, gives the rope a mighty pull, and Nymis slides away from the sword, across the floor, over a keg and on top of Xena, so they are face-to-face, nose-to-nose.

XENA

I hate uninvited guests.

She bashes him with her head, then slams her wrists into each side of his head. He is out. She rolls him over, sitting up with him as Kalus, recovered, charges again. Xena waits until he is just in range... then she presses her thumb into a specific region of Nymis' chest. Nymis' left leg kicks out reflexively and catches Kalus between the legs. Kalus reacts, bending over. Xena jams her thumb into another area, and Nymis' right foot kicks out, catching Kalus under the chin and flipping him onto his back; out cold. Xena pushes Nymis off her. She looks much worse now, her breathing is very heavy and sweat pours off her brow. She tries to get to her hands and knees, but the effort is too much. She falls to the ground. From this, we:

CUT TO:

22 EXT. TALMADEUS' CAMP - DAY

22

Gabrielle is being held by Talmadeus' men. Talmadeus is livid.

TALMADEUS

(smiles)

It was all a trick! Xena was covering for some weakness... and I almost fell for it. Brilliant!

GABRIELLE

Maybe you're falling for it now. Maybe me being captured is the trick. Have you thought of that?

TALMADEUS

It makes no difference. By daybreak, I'll have her. And...

(hissing)

...Salmoneus!

GABRIELLE

Okay, you're right, I was covering for Xena while she... she went to find Hercules! If I were you, I'd get while the getting's good.

TALMADEUS

I can't help but admire your bravery. Too bad I have to kill you.

GABRIELLE

You don't have to!

TALMADEUS

But don't worry. You'll soon have a lot of company on Charon's boat.

He turns, takes a sword from a warrior and turns back to her.

TALMADEUS

I'll make it quick.

Suddenly Argo gallops in and starts to spin and kick. She sends men flying, Talmadeus getting a particularly nasty kick. Gabrielle grabs up her staff as another man aims his spear at Argo. He throws it, but Gabrielle bats it down mid-flight. She runs straight for Argo. Argo stops what she's doing long enough for Gabrielle to crawl up. Then, she bolts for the woods, Gabrielle clinging to her.

NESS

(to his men)

Get the horses!

(CONTINUED)

22 CONTINUED:

22

TALMADEUS

No! Don't waste the effort. Where's she going to go?

Off his confidence, we:

CUT TO:

23 INT. FACTORY - DAY

23

Salmoneus walks in, holding his head. The chicken trots in his direction. He cowers from it, protecting his head.

SALMONEUS

Okay! I'll make pheasant soup!

The chicken looks at him with a newfound sense of superiority, then walks away. Salmoneus looks around and sees the two heavies, still unconscious. Nymis starts to stir. Salmoneus picks up a barrel lid and hits him. He drops. Then... Salmoneus sees Xena. He rushes to her.

SALMONEUS

Xena...! Xena! Hello! This is a trick, right?

He touches her neck, then puts his hand over her mouth. Suddenly deflated, he drops to the ground next to her.

SALMONEUS

Proud warrioreess...

A BEAT, then he grabs her blanket and pulls it over her and over her face.

SALMONEUS

I'll miss you.

HIGH ANGLE

Salmoneus sitting quietly beside the still form of Xena. Hold, then we:

DISSOLVE TO:

24 EXT. SUNSET

24

To establish time...

25 INT. TALMADEUS' TENT - NIGHT

25

Or, rather, what's left of it. The place looks pretty bad and, yet, Talmadeus is in good spirits as he walks around the ruin. Ness enters.

(CONTINUED)

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25 CONTINUED:

25

TALMADEUS

Any word from Kalus?

NESS

No, Sir. Nothing. Perhaps the Warrior Princess is still alive.

Talmadeus backhands the man onto his ass.

TALMADEUS

None of that! That's the kind of talk that's paralyzed this army. And it's exactly what Xena wanted.

Then, Talmadeus helps him to his feet.

TALMADEUS

This entire valley is mine for the taking. And it's time I started. We move out at first light. We capture Salmoneus. Then, while he watches, we destroy this valley... take it off the map. *

Ness salutes and exits. Off Talmadeus' happiness, we:

DISSOLVE TO:

26 INT. FACTORY - NIGHT

26

Gabrielle rushes in, still looking disheveled from her escape from Talmadeus. The people here look somber.

GABRIELLE

Xena! Xena, we have trouble!

Salmoneus runs up to her, intercepting her before she goes too far.

SALMONEUS

Wait, wait!

GABRIELLE

Get out of my way! *

She pushes past him to see Xena lying, still covered with the blanket. Everyone is watching.

GABRIELLE

No...

(CONTINUED)

26 CONTINUED:

26

Gabrielle drops to her knees next to Xena as her strength leaves her. Salmoneus motions for everyone to move away. The people back off. Tears and anger swell up inside Gabrielle as she reaches out and touches the blanket... She lifts it off Xena's face. Xena looks peaceful and at rest.

SALMONEUS

I don't know what happened. I was knocked out and they had me! But they must have gotten greedy and gone after her! When I came to, she was like... this. We tied the two warriors up.

*
*
*

A LONG PAUSE. Gabrielle says nothing. Salmoneus wrings his hands. He lowers his voice so the people don't hear.

SALMONEUS

There's nothing we can do. We've got to get out of here. It's called cutting your losses and changing markets. That's what I think.

(beat)

What do you think?

A moment as Gabrielle doesn't answer. Again, she touches Xena's face. Then, she takes a deep breath, stands and:

GABRIELLE

Move these barrels to the entrance. We can build a defensive wall that will take days to breach.

SALMONEUS

Defense? Breach? When did you learn to talk like that?

GABRIELLE

(going on)

When you're done with that, gather as much food as you can without leaving the area.

SALMONEUS

How long do you think these people can hold out against Talmadeus and his army?

GABRIELLE

Long enough for me to get to Levadi. I think Iolaus is there.

(CONTINUED)

26 CONTINUED: 2

26

SALMONEUS

If you're leaving the valley, I'm going
with you! Talmadeus will kill the both
of us if he --

(CONTINUED)

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26 CONTINUED: 3

26

GABRIELLE

(angry)

This isn't about you or me, Salmoneus. It's about these people. That's why we're here... why Xena was here. We're staying and fighting. For the greater good. Get to work.

She exits. Salmoneus gives a look to his people, then heads outside.

27 EXT. FACTORY - NIGHT

27

Gabrielle removes her staff from the saddle and, determination on her face, heads toward the woods. She gets just to the edge when it overtakes her... She pauses... then spins and hits a nearby tree with her staff in anger. Again and again, she hits it, the tears flowing freely now. Finally, she drops to the ground.

GABRIELLE

No... Xena said to focus... I have to focus...

(then)

Oh, Xena...

She curls up, pulling her knees to her and lowering her head, sobbing. A BEAT, then she feels something beside her. Argo pushes her nose up against her, softly. She turns and rubs Argo's nose, still crying.

GABRIELLE

It's just you and me, Tympani... and we're going to be okay. We are. *

She stands and picks up her staff.

GABRIELLE

I have a better chance on foot. Stay here. I'll be coming back.

(then)

Be here when I do.

She gives Argo a hug around the neck, picks up her courage, and heads off into the woods.

CUT TO:

28 INT. FACTORY - NIGHT

28

The people all stare at Salmoneus as he enters. They're looking for guidance.

(CONTINUED)

18 CONTINUED:

28

GORNEY

What are we supposed to do, Lord Seltzer?

PHOTIS

Did you and Gabrielle come up with a plan?

OLD MAN

Just tell us what to do and we'll defend you!

They all CHEER at that. Salmoneus takes a breath and calms them down.

SALMONEUS

Okay... okay! Quiet! Listen, people... I'm not... I'm not all that you think I am. A brilliant financial mind, yes, but I'm not worth...

(deep breath)

I'm not worth dying for. There. I've said it. I'm not worth it. Okay?

A BEAT, then Photis steps forward and gestures to Xena's body.

PHOTIS

She thought you were.

Salmoneus reacts. Then, he nods.

SALMONEUS

Okay. Let's move all those barrels to the door. We can hold out here. For a while, anyway.

They CHEER and begin working.

NEAR XENA

As the work goes on in the background, Salmoneus comes over and sits by Xena. He looks at Xena for something. Then, he comes to a solution.

SALMONEUS

I know what I have to do.

He stands and, with determination, heads for the door and exits.

DISSOLVE TO:

29 INT. TALMADEUS' TENT - NIGHT - ON TALMADEUS

29

The tent looks as if it has seen some repair. At the moment, Talmadeus lightly handles an axe as he talks to someone...

TALMADEUS

I already have the valley and now I have you. What makes you think I would even care about Xena?

He turns to look at:

SALMONEUS!

He stands opposite Talmadeus, in front of Ness and looking scared as all get out. His eyes keep drifting to the wooden target of himself with two axes buried in it.

SALMONEUS

Because without Xena, you can't win. You know that. Not that you aren't the ultimate warrior. Your power is legendary! But... why fight her when you can have her delivered to you?

TALMADEUS

And you.

SALMONEUS

(beat)
Yes. And me.

TALMADEUS

And all I have to do is...?

SALMONEUS

Leave the valley. Let these people go. Take me and Xena and... do what you want with us.

A BEAT, then Talmadeus raises the axe and throws it. It hits the Salmoneus image, again in the forehead. Salmoneus reacts and barely notices that Talmadeus has his hand out. Salmoneus tentatively clasps his arm. *

TALMADEUS

Now. Where's Xena?

SALMONEUS

You're a man of your word, right?

Talmadeus squeezes Salmoneus' arm. *

(CONTINUED)

29 CONTINUED:

29

SALMONEUS

Ow! Just making sure. She's at the factory.

(then)

She's dead.

A reaction, then Talmadeus starts laughing.

SALMONEUS

Remember! We have a deal!

TALMADEUS

Yes, yes. Don't worry! I'm an honorable man, as you said. Go. Lead my men to Xena and bring her and the villagers here. When I know she's truly dead, I'll let everyone go.

Salmoneus nods and exits. Ness starts to follow, but Talmadeus stops him.

TALMADEUS

Salmoneus, Xena dead, and an entire village of slaves to be sold. It's turning out to be a good day.

Off Ness' grin, we:

CUT TO:

30 INT. FACTORY - NIGHT

30

Some kegs are set up at the entrance. Gorney and several men are manning the entrance.

SALMONEUS' VOICE

It's Lord Seltzer! I'm coming in!

GORNEY

Stand down, everyone!

They pull the kegs away. Suddenly, Ness and his men rush in, shoving the villagers aside. Taken by surprise, the battle is quick. Salmoneus enters.

SALMONEUS

Don't fight! It's going to be okay! Talmadeus and I have an arrangement!

The men subdue the crowd.

NESS

Where's Xena?

(CONTINUED)

30 CONTINUED:

30

Salmoneus walks him over to the body. Ness smiles.

SALMONEUS

What are you going to do with her?

NESS

Me? Nothing. But Talmadeus wants her
body torn limb from limb. I'm just
going to enjoy it.

(to men)

Let's get them out of here!

Salmoneus turns to head out. Ness takes a BEAT, turns and
KICKS XENA. He walks away.

CLOSE - XENA'S HAND

as it moves a bit, then stops...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

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ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

31 EXT. VALLEY - SUNRISE

31

Establish time.

CUT TO:

32 EXT. WOODS - DAY

32

Gabrielle is trying her best to use what senses she has learned from Xena as she moves along. A BEAT, then she stops...she hears something. She ducks into hiding as two of Talmadeus' men walk through. Another man, WARRIOR #1, calls to them.

WARRIOR #1 (O.S.)

Hold up!

The two men turn as he walks up.

WARRIOR #1

Change of plans. We're to assemble near the factory.

WARRIOR #2

What about Xena?

WARRIOR #1

Xena's dead. It's all over. One of the villagers sold them out.

WARRIOR #2

(to other man)

What did I tell you? One of them would turn. You owe me ten dinars.

And they head off. Gabrielle appears again. She has no choice; she heads back toward the factory.

DISSOLVE TO:

33 EXT. FACTORY - DAY

33

The villagers are herded out. Nymis grabs Argo's reins. She resists, but he holds her fast. Ness and Salmoneus come out as Kalus drags Xena across the ground. Salmoneus doesn't look pleased with Xena's treatment.

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED:

33

SALMONEUS

Now, don't hurt any of the people.
Talmadeus promised they wouldn't be
harmed.

Meanwhile, we INTERCUT with:

GABRIELLE

watching from the brush. Her face reveals anger toward
Salmoneus.

SALMONEUS

He's not going to like it if you go
back on our arrangement.

GABRIELLE reacts to this.

GABRIELLE

(to herself)
He sold us out...

Ness turns to Kalus.

NESS

We're keeping to our end of the
bargain. Now, you go with your people.
Calm them down. If they resist, the
deal is off. Understand?

Salmoneus nods and, with a look to Xena, exits with the
people. Ness turns back to Kalus.

NESS

Wrap her up in that blanket. Talmadeus
wants her body to prove he's killed
her. Bring it and the horse.

Kalus roughly wraps Xena in the blanket and picks her up.
All three of them, including Argo, exit the area.

ON GABRIELLE

frozen in shock.

CUT TO:

34 EXT. TALMADEUS' CAMP - DAY

34

Talmadeus sits on his makeshift throne. His men are
gathered around and the villagers are sequestered nearby.
Ness stands next to Talmadeus. Salmoneus faces them,
nervous. Talmadeus casually spins Xena's chakram on his
finger.

(CONTINUED)

34 CONTINUED:

34

SALMONEUS

Okay, I've fulfilled my end of the bargain. Now, make me proud to have done business with you and let them go.

(beat; re: chakram)

If you like that thing, I can throw it in to sweeten the deal.

*
*

TALMADEUS

Bring out Xena's body.

Kalus walks up and throws Xena's body to the ground. Talmadeus smiles.

TALMADEUS

This is it? This is what I was afraid of?

(to Salmoneus)

Who killed her?

Salmoneus just shrugs, staring at Xena.

SALMONEUS

I... I don't know.

TALMADEUS

You don't know? It's obvious. And soon the entire world will know. I killed her! The great Talmadeus has taken down the Warrior Princess!

(then)

Business is business. A good businessman gives what he is given.

(beat; deadly serious)

You gave me talgamite weapons. And I lost a battle. I'm giving back now. Selling these people of yours to the slavers is good business!

Ness pulls a dagger on Salmoneus.

SALMONEUS

But we had a deal!

TALMADEUS

(to Kalus)

Bring out the horses.

(re: Xena)

Let's tear this carcass limb from limb.

The warriors all CHEER. Suddenly, there is the SOUND of something SPINNING THROUGH THE AIR. It's Gabrielle's staff! It hits several of Talmadeus' men and drops them. Gabrielle rushes in and picks up the staff.

(CONTINUED)

34 CONTINUED: 2

34

She swings it around as we've never seen her do it before, as she heads relentlessly toward Talmadeus.

TALMADEUS

Don't kill her! I like her spirit!

If they don't kill her, they sure aren't going to capture her. Gabrielle has a look in her eyes we haven't seen. At one point, a warrior pulls a sword in front of her. She brings her staff up under his chin and sweeps the other end under his wrist, sending the sword flying. Then, she vaults over the man, hits the ground and rolls to her feet, coming up directly in front of Talmadeus. Before he can react, she CATCHES THE SWORD as it comes down and points it right at him. Let's face it, we are amazed. Talmadeus freezes, only inches from death. The blaze in Gabrielle's eyes lets us know that she's not to be taken lightly.

GABRIELLE

I'm taking my friend and we're leaving.
Got it?

TALMADEUS

You fight well. I might ask you to
join --

GABRIELLE

I'm taking her home to her brother!!

TALMADEUS

(beat)

I can see you're determined.

Gabrielle gives a WHISTLE and Argo pulls away from the man holding her and trots over. Gabrielle looks to Kalus.

GABRIELLE

You. Put her on her horse. Now.

Kalus doesn't move. Talmadeus starts to stare into Gabrielle's eyes.

TALMADEUS

How long do you think you can keep this
up? The moment you turn your head...
the moment your eyes flicker... I've
got you. You know that.

(she does)

You don't even know how to hold a
sword.

He's right, of course. And Gabrielle shifts her grip. That was all Talmadeus needed. He slaps the blade away, grabs Gabrielle and spins her, holding her in an armlock.

(CONTINUED)

34 CONTINUED: 3

34

TALMADEUS

You people are pathetic. You think
you can steal Xena's body from me.
Salmoneus thinks he can trade his life
for the villagers.

*
*
*
*
*

Gabrielle gives a look to Salmoneus.

*

TALMADEUS

Such nobility... such a waste of time!

*

He hands her off to Ness, who holds her. Talmadeus turns to
Kalus.

TALMADEUS

Tie Xena to the horses.

The men CHEER as Kalus drags Xena over to an open area. Two
horses are brought in, Argo being one of them. Xena is
quickly tied to the horses, an arm and leg for each horse.
The ropes are slack. Gabrielle glares at Salmoneus, who
can't return her gaze.

Finally, two men stand next to each horse with a whip.
Talmadeus steps forward.

TALMADEUS

Finish it!

The men turn and HIT THE HORSES.

ON ARGO

as she neighs loudly.

THE OTHER HORSE

replies! It nods it's head but doesn't move.

BACK TO SCENE

as the men hit the horses again with the same result.

TALMADEUS

It's her horse! Kill it!

Kalus draws his sword and swings it high toward Argo.

It never connects. A HAND intercepts Kalus' wrist and stops
the blow.

ANGLE - ON KALUS

(CONTINUED)

34 CONTINUED: 4

34

His sword still raised, but his wrist in a powerful grip.
His expression is complete shock as the person rises up into
frame... XENA!!

XENA

Don't ever touch my horse.

And, with a twist of his wrist (and the requisite "crack"),
Kalus goes flying.

(CONTINUED)

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34 CONTINUED: 4

34

BACK TO SCENE

Everyone reacts. Talmadeus stares...

TALMADEUS
(amazed)
Xena...

GABRIELLE
(overjoyed)
Xena!

SALMONEUS
(relieved)
Xena?!?

Xena tears into the warriors, taking a moment to pick up Gabrielle's staff and throw it to her. The aim is perfect and it hits Ness in the chest. He flies back as Gabrielle grabs her staff and nails him on the head. Xena WHISTLES; Argo kicks. Two men go flying.

Gabrielle runs up to Xena, almost ignoring the carnage around her.

GABRIELLE
(happy)
Nice to have you back!
(pissed)
Don't you ever do this again!

XENA
Gabrielle... we're in the middle of a fight.

She punches the warrior coming up behind Gabrielle, then smiles at her. And they are back into it. Meanwhile:

Salmoneus runs to his people and unties them, sending them running. Some of the men join in the fight. Salmoneus is hit and drops. A blade appears in front of his face. Talmadeus grabs him by the neck and pulls him to his feet.

TALMADEUS
At least I get my revenge on you!

XENA
Think again.

Xena's fist plows into Talmadeus' face, knocking him back. He drops his sword. She swings again, he dodges it and hits her square in the chest. She recoils, but doesn't back off. Then, in at the same time, they grab each others' hands. Now it's a matter of brute strength.

(CONTINUED)

34 CONTINUED: 6

34

Talmadeus has the obvious advantage. He starts to smile as he brings her hands down and locks her elbows. She reacts to the pain.

TALMADEUS

I'm glad you're not dead. It would have robbed me of this.

XENA

Yeah... but it would have saved me from your breath.

And she HEAD BUTTS him. He is staggered. She does it again. He doesn't let go, but he is weaker. Without letting go of his hands, she WALKS RIGHT UP HIS BODY, WRAPS HER LEGS AROUND HIS NECK, AND DIVES FOR THE GROUND, FLIPPING HIM OVER HER AND INTO THE WATER TROUGH. Villagers surround him, swords ready.

And that pretty much takes care of it. All that's left is the CHEERING from the villagers. Salmoneus is still on the ground. This time, the person who grabs him is Gabrielle. He reacts as if she's about to hit him.

SALMONEUS

Wait! You don't understand!

GABRIELLE

I understand you did it to save these people. There's hope for you yet, Salmoneus.

She smiles and hugs him. He isn't sure how to react. Off this, we:

DISSOLVE TO:

35 EXT. FACTORY - DAY

35

It is much later and the place is back to normal. Except that there's a bit of a festival going on to celebrate the victory. We can tell everything is good by the sound of happy "belches" that pervade the air. Salmoneus stands with "his people." He looks over and raises a toast to:

ANGLE - ON GABRIELLE

as she stands next to Argo, rubbing her neck. Argo nuzzles her. Gabrielle smiles. Xena walks up.

XENA

I'm glad to see you two are getting along.

(CONTINUED)

35 CONTINUED:

35

GABRIELLE

Well, the best of friends are made in
strange situations. Argo's okay. At
least I know she doesn't hate me.

(then)

She's still too tall, though.

They start to walk together.

(CONTINUED)

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35 CONTINUED:

35

GABRIELLE

I'm angry with you. I mean... I really thought you were... you know. *

XENA

I almost was. Tolmic poison shuts everything down. I had to go under with it just to fight the effects. I didn't expect to be under so long.

GABRIELLE

We still don't know who hit you with that dart.

XENA

Whoever it was, he knew what he was doing. I just have to figure out why.

Another BEAT, then Xena stops and faces Gabrielle.

XENA

Gabrielle... when you thought I was dead... You risked your life to try and take me home...

GABRIELLE

It was your last wish. For all you've given me and all the times you saved my life, I'd go to Tartarus and back to carry it out.

XENA

I used to wonder whether I'd ever make it back. Now, I know that no matter what, I'm going home one day. Thank you. *

Gabrielle wipes a tear.

GABRIELLE

Let's change the subject or I'm going to get all soft on you.

XENA

(smiling)

We can't have that, can we?

As they start to walk, Xena takes the dart out of her pouch and looks at it. A mystery...

FADE OUT.

THE END