

Prod. #V0212

XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS

"Here She Comes... Miss Amphipolis"

Written by  
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SHOOTING DRAFT  
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XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS

"Here She Comes... Miss Amphipolis"

CAST LIST

XENA  
GABRIELLE

SALMONEUS  
MISS PARNASSUS  
MISS MESSINI  
MISS SKIROS  
MISS ARTIPHYS  
LORD CLAIRON  
PALATINE OF PARNASSUS  
DOGE OF MESSINI  
REGENT OF SKIROS  
PAGEANT MATRON

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XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS

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SET LIST

INTERIORS:

CASTLE - CORRIDOR  
- MISS MESSINI'S ROOM  
- XENA'S ROOM  
- GREAT HALL  
- STEAM ROOM  
- OUTSIDE STEAM ROOM  
- MISS PARNASSUS' ROOM  
THEATRE - STAGE  
- BACKSTAGE

EXTERIORS:

BEACH #1  
ROCKY POINT ABOVE BEACH #1  
BEACH #2 - PLATFORM WITH RUNWAY  
WOODS ABOVE BEACH #2

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XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS

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CHRONOLOGY

DAY 1

SCENES #1 - 31

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XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS

"Here She Comes... Miss Amphipolis"

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 EXT. BEACH #1 - DAY

1

XENA and GABRIELLE walk along the tideline; Gabrielle enjoying their surroundings, Xena looking more reflective.

GABRIELLE

Doesn't the sun feel good on your face?  
And smell the air...

(breaths deeply)

Y'know, if Salmoneus had to send for us, he could've done a lot worse than pick here to meet.

XENA

Yes, it's nice. But it wasn't always like this.

(pointing O.S.)

See that wreck on the rocks?

Gabrielle looks to see the skeletal remains of a ship.

GABRIELLE

Looks like what's left of a warship.

XENA

One of dozens that attacked this beach in a battle so bloody, the sand was soaked red.

GABRIELLE

(reacts)

Thanks for sharing. When was this?

XENA

Must be almost a year now since the peace was signed.

GABRIELLE

A year?

(strides ahead; lifting her face to the sun)

That's plenty of time for things to go back to being safe and normal --

Abruptly, she DROPS OUT OF FRAME. Moving to join her, Xena finds Gabrielle sprawled beside a large, deep rut.

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED:

1

XENA

You all right?

GABRIELLE

I think so...

(rising; re: rut)

Where'd this come from?

Xena eyes it, then scans the beach beyond.

XENA

(indicating)

Same place as that one.

ANGLE ADJUSTS to include... another rut, running parallel to the first, clearly a set of wheel tracks.

GABRIELLE

Sure are deep.

(spotting something)

Hey -- look!

(bending to pick up:)

Clams...! Lots of 'em!

(digging them out)

Guess I know what we're eating tonight.

What do you think made these ruts?

XENA

(studying them)

Only one thing I know makes tracks this deep...

(frowns; concerned)

...a fully-armed war wagon.

GABRIELLE

What would a war wagon be doing here?

I thought you said things are peaceful.

On cue, frightened SCREAMS are heard and the women look --

UP THE BEACH

where a half-dozen, SCANTILY-CLAD BEAUTIES come running onto the sand, chased by two LOWLIFE THUGS. Reaching a wide tidal pool, the girls plunge across it, only to trip and fall down. Leering, the Thugs close in when, suddenly --

-- A LARGE CLAM SHELL conks the first Thug, followed by a second clam that bonks the other. Turning, the men see:

XENA AND GABRIELLE

down the beach. Resembling a human Gatling gun, Xena barrages the Thugs with clams Gabrielle supplies her.

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED: 2

1

Pelted by the painful, miniature 'frisbees,' the Thugs run off, allowing the Beauties to emerge from the tidal pool, dripping wet, their clothes molding their figures as...

...SALMONEUS rushes up, raises his clenched fist, and shakes it after the retreating Thugs as he shouts:

SALMONEUS

...And stay away!

(dusting his hands, he turns to the girls)

Everything okay? Because, frankly, I was worried. These costumes were never designed to take this kind of abuse.

MISS PARNASSUS, a bodacious brunette whose hair and clothes are a sopping mess, glares.

MISS PARNASSUS

Costumes? Just wait'll I tell my sponsor about this.

Turning, she and the other girls stalk off.

SALMONEUS

(calling after her)

Don't forget to tell him who saved you. A person of unflinching courage, deceptive strength, ingenious skill... who's not above accepting some financial remuneration.

A COUGH makes him spin to see... Xena and Gabrielle standing behind him.

SALMONEUS

Xena! You're here!

(big, over-bright smile)

I was just talking about you... sorta.

OFF Xena's look...

CUT TO:

2 EXT. ROCKY POINT ABOVE BEACH #1 - DAY

2

Xena and Gabrielle stare at Salmoneus incredulously.

XENA

Beauty contest. You sent urgent word for us to come see some under-dressed, over-developed, bubbleheaded bimbos in a beauty contest?

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED:

2

SALMONEUS

Pageant. The word is pageant.

GABRIELLE

Contest, pageant, it's still just a feeble excuse for men to exploit and degrade women.

SALMONEUS

Wrong as usual, Miss Sunshine. Since when have we ever needed an excuse? Besides, the way things stand, it's more like combat than a contest.

(wistful sigh)

And it had such potential when Lord Clairon first proposed it as a way to celebrate a year of peace... merchandising, local franchises, off-runway betting...

XENA

Wake me up when you get to the "urgent" part.

Looking wounded, Salmoneus, nonetheless, cuts to the chase.

SALMONEUS

You know the leaders who signed the treaty here last year?

XENA

(nods; enumerating)

The Doge of Messini, the Regent of Skiros, and the Palatine of Parnassus.

SALMONEUS

Bingo. Well, they've all entered their girlfriends in the pageant. And since then, we've had nothing but trouble -- most of it aimed at those three girls -- wrecked props, ripped costumes, and now this business on the beach.

XENA

Sounds like someone's trying to wage a war by proxy, get to the leaders by getting to their girlfriends.

GABRIELLE

Might explain those war wagon tracks.

(CONTINUED)



2 CONTINUED: 2

2

SALMONEUS

You see? They're already massing their armies. That's why I sent urgent word. If you don't help stop the sabotage and keep things on the level, each leader's gonna blame the others and, before you know it, we're all buying headstones.

GABRIELLE

Probably from you. Otherwise, why not just call off the pageant before things get any worse?

SALMONEUS

There's that attitude again. But it just so happens Lord Clairon's already tried that. Only these guys are so invested in winning, it's like a war of its own. Nobody wanted to look like a coward by being the first to quit.

XENA

In that case, your best bet's a ringer, someone who can infiltrate these superficial numb-nuts, and find out what's really going on.

SALMONEUS

My thoughts exactly!  
(eyeing Gabrielle)  
The way I see it, all I need is a contestant to keep an eye on things from the inside.

GABRIELLE

(catching his drift)  
Well, don't look at me! You know how I feel about the women being victimized by these meat markets.

XENA

She's right. But war makes everyone a victim. So...  
(reluctant; but determined)  
...meet Miss Amphipolis.

As Salmoneus and Gabrielle react, HOLD on Xena's resolve.

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

3 INT. CASTLE - CORRIDOR - DAY

3

Beautiful GIRLS in various stages of undress flit up and down the hallway... chatting, running scales, rehearsing songs and dance steps, etc. as Salmoneus leads Gabrielle and Xena (her warrior outfit covered by a long cloak, a scarf hiding her hair) up the hallway toward their room.

SALMONEUS

(low; to Xena)

Now remember, anyone asks, you're Miss Amphipolis...

(to Gabrielle)

...and you are her sponsor, the Marquessa.

XENA

What about the contest itself?

SALMONEUS

Piece o' cake. Every girl must compete in three events to win. Miss one event -- whatever the reason -- you're out of the pageant, and you can't get back in, understand? One miss, you're gone.

Xena starts to reply, when Salmoneus suddenly stops, drawing Xena and Gabrielle into:

CUT TO:

4 INT. MISS MESSINI'S ROOM - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

4

A zaftig redhead, MISS MESSINI, is sitting down to play a harp when Salmoneus pops in with Xena and Gabrielle.

SALMONEUS

Excuse me -- Miss Messini?

Hands raised to play, she stops and turns to him, questioningly.

SALMONEUS

Sorry to interrupt, but I wanted you to meet our newest contestant...

(indicating Xena and Gabrielle)

...Miss Amphipolis, and her sponsor, the Marquessa.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED:

4

SALMONEUS (cont'd)  
(to Gabrielle and Xena)  
Ladies, this is Miss Messini...  
(meaningfully)  
...sponsored by the Doge of Messini.

During all this, Xena has focused on the harp where she sees a string running from the instrument via a covert path up to... a crossbow whose arrow is ready to fly straight at Miss Messini the moment she plays the harp. Meanwhile...

GABRIELLE  
(to Miss Messini)  
Nice to meet you. But, please, don't  
let us keep you from...

She motions her to play as Xena sees the loaded crossbow.

XENA  
No!

But it's too late. Sweeping her hands across the strings, Miss Messini and the rest hear a "PING" as she releases --

THE ARROW whose POV shows it flying straight at Miss Messini who stands frozen while, behind her --

Xena instantly grabs her chakram and sails it at the arrow, slicing it lengthwise, and sending each piece veering to either side of Miss Messini.

Catching the chakram, Xena quickly thrusts it at Salmoneus who bobbles it like a hot potato as a crowd forms at the door, and Miss Messini turns around. Seeing Salmoneus holding the chakram, she rushes to hug him.

MISS MESSINI  
You saved my life!  
(to the others)  
Did you see that? He saved my life!

SALMONEUS  
(uncomfortably)  
Yeah, well, really... it was nothing.

MISS MESSINI  
Nothing? I wouldn't call that arrow  
nothing.  
(to others; suspicious)  
And I don't think my sponsor will  
either, once he finds out about it.

And pushing past the crowd, she exits. Reacting, the crowd disperses, too. But as Gabrielle, Salmoneus, and Xena move back into...

5 INT. CORRIDOR - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

5

Xena senses someone watching her and glances around, spotting... MISS ARTIPHYS, a dark, sinewy contestant staring at her from across the hall.

As the two lock eyes we see a subtle reaction from Xena.

Miss Artiphys sees it, too, and quickly moves off. Frowning, Xena hesitates, then lets it go as she turns back to follow Salmoneus and Gabrielle, only to collide with --

-- MISS SKIROS, a small, delicate woman whose sly-eyed beauty belies her shrewd, competitive mind.

MISS SKIROS

Hey, watch it, Gargantua.

(taking in Xena's height)  
Sure you're in the right place? The  
giantess gig is two leagues east.

And tossing her head, she moves off, leaving Xena staring after her before turning to follow Salmoneus and Gabrielle.

CUT TO:

6 INT. CASTLE - XENA'S ROOM - DAY

6

As Xena and Gabrielle enter, Salmoneus shuts the door and leans against it, weak-kneed.

SALMONEUS

Talk about a close call. If Miss Messini had been skewered, the Doge would've blamed the other two, and I would've lost both the peace and my shirt in one fell swoop.

GABRIELLE

Your concern is touching. But as long as we can keep the contest fair 'til we catch whoever's doing this, we're fine.

XENA

Okay, here's the plan. Salmoneus, you get me a disguise before I'm recognized and thrown out, while...

(turning to Gabrielle)

...you get to know the other sponsors, especially the Doge of Messini, the Regent of Skiros, and the Palatine of Parnassus. Got it?

GABRIELLE

(nods; ticking 'em off)  
Doge, Regent, Palatine. Got it.

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED:

6

XENA  
(walking them to door)  
We'll meet back here before the first  
event.

Nodding, they exit. Xena locks the door behind them. Then,  
tossing off her cloak and scarf, she moves behind a dressing  
screen as... a KNOCK sounds at the door.

PAGEANT MATRON (O.S.)  
(announcing herself through  
the door)  
Matron of the Pageant, coming in.

XENA  
(startled)  
Uh -- wait just a moment --

She starts for her scarf and cloak when a KEY unlocks --

THE DOOR

which opens, admitting... the PAGEANT MATRON, a middle-aged  
woman who exudes a sense of power despite (or perhaps  
because of) her extreme unattractiveness. She carries an  
official-looking scroll.

PAGEANT MATRON  
No time for modesty. I've got ten more  
of you wannabes to see before...

She stops, peering intently at Xena who remains O.S.

PAGEANT MATRON  
(suspiciously)  
Here, what's this? Aren't you...  
(moving closer; squinting)  
Yes, I'm sure you are...  
(then; closer still)  
I knew it! You're wearing that robe  
inside out.

ANGLE TO INCLUDE XENA

who looks sheepish as she stands beside the dressing screen  
where she's managed to scramble into a bath turban and a  
robe, worn inside out.

PAGEANT MATRON  
(shakes her head)  
Why the gods waste beauty on girls like  
you, I'll never know. If I'd been  
granted half your looks, I'd rule the  
world.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED: 2

6

PAGEANT MATRON (cont'd)

(resentful)

Instead, Lord Clairon has me cater to you empty-headed entrants like I was a slave.

Xena notes her jealous envy even as she affects the stereotypical airhead attitude they both dislike.

XENA

I'm sorry about the robe. I'm just so totally thrilled to be here that I --

PAGEANT MATRON

Save it for the judges. I'm on a schedule.

And turning on her heel, she exits.

CUT TO:

7 INT. CASTLE - GREAT HALL - DAY

7

All three leaders, the DOGE OF MESSINI, the REGENT OF SKIROS, and the PALATINE OF PARNASSUS, protest to LORD CLAIRON, a mild-mannered milquetoast who tries to calm them.

DOGE OF MESSINI

That arrow nearly killed her! And why? Because one of you wants to stop me from winning, that's why.

(to Lord Clairon)

It's an insult.

LORD CLAIRON

Please, we don't know for a fact that --

PALATINE OF PARNASSUS

(overriding him; to Doge)

What about me? My girl was assaulted on the beach by thugs that one of you hired to try and stop me from winning.

(to Lord Clairon)

It's a slur on my honor.

LORD CLAIRON

As I said, nothing's been proven against anyone. So --

REGENT OF SKIROS

Would you listen to yourselves?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED:

7

REGENT OF SKIROS (cont'd)

Pissing and moaning when it's clear my girl is gonna win this for me, no sweat.

Outraged, the men erupt at once when a SHARP WHISTLE stops them and, turning, they see... Gabrielle.

GABRIELLE

Is this a private bash, or can any sponsor join in?

LORD CLAIRON

You're a sponsor?

GABRIELLE

(crossing to join them)  
That's right. I'm called the Marquessa. And, from what I've just heard, I'm a lot better sponsor than any of them.

(to Doge; hotly)

Your contestant's nearly killed, and it's you who's insulted? Get a life.

(to Palatine; incensed)

Yours is attacked, but it's your disgrace? Gimme a break.

(to Regent; snapping)

I guess if your contestant got hurt, it'd be about you, too. Well, all I can say to you three is...

(sees them staring; realizes she's blowing her cover; changes tacks)

...clear the runway, 'cause my contestant's gonna wipe the floor with all of you.

DOGE OF MESSINI

(reacting)

And just who is your contestant?

SMASH CUT TO:

8 INT. CASTLE - STEAM ROOM - DAY

8

Clouds of steam give us tantalizing peeks at the towel-draped Miss Skiros, Miss Messini, and Miss Parnassus, lounging in the natural hot springs.

MISS PARNASSUS

Her name's Miss Amphipolis.

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED:

8

MISS SKIROS

Odd, her being sponsored by a woman.

MISS MESSINI

I'll say. You'd think a woman wouldn't put you through this just to win some silly contest.

MISS PARNASSUS

(nods agreement)

I just keep focused on the extra food my village'll get if I win. The Palatine promised.

MISS SKIROS

Well, nobody twisted my arm to be here. I'm gonna use this thing to get as far away from here as possible. And all I can say is Miss Amphipolis better not get in my way.

XENA (O.S.)

Thanks for the warning.

As the women react, Xena (turbaned and towel-draped) appears in the steamy mist.

XENA

I'll try and remember it.

MISS SKIROS

(holding her gaze)

Do that.

The others, embarrassed by their gossiping, rise.

MISS PARNASSUS

Uh, I gotta go.

MISS MESSINI

Yeah, me, too. Any more steam, I'll turn all prune. See ya.

And both women flee, leaving Xena and Miss Skiros alone.

XENA

Sounds like this pageant means a lot to you.

MISS SKIROS

No. But winning it does. And you can bet I'll do whatever it takes to do it.

Rising to leave, Miss Skiros adjusts her towel, and Xena sees... an ugly, jagged scar on her back.

(CONTINUED)



8 CONTINUED: 2

8

Noting her reaction, Miss Skiros glares, covers her scar, and exits.

Xena remains a thoughtful BEAT. Then rising, she, too, crosses to exit -- only to find the door locked. Reacting, she tries to force it. But the door won't budge.

Sweat coursing down her face, Xena looks around in the rising steam until she spots...

...AN AIR VENT, latched shut, high up on a wall.

Another glance around reveals there's nothing for her to work with, so Xena grabs her towel and whips it off, as we:

ANGLE - THE CLOSED AIR VENT

where the flicking edge of a towel snaps it open.

CUT TO:

9 INT. CASTLE - XENA'S ROOM - DAY

9

Looking anxious, Gabrielle quickly crosses to the door as it opens and Salmoneus hurries in.

GABRIELLE

Find her?

SALMONEUS

No. She's not back?

GABRIELLE

No.

Frustrated, they pace, crisscrossing each other.

SALMONEUS

You know, she misses this, she's out of the pageant -- no ifs, ands, or buts.

She's gone, finito --

(whistles and jerks his thumb)

-- out!

GABRIELLE

I know...

(frowning)

...and so do those warlords. You should've seen the way they acted. Like this contest was all about them, and how great they are. I'm telling you, they'd do anything to win.

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED:

9

SALMONEUS

But which one? The Palatine, the Regent, or the Doge?

GABRIELLE

I wish I knew.

SALMONEUS

And I wish I could stay. But I got a show to m.c.

(starting out)

If Xena turns up, get her dressed and down to the beach, fast. She doesn't stay in to keep an eye on things, we're all goners.

And he goes, leaving a worried Gabrielle...

DISSOLVE TO:

10 EXT. BEACH #2 - PLATFORM WITH RUNWAY - DAY

10

ON A SURGING, UNRULY CROWD from which we PULL BACK, revealing the cause of their commotion...

...The lanky Miss Artiphys, wearing a swimsuit and spike heels, poses at the runway's end, then turns and sashays back up it and off as Salmoneus leads the APPLAUSE.

SALMONEUS

Come on, people... Let's give it up for Miss Artiphys! That's it -- a big hand, now. Miss Artiphys, everybody!

As the APPLAUSE DIES, Salmoneus desperately scans the place for Xena, vamping as he stalls.

SALMONEUS

Yessir, that Miss Artiphys is some kinda woman...

(still no Xena)

...as are all our contestants, don't you think?

(leads more APPLAUSE)

That's right, folks. Let 'em know how you feel about 'em.

Suddenly, Gabrielle runs in, giving Salmoneus a hi-sign.

SALMONEUS

(relieved)

And now, it's my very great pleasure to present to you our last contestant... Miss Amphipolis!

(CONTINUED)

10 CONTINUED:

10

Turning, he gestures to... a leggy, blonde bombshell (Xena), poured into an eye-popping swimsuit and heels.

Even Salmoneus is rocked by her sexy transformation as Xena swivels down the runway, strikes a pose, and blows a kiss to the CHEERING CROWD. As we HOLD on her...

CUT TO:

11 INT. CASTLE - XENA'S ROOM - DAY

11

Discreetly shot, a mysterious figure opens the unlocked door and enters the room, swiftly searching it until a look inside a chest brings the search to a halt.

Reaching into the chest, ANONYMOUS HANDS withdraw... Xena's warrior outfit. As we HOLD on its mute indictment...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

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ACT TWO

FADE IN:

12 EXT. BEACH #2 - PLATFORM WITH RUNWAY - DAY (CONTINUOUS) 12

The crowd is still APPLAUDING as Xena exits the platform past Salmoneus who draws her aside, moving with her...

DOWN THE BEACH

as he takes in her transformation.

SALMONEUS  
Xena? It's incredible! Is that really  
you?!

Her hand shoots out, grabbing his neck in a viselike grip.

SALMONEUS  
(choking)  
Brilliant disguise... if I do say so  
myself.

With a look, she releases him. Salmoneus gasps in relief.

SALMONEUS  
So, what happened? You were nearly  
disqualified!

XENA  
Which is exactly what somebody wanted.

Before she can elaborate, Gabrielle runs up to join them.

GABRIELLE  
Did she tell you she got locked in the  
steam room?

SALMONEUS  
(shocked; to Xena)  
Someone tried to saute you?

XENA  
Yes... and I think I know who.

Raising her hand, she displays a silver earring...

CUT TO:

13 INT. CASTLE - OUTSIDE STEAM ROOM - DAY 13

Her BACK TO THE CAMERA, a contestant is frantically searching the floor outside the steam room.

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED:

13

XENA (O.S.)

Looking for this?

ANGLE WIDENS to include Xena, holding out the silver earring to... Miss Artiphys who tries to run away.

In a heartbeat, Xena seizes Miss Artiphys, slams her up against a wall, grabs her hair, and yanks it off to reveal... Miss Artiphys is really a Mister!

XENA

Now I want some straight answers.

MISS ARTIPHYS

Have you got the wrong guy.

He winces as Xena's grip tightens. Then, dropping his voice to it's normal male register, he acquiesces.

MISS ARTIPHYS

Okay, okay... I was just kidding.  
Where's your sense of humor?

XENA

Must've sweated it out in the steam room. That your idea of funny, too?

MISS ARTIPHYS

I just wanted to scare you.

Surprised, Xena lets him go and he turns to face her.

XENA

Why? Why'd you want to scare me?

MISS ARTIPHYS

Because I knew you knew... you know... about me. And I didn't want you telling anyone. But when I came back to unlock the door, you'd already gone.

XENA

What made you think I'd tell?

MISS ARTIPHYS

(with a look)

Please... To win this pageant, I'd rat on my own mother. Well, maybe not my mother, but you know what I mean.

XENA

No. I don't. Why do you care?

He looks at her, surprised to realize:

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED: 2

13

MISS ARTIPHYS

You really don't get it, do you? I guess being born a woman, you wouldn't. But this is my chance to use a part of me most people laugh at... or worse. A part I usually have to hide, only here that part works for me, y'see?

XENA

(trying)

I think so...

MISS ARTIPHYS

Look, I don't expect you to understand. And I'm sorry I got you, forgive the expression, steamed. I just hope you let me quit the pageant in private, instead of publicly exposing me.

XENA

No way.

As Miss Artiphys reacts, Xena gets his wig and returns it.

XENA

May the best... person... win.

Startled, he takes the wig. But before he can speak, Xena exits... leaving him looking after her, grateful.

CUT TO:

14 INT. CASTLE - XENA'S ROOM - DAY

14

In a PARODY of the "dressing sequence" in the OPENING CREDITS, we see a pair of hands lacing up some lovely Grecian sandals instead of leather boots, as we HEAR:

GABRIELLE (O.S.)

Remember, a beauty pageant's like a war.

Finishing with the sandals, the hands move up, CAMERA TRACKING them past the slinky skirt molding Xena's thighs 'til the hands reach her waist.

GABRIELLE (O.S.)

To win, you've gotta be fired with the heat of competition.

(cinching skirt tighter)

The power...

(tighter)

The passion...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED:

14

GABRIELLE (O.S.) (cont'd)  
(tighter)  
The driving desire to win!

CAMERA PULLS BACK to display... the blonde-wigged Xena,  
wearing a sexy costume which Gabrielle ties at the waist.

XENA  
(reacting)  
Gabrielle, we're not here to win.  
We're here to stop another war.

GABRIELLE  
Well, sure. But no harm in winning  
while we do it, right?

An O.S. SCREAM would seem to refute that, as we:

CUT TO:

15 INT. CASTLE - MISS PARNASSUS' ROOM - DAY

15

Responding to the scream, Xena and Gabrielle burst into the  
room to see Miss Parnassus kneeling on the floor, cradling a  
small, inert body. She looks up at them, genuinely upset.

MISS PARNASSUS  
Look what some monster did to Bobo.

And raising her arms, she displays... a ventriloquist's  
dummy whose broken jaw hangs slack, his wooden arms and  
legs split like kindling.

MISS PARNASSUS  
Now what'll I do? I'll never win  
without Bobo.  
(rising; tearful)  
Just wait'll I tell my sponsor.

And she runs out. Frowning, Xena turns to Gabrielle.

XENA  
Find Lord Clairon. Warn him there may  
be more trouble.

CUT TO:

16 INT. CASTLE - GREAT HALL - DAY - ON LORD CLAIRON

16

LORD CLAIRON  
what else can I do?

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED:

16

PULL BACK and WIDEN to include... the Doge of Messini, the Regent of Skiros, the Palatine of Parnassus, and Gabrielle.

LORD CLAIRON

We've always been neutral, even during the war. So there's no army to call out, just some reserves. And I'm using all I've got.

PALATINE OF PARNASSUS

Then you'd better draft more, or I'll be forced to bring in men of my own.

REGENT OF SKIROS

He brings his men in, so do I.

DOGE OF MESSINI

And I.

GABRIELLE

Will you listen to yourselves? This is exactly how the Trojan War got started -- over a stupid beauty contest. How do you think that kind of pressure makes your contestants feel?

REGENT OF SKIROS

Who cares? As long as mine wins.

PALATINE OF PARNASSUS

I told mine I don't care if she wins...  
(as Gabrielle beams)  
...I just don't want her to lose.

GABRIELLE

(smile fading)  
Great. Real understanding.

DOGE OF MESSINI

Why? What'd you tell yours?

GABRIELLE

I didn't "tell" her anything. We're a team. I asked.

The leaders trade looks.

REGENT/PALATINE/DOGE

Right...

Then the Palatine turns to Lord Clairon.

PALATINE OF PARNASSUS

One more incident, I'm bringing in my troops.

(CONTINUED)



16 CONTINUED: 2

16

As Lord Clairon reacts, the Palatine exits.

REGENT OF SKIROS  
That makes two of us.

He exits, too.

LORD CLAIRON  
I'll put out a call for volunteers.

And looking anxious, he hurries out, leaving Gabrielle alone with the Doge. Concerned, she starts off, too, when --

DOGE OF MESSINI  
(stops her)  
Uh -- Marquessa?  
(as Gabrielle turns)  
That "asking" stuff. That works for you?

GABRIELLE  
Every time.

Then she exits... leaving the Doge looking thoughtful.

CUT TO:

17 EXT. BEACH #2 - DAY - ON SALMONEUS

17

He looks a little ragged as he teaches the contestants -- all wearing the same slinky costume as Xena -- a production number.

SALMONEUS  
...Okay, everyone got it?  
(off their blank faces)  
Right. Then let's take it from the top. Ready?  
(squirts an atomizer into his throat; then)  
And a one, and a two, and a three --

Off his nod, the three-piece COMBO playing for the pageant swings into a LIVELY TUNE.

SALMONEUS  
(singing and dancing)  
"We're here to entertain you;  
We're here to make you smile.  
You're here, and who can blame you.  
So come on, stay a while..."

A natural showman, he gives it his all. But when he turns, his face falls as...

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED:

17

...CAMERA PANS the girls, most of whom are milling around, going left instead of right, bumping into each other, etc. until we find and hold on Xena, who's done it perfectly.

SALMONEUS

(sighs)

Okay... Take five while I work with you in groups...

As he moves off, CAMERA follows Xena who moves to some trees when the Palatine of Parnassus appears, blocking her way.

PALATINE OF PARNASSUS

(insinuating smile)

You move very well.

XENA

Thanks.

She starts around him, but he blocks her again.

PALATINE OF PARNASSUS

You look familiar. Have we met before?

XENA

I'm sure I'd remember.

And again she starts past him. Again, he stops her.

PALATINE OF PARNASSUS

Then allow me to introduce myself...

(slight bow)

I'm the Palatine of Parnassus.

XENA

(curbing her impatience)

Miss Amphipolis.

Taking her hand, he bends to kiss it as Xena, rolling her eyes, sees... Miss Parnassus watching, her face concerned.

Turning her palm up, the Palatine starts nibbling up Xena's arm. Reacting, she tries to withdraw it, but he holds firm.

XENA

(eyes smoldering)

I'd appreciate you letting me go.

PALATINE OF PARNASSUS

(leering as he grazes up her

arm)

Or you'll do what?

Not missing a beat, Xena seizes his throat with the hand he's holding, gripping it tightly.

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED: 2

17

XENA

Now, take your greasy lips off my arm,  
and apologize.

PALATINE OF PARNASSUS

(releasing her; gasping)

I'm... sorry...

XENA

Not to me.

(indicating Miss Parnassus)

To her.

He starts to protest. But Xena tightens her hold, nearly choking him, and he nods. Satisfied, Xena lets him go.

PALATINE OF PARNASSUS

(icy rage)

We're not done, you and me... not by a  
long shot.

Rubbing his throat, he moves to Miss Parnassus who looks stunned as he apologizes in words we don't hear, then exits.

From the look on Miss Parnassus' face as she eyes Xena, it's clear she sees her in a different light. Meanwhile...

...Miss Artiphys, who has also watched the scene, looks from Xena to the exiting Palatine with a worried frown before covertly trailing him off as...

...Salmoneus takes a deep breath and tries again.

SALMONEUS

Okay, ladies... From the top...

CUT TO:

18 INT. CASTLE - XENA'S ROOM - DAY

18

ON GABRIELLE as she stares in outrage.

GABRIELLE

It's sabotage!

PULL BACK and WIDEN to reveal... Xena in her blonde wig,  
wearing a hopelessly dowdy formal gown.

XENA

Gabrielle, it's just a bad dress.

(CONTINUED)

18 CONTINUED:

18

GABRIELLE

Bad?! Xena -- chiffon is bad,  
chartreuse is bad. That dress, it's a  
disaster! You can't wear it in public!

XENA

Calm down. Look, if it really bothers  
you, I'll take care of it, okay?

And reaching into a nearby fruit basket, Xena withdraws a  
small knife. Turning to a mirror, her eyes never leave her  
reflection as --

XENA WIELDS THE KNIFE AT WARP SPEED -- slashing, slicing,  
slitting, ripping, cutting, shredding the dress in a BLUR OF  
MOVEMENT while --

Gabrielle looks on in amazement until...

...Xena stands poised in a daring dress whose design flaunts  
tradition to enhance her own unique, exotic beauty.

PAGEANT MATRON (O.S.)

You're pretty good with a knife...

Xena and Gabrielle turn to find her standing in the doorway.

PAGEANT MATRON

(eyeing Xena; suspiciously)  
...for a beauty contestant, that is.

Instantly playing Miss Amphipolis, Xena smiles modestly.

XENA

I have many skills.

CUT TO:

19 EXT. BEACH - PLATFORM WITH RUNWAY - DAY

19

Looking like provocative butterflies in their colorful  
gowns, the beauty contestants walk the runway, accompanied  
by Salmoneus' commentary which he reads from a scroll as we  
INTERCUT him, the contestants, and the crowd.

SALMONEUS

...And next we have Miss Skiros...

(CONTINUED)

19 CONTINUED:

19

The diminutive beauty glides down the runway, confidently.

SALMONEUS

(reading from scroll)

As cool as the marble her country's  
known for, Miss Skiros' hobbies include  
music, exotic dancing, and sacrificing  
to the gods. Her favorite deity:

(smirking)

...Aphrodite. Ladies and gentlemen,  
let's have a big hand for Miss Skiros.

Reaching the end of the runway, Miss Skiros locks eyes with  
her sponsor, the Regent of Skiros, who returns her gaze  
coolly, withholding approval until she wins. Smile  
thinning, Miss Skiros moves off as:

SALMONEUS

...Next up is Miss Amphipolis...

Every man's fantasy in tousled blonde hair, spike heels, and  
her 'cutaway' dress, Xena starts down the runway as:

SALMONEUS

(reading from scroll)

A country girl at heart, Miss  
Amphipolis enjoys the simple things in  
life: weaving tapestries, making  
candles, and doing volunteer work with  
her local Hestian Virgins.

(a take; then)

People, let's give it up for the  
angelic Miss Amphipolis.

Xena poses at the end of the runway and the crowd goes wild.  
But as she pivots and heads back to the platform:

PALATINE OF PARNASSUS (O.S.)

(shouts from crowd)

Wait! Hold everything!

Rising, he overrides the crowd which quiets to hear him.

PALATINE OF PARNASSUS

(motioning to platform)

That woman -- she's not a contestant!  
That's Xena, Warrior Princess!!

Instantly, the Doge of Messini is up, followed by the Regent  
of Skiros, each of them drawing their swords as they shout:

DOGE OF MESSINI

She's a hired mercenary!

(CONTINUED)

19 CONTINUED: 2

19

REGENT OF SKIROS  
It's a breach of the peace!

PALATINE OF PARNASSUS  
This means war!

As the crowd reacts, and Gabrielle and Salmoneus look  
anxious, HOLD on Xena's growing dismay.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

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ACT THREE

FADE IN:

20 EXT. BEACH - PLATFORM WITH RUNWAY - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

20

The leaders stand on the brink of war as the Palatine urges:

PALATINE OF PARNASSUS  
Arrest her! Arrest the Warrior  
Princess!

But as Xena starts to speak, a figure behind her shouts:

MISS ARTIPHYS (O.S.)  
Honey, I'm no princess...

ANGLE - MISS ARTIPHYS

Dressed in Xena's warrior outfit, he struts center stage and strikes a pose.

MISS ARTIPHYS  
...I'm a Queen!

There is a beat. Then the crowd bursts into APPLAUSE. With a wink to Xena, Miss Artiphys hits the runway while the leaders, somewhat abashed, resume their seats. Relieved, Salmoneus keeps things moving.

SALMONEUS  
Actually, folks, this lanky beauty is Miss Artiphys, the last of our contestants whose interests include archery, breeding horses, and knowing the complete score to every musical ever composed.  
(presenting:)  
Folks, put 'em together for Miss Artiphys!

Basking in the APPLAUSE, Miss Artiphys blows a kiss, then struts back to the stage as... Salmoneus crosses to take a scroll from the Judges.

SALMONEUS  
(displaying scroll)  
People -- people, please! I have here the judges' preliminary decision.

As the crowd QUIETS, Salmoneus unrolls the scroll.

SALMONEUS  
Ladies, when I read your names will you please step forward?  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

20 CONTINUED:

20

SALMONEUS (cont'd)  
(reading from scroll)  
The five finalists for the crown of  
Miss Known World are: Miss Messini...  
(as the surprised Miss  
Messini comes forward)  
...Miss Skiros...  
(as Miss Skiros steps up  
confidently)  
...Miss Parnassus...  
(as she joins them; looking  
relieved)  
...Miss Artiphys...  
(as he nearly faints; then  
joins them)  
...and last, but not least...  
(almost afraid to look;  
then, vastly relieved)  
...Miss Amphipolis!

Smiling, Xena joins the others while...

IN THE AUDIENCE

Gabrielle goes nuts: clapping, whistling, pumping her arm  
and shouting "Yes!" as the other sponsors stare at her,  
surprised. Noting their looks, she gets a grip as...

SALMONEUS  
There they are, folks. The finalists  
for the crown of Miss Known World!

The crowd APPLAUDS as the other contestants break ranks and  
rush to hug the finalists. Surrounded, Xena finds herself  
face-to-face with Miss Artiphys who eyes her warmly.

XENA  
How did you -- Why would you --

Placing a finger to Xena's lips, Miss Artiphys silences her.

MISS ARTIPHYS  
Guess we've both got our secrets.  
(hugs her; whispering)  
Thanks for keeping mine.

Then, pulling back, he smiles and turns away as Gabrielle  
arrives, distracting Xena with a hug of her own, while:

SALMONEUS  
(exhorts the crowd)  
Okay, folks, now don't forget to come  
to the theatre for the final round:  
the talent competition!

(CONTINUED)



20 CONTINUED: 2

20

Hearing his words, Xena's smile fades.

CUT TO:

21 INT. CASTLE - XENA'S ROOM - DAY

21

Gabrielle paces, brainstorming for the talent event, while Xena mulls their sabotage problem.

GABRIELLE

I still don't see why you won't sing.  
You'd be a shoo-in if you did.

XENA

I told you, I sing when I'm moved, when there's something behind it. It's not about performing.

GABRIELLE

Okay, fine. As a bard and a fellow creative artist, I can accept that. Which just leaves one question:  
(exploding impatiently)  
What can you do?

XENA

I don't know. But finding out who's sabotaging things would be a start. If they strike again, someone could get killed.

GABRIELLE

Yeah -- you. Whoever's doing it wants to see one of those three warlord girls get picked to start a war, right? Well, how better than to --  
(Karate chops at Xena)

-- you.

But instead of being warned, Xena grins.

XENA

Thanks, Gabrielle. You just gave me an idea.

GABRIELLE

About how to catch whoever's doing this?

XENA

No. About what to do for my talent.

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED:

21

Thrown, Gabrielle blinks. But before she can speak, a KEY sounds in the door and the Pageant Matron enters, clearly surprised to see them.

PAGEANT MATRON

What're you doing here? That is...

(to Xena)

I thought you'd be rehearsing for the talent event...

(to Gabrielle)

...And aren't you supposed to be at the meeting?

GABRIELLE

What meeting?

CUT TO:

22 INT. CASTLE - GREAT HALL - DAY

22

All three leaders confront Lord Clairon.

PALATINE OF PARNASSUS

I was made to look like a fool!

DOGE OF MESSINI

A fairly simple task.

REGENT OF SKIROS

You should talk.

LORD CLAIRON

Gentlemen, please... This isn't solving the problem.

GABRIELLE (O.S.)

He's right.

Turning, the men see Gabrielle crossing to join them.

GABRIELLE

That stunt Miss Artiphys pulled only showed how on the edge things are. It was a joke, for Zeus' sake. Nothing to call out the troops for.

PALATINE OF PARNASSUS

Maybe not. But what about everything else our girls have been through?

(eyeing the Regent;  
suspiciously)

...At least, most of our girls.

The Regent returns his gaze coolly.

(CONTINUED)

22 CONTINUED:

22

REGENT OF SKIROS  
Can I help it if mine's lucky?

PALATINE OF PARNASSUS  
I'm beginning to think maybe you can.

DOGE OF MESSINI  
Yeah... Funny how nothing's happened  
to your contestant... yet.

The Regent's eyes turn ice cold.

REGENT OF SKIROS  
She gets so much as a hangnail, I won't  
wait for the judges, I'll make my own  
declaration...  
(eyeing them all)  
...and it'll be war.

Turning, he exits. Reacting, the Palatine growls:

PALATINE OF PARNASSUS  
That goes double for me.

And he goes, too. Lord Clairon frowns, looking anxious.

LORD CLAIRON  
I'd better up security at the stage.

Exiting, he leaves the Doge with Gabrielle who looks irked.

GABRIELLE  
Now look what you did.

DOGE OF MESSINI  
Me?!

GABRIELLE  
Threatening Miss Skiros like that.  
Why is it with you three, it's always  
threats or ultimatums? You're here to  
celebrate the peace, to show how well  
you work together. So, why not just  
shut up and do it?

Exasperated, she exits, too... leaving the Doge nonplussed.

CUT TO:

23 EXT. WOODS ABOVE BEACH #2 - DAY

23

Gripping a set of nunchukas, or small swords, or a staff, or saber (whatever her physical condition permits), Xena puts on a blinding display of martial artistry: slashing, slicing, spinning, and twirling the weapon in a BLUR OF MOTION. Halting, she shrugs.

XENA

It's not Euripides, but it'll do.

She starts off when she hears a covert SOUND, and stops. Tracking it, she comes upon...

MISS MESSINI

sitting beside her harp, crying. Fearing she's the victim of another attack, Xena hurries to her.

XENA

Miss Messini -- what is it? Are you all right? What's happened?

Startled, the redhead jumps, then quickly dries her tears.

MISS MESSINI

Nothing! I'm fine. Really. Just a little something in my eyes, is all.

XENA

(dubious)

I see.

(then; playing the airhead she thinks all beauty contestants are)

Guess we're all a little keyed up wondering who's gonna win, huh?

MISS MESSINI

No. I mean, no offense. If you really care about this contest, that's fine.

But I can't help it...

(tears welling)

...I think it's a crock.

XENA

(thrown)

You do?

MISS MESSINI

We all do. Well, except you. But then, you're not from around here. You don't know how stupid something like this seems when you've been through a war where every day was a struggle just to survive.

(CONTINUED)

23 CONTINUED:

23

XENA

But if that's how you all feel, then why are you here?

MISS MESSINI

(shrugs)

Different reasons. Miss Parnassus made a deal. If she wins, the Palatine will give her village extra food this coming winter. For Miss Skiros, the war was terrible, and the memories...

(trails off; then)

She wants to get away, so she's using this pageant to do it.

XENA

And what about you? Why'd you enter?

MISS MESSINI

I didn't. My boyfr-- I mean, my sponsor entered me. I guess I could've said no. But it seemed to mean so much to him, I couldn't hurt his feelings.

XENA

What about your feelings? Don't they count?

MISS MESSINI

They never have before. It's like he only sees my outside, and thinks I'm some sort of trophy or something. He doesn't see me as a person.

(shrugs)

But then, I think a lot of people make that mistake, don't you?

Realizing she's been guilty of the same thing, Xena nods.

XENA

I know they do.

(then)

But there's no reason you can't change that. Just tell him how you feel. You're entitled.

MISS MESSINI

You think so?

XENA

I know it. ...And so should you.

Off Miss Messini's thoughtful face...

CUT TO:

24 INT. THEATRE - DAY

24

The empty stage, which has a short runway, appears deserted... except for the SOUND of someone SAWING WOOD.

CUT TO:

25 INT. CASTLE - CORRIDOR - DAY

25

Miss Skiros is squinting through Xena's keyhole when:

XENA (O.S.)  
(whispers)  
What's she doing?

MISS SKIROS  
(glued to keyhole)  
I don't know. I can't see anyth--

She stops, realizing it's Xena. As ANGLE WIDENS to include them both, the women lock eyes. Then Xena extends her hand.

XENA  
Good luck.

MISS SKIROS  
(ignoring her hand)  
I make my own luck.

XENA  
Then you don't need a beauty pageant to change it.

Thrown, Miss Skiros moves off as Gabrielle runs up.

GABRIELLE  
There you are! Come on! They've pushed up the talent event. It's already started.

CUT TO:

26 INT. THEATRE - STAGE - DAY

26

ON A HARP whose strings are being caressed by the dimpled, but talentless, hands of... Miss Messini. She concludes with an off-key FLOURISH that earns a SPATTERING OF APPLAUSE led by her sponsor, the Doge of Messini.

Palming some earplugs, Salmoneus takes the stage.

SALMONEUS  
Thank you, Miss Messini, for that lovely rendition of...  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

26 CONTINUED:

26

SALMONEUS (cont'd)  
(at a loss)  
...the song you just played.  
(with a flourish)  
Miss Messini, Ladies and Gentlemen.

IN THE WINGS

Lord Clairon motions Salmoneus to speed things up.

SALMONEUS  
And now, prepare to be amazed and  
amused by the comic repartee of Miss  
Parnassus and her wooden friend, Bobo!

With another flourish, Salmoneus retires backstage as Miss  
Parnassus comes on carrying her dummy whose gerryrigged  
condition is clearly visible as she settles him on her arm.

MISS PARNASSUS  
(very nervous)  
Hello, everyone, I'm Miss Parnassus,  
and this is my little pal, Bobo.  
(to dummy)  
Say hello to the people, Bobo.  
(through clenched teeth;  
moving dummy's mouth)  
Hair-row.

The dummy's jaw falls open and won't close. ON Miss  
Parnassus' dilemma...

CUT TO:

27 INT. THEATRE - BACKSTAGE - DAY

27

As Salmoneus turns away from watching Miss Parnassus bomb,  
Xena and Gabrielle rush up to him.

SALMONEUS  
Thank the gods! You've gotta stop with  
the close calls. My heart can't take  
it, let alone my profit margin.

Xena and Gabrielle trade looks. But before they can speak,  
Salmoneus signals for silence as he looks O.S. to:

THE STAGE

where Miss Parnassus is struggling through the end of her  
routine with Bobo whose broken jaw remains open.

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED:

27

MISS PARNASSUS

Well, that's it, folks.

(to dummy)

Say good-bye to the nice people, Bobo.

(through clenched teeth)

Guh-vie, erryoddy.

She waves the dummy's arm... which breaks. As she reacts...

SALMONEUS

(comes on stage; forcing a  
big smile)

Okay, "erryoddy" -- let's hear it for  
Miss Parnassus and Bobo!

As the flustered brunette bows with Bobo in her arms, his head falls off. Scooping it up, she flees the stage. Reacting, Salmoneus launches into his next intro.

SALMONEUS

Our next finalist, Miss Artiphys, is here to dazzle us with her rhythmic ribbons. So, let's welcome her with a big hand. Miss Artiphys, folks!

Leading the round of APPLAUSE, Salmoneus exits past Miss Artiphys who takes the stage, ribbons flying as his MUSIC starts up and he swirls into his act. Meanwhile...

BACKSTAGE

Salmoneus rejoins Xena and Gabrielle.

XENA

Any trouble so far?

SALMONEUS

(frowning towards stage)

Nothing a hook wouldn't solve. But if you mean danger, not yet.

GABRIELLE

Maybe we've scared off whoever's trying to get to these girls.

XENA

Let's just hope he hasn't switched to targeting warlords.

As the others react, Miss Artiphys' O.S. MUSIC ENDS. Hearing that, Salmoneus quickly heads for the stage, passing Miss Artiphys who goes by, entangled in ribbons.

ON STAGE

(CONTINUED)



27 CONTINUED: 2

27

Salmoneus joins in the dying APPLAUSE. Then:

SALMONEUS

Our next contestant, Miss Skiros, has an act that's sure to be a real 'charmer.' Lords and ladies, peasants and peons, join me in giving a great big welcome to Miss Skiros!

Carrying a musical pipe and covered basket, Miss Skiros comes on stage as Salmoneus goes...

BACKSTAGE

to join Xena and Gabrielle.

XENA

Why the rush on this event?

SALMONEUS

Don't ask me.

(nods towards the wings)

He's the one who ordered it.

Xena looks to see... Lord Clairon avidly watching:

THE STAGE

where Miss Skiros puts her basket down, opens it, and starts to play her pipe, leaping and swaying as...

AN ENORMOUS KING COBRA SNAKE rises slowly from the basket!

Reacting, Xena and Gabrielle watch, oblivious to...

...THE WOODEN BEAM above the stage which has been sawed nearly through. As it breaks more and more with Miss Skiros' leaping, HOLD ON this impending disaster, as we...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

28 INT. THEATRE - DAY

28

As we RESUME ACTION, Xena looks from the COBRA to... Lord Clairon whose fixed stare has shifted from the stage. Following it, Xena looks up to see --

-- THE SABOTAGED BEAM, getting worse with each leap Miss Skiros makes!

Instantly springing into ACTION, Xena does a rapid SERIES of flips, rolls, and somersaults onto the stage where --

Miss Skiros is finishing her act, directly below the beam.

Seeing Xena burst onto the stage, the pageant's COMBO looks surprised, then quickly segues into MUSIC that accompanies her acrobatic moves which take her past:

THE SNAKE who's upset by Xena's moves, spreads his hood, and strikes! As Xena dodges the snake...

IN THE AUDIENCE, the Doge, Regent, and Palatine see something's wrong and rise, hands on their swords, while...

ON STAGE, the snake strikes again! Eluding it, Xena tumbles to Miss Skiros whom she scoops from harm's way as:

The beam comes crashing down!

BACKSTAGE, Gabrielle and Salmoneus barely have time to react before the dust clears, revealing...

...Xena, poised atop the fallen beam, wearing the COBRA across her shoulders!!! All eyes on her, she strikes a pose as if this was all part of her act.

IN THE AUDIENCE, which explodes with APPLAUSE, all three leaders look impressed while...

IN THE WINGS, Lord Clairon looks amazed... as do Salmoneus and Gabrielle. But the most surprised person of all is...

...Miss Skiros, safe and sound at the stage's edge, staring at Xena incredulously.

DISSOLVE TO:

29 INT. THEATRE - BACKSTAGE - DAY

29

Gabrielle talks with Salmoneus who is fuming.

(CONTINUED)

29 CONTINUED:

29

SALMONEUS

How could she go walking on the point  
now? Doesn't she know how dangerous  
that could be? Especially alone!

INTERCUT - CLOSE ON THE DOGE OF MESSINI

being hit from behind, and knocked cold.

BACK TO SALMONEUS AND GABRIELLE

GABRIELLE

There weren't any Guards around to go  
with her. Besides, she'll be fine.

INTERCUT - CLOSE ON THE PALATINE OF PARNASSUS

being clubbed from behind, and knocked senseless.

BACK TO SALMONEUS AND GABRIELLE

GABRIELLE

And the good news is, she's a cinch to  
win. That means this whole threat of  
war will be over.

INTERCUT - CLOSE ON THE REGENT OF SKIROS

being bashed from behind, and knocked out.

BACK TO SALMONEUS AND GABRIELLE

SALMONEUS

But if she's not here, and one of those  
other three gets it, we're back to  
square one.

GABRIELLE

Don't worry. No one else even knows  
she's up at the point.

And taking his arm, Gabrielle leads him off. There's a  
BEAT. Then the Pageant Matron emerges from behind some  
flats where she's been eavesdropping. Frowning, she quickly  
hurries off.

CUT TO:

30 EXT. ROCKY POINT ABOVE BEACH #1 - DAY

30

Still dressed as Miss Amphipolis, Xena appears lost in  
thought when she hears a SOUND and turns to see...

(CONTINUED)

30 CONTINUED:

30

LORD CLAIRON

(approaching)

Miss Amphipolis? I'm Lord Clairon.  
Congratulations. I'd stake my life the  
judges'll pick you as the winner.

XENA

Really? You're very kind to say so.

LORD CLAIRON

Not at all. In fact...

(withdrawing a dagger)

...kindness has nothing to do with it.  
I said I'd stake my life but, in truth,  
I'm staking yours.

He starts toward her. Looking nervous, Xena backs toward  
some rocks.

XENA

What do you mean? What're you doing?

LORD CLAIRON

You wouldn't understand. You weren't  
here for the war when our neutrality  
made this country rich.

XENA

You made a profit off death and  
suffering?

LORD CLAIRON

Let's just say, we filled a need. Then  
peace came, and good times were gone.  
That's why we need another war, to  
bring back prosperity.

(resumes stalking her)

...And that's why you have to die.

XENA

(loud and distinct)

So, you're the one who's been  
sabotaging the pageant.

LORD CLAIRON

Can you think of a better way to get  
those fools fighting again without  
arousing suspicion?

XENA

Matter of fact, I can't. But why don't  
we ask the "fools" themselves?

And moving quickly, she disappears around the rocks. In hot  
pursuit, Lord Clairon rushes after her...

(CONTINUED)

30 CONTINUED: 2

30

BEHIND THE ROCKS

where he suddenly halts, staring to see... the Doge of Messini, the Regent of Skiros, and the Palatine of Parnassus -- gagged and tied together, back-to-back-to-back.

XENA

Finally knocked some sense into them, and kept them quiet long enough to hear you confess.

LORD CLAIRON

(thrown)

But how did you --

XENA

Know it was you? Only the guy who rigged it would have looked up at that beam. And as for the security Gabrielle said you were adding, we couldn't find a Guard anywhere.

LORD CLAIRON

(smiles thinly)

You surprise me. I had no idea a beauty contestant could be more than the sum of her well-assembled parts.

XENA

(smiles; ironic)

Neither did I.

And in that instant, Lord Clairon seizes Xena, pressing his dagger to her throat.

LORD CLAIRON

Now be smart, and maybe I won't have to disassemble you.

XENA

Trust me, you don't want to do this.

LORD CLAIRON

On the contrary...

(pressing dagger closer)

...I'm looking forward to it.

XENA

(shrugs; she tried)

If you say so...

And slamming her elbow in his gut, she conks his head as he bends double, sending Lord Clairon sprawling to the ground.

(CONTINUED)

30 CONTINUED: 3

30

XENA  
Having a good time?

In answer, Lord Clairon jumps up and charges. Sidestepping him, Xena lands a kick that decks him again.

XENA  
You're right, this is sorta fun.

Undeterred, Lord Clairon rises, drops his dagger, and draws his sword. Reacting, the Palatine, Regent, and Doge struggle to free themselves, but to no avail.

Attacking, Lord Clairon forces Xena to counter with moves that send her blonde wig flying -- releasing her raven hair, and leaving no doubt she is:

DOGE  
(thru gag)  
Xena --!

PALATINE  
(thru gag)  
Xena --!

REGENT  
(thru gag)  
Xena --!

Having dropped his milquetoast facade, Lord Clairon fights hard. But in the end, he's no match for Xena who knocks him cold as Gabrielle comes running up.

GABRIELLE  
Xena! I mean, Miss Amphi...  
(taking in scene)  
...polis.

XENA  
It's okay, Gabrielle.  
(freeing leaders)  
I think we all know who's who now.

GABRIELLE  
Not quite. The judges have voted.  
They're ready to crown a winner.

CUT TO:

31 INT. THEATRE - STAGE - DAY

31

Flanked by the other contestants, Miss Messini, Miss Skiros, Miss Artiphys, and Miss Parnassus look tense as Salmoneus takes a sealed scroll from the Judges, and moves center stage. The crowd QUIETS. Stalling, Salmoneus looks for Xena as he announces:

(CONTINUED)

31 CONTINUED:

31

SALMONEUS

I hold in my hand the final results of  
the first --

(aside to himself)

-- but one hopes not the last -- Miss  
Known World pageant.

(still no Xena)

Of course, if for some reason the  
winner is unable to perform her  
duties...

(loud)

...like she isn't here...

(waits; nothing)

...then the crown goes to the first  
runner-up, and so on down the line.

(loud again; desperate)

Is that understood?

XENA (O.S.)

Perfectly.

Reacting, Salmoneus turns, surprised to see... Xena striding  
through the crowd toward the stage, sans her blonde wig.  
Thrown, the crowd BUZZES in confusion.

SALMONEUS

Xena!

(realizing his slip; quickly  
demanding)

What have you done with Miss  
Amphipolis?

XENA

She's withdrawn from the pageant.

(turning to finalists)

She told me she learned a lot from all  
of you.

(then; to Gabrielle)

But she feels it's time she moved on.

Returning Xena's gaze, Gabrielle smiles, nodding agreement.

SALMONEUS

But she can't! I have the ballot right  
here.

(unscrolling it fast)

See? She won. She can't quit now!

XENA

(steely look)

She just did.

(CONTINUED)

31 CONTINUED: 2

31

SALMONEUS

Right!

(scanning scroll)

So, moving to the first runner-up, I see the crown goes to --

MISS SKIROS (O.S.)

Wait!

All look as Miss Skiros steps forward.

MISS SKIROS

I quit, too.

REGENT OF SKIROS (O.S.)

What?!

As he stands, Miss Skiros eyes him levelly.

MISS SKIROS

That's right. I thought I needed this crown to get away from a lot of bad...

(hesitates, then; eyeing

Xena; wryly)

...luck. Turns out all I need is myself... and maybe someone to remind me of that, occasionally.

As she and Xena hold a look, Salmoneus plunges ahead, anxious not to lose momentum.

SALMONEUS

Okay, then moving right along...

(scanning scroll)

...I see our winner is --

MISS MESSINI

(blurting out)

Wait! Me, too. I quit, too.

SALMONEUS

(reacting)

What is it, catching?

DOGE OF MESSINI

(rising in crowd)

You heard her. She wants to quit.

(hand on his sword)

You got a problem with that?

As Miss Messini stares, thunderstruck by his change in attitude, we glimpse Gabrielle hiding a pleased smile.

(CONTINUED)



31 CONTINUED: 3

31

SALMONEUS

(gulps)

No, sir. Not me. Uh-uh. No problem.  
Especially since...

(crossing to Miss Parnassus)

...I think we have a winner right  
here --

MISS PARNASSUS

(with difficulty)

Then think again.

Outraged, the Palatine leaps to his feet.

PALATINE OF PARNASSUS

We had a deal! You put yourself before  
your family, your village? You'd let  
them starve?

MISS PARNASSUS

(passionately)

No! I won't "let" them starve. I'll  
help them plant, and plow, and harvest  
with all my strength, year after year,  
until we've gotten through this.

(then; finding a quiet  
strength)

But to give away my pride... my  
dignity... for one winter's food...  
Where's the good in that?

As the Palatine frowns, unable to answer, Xena eyes the  
women with warm admiration while Salmoneus desperately tries  
to salvage what's left of the pageant.

SALMONEUS

She's got a point, folks. Which means  
our winner has to be none other  
than --

A THRILLED SCREAM bursts from Miss Artiphys as Salmoneus  
turns to him and, lunging for the tiara in his hands, Miss  
Artiphys eagerly puts it on. Relieved, Salmoneus hands him  
the roses, too, whispering gratefully:

SALMONEUS

Thanks. You really saved my assets.  
(beaming thankfully)  
You're something else, y'know that?

MISS ARTIPHYS

You have no idea.

Oblivious, Salmoneus turns to the crowd.

(CONTINUED)

31 CONTINUED: 4

31

SALMONEUS

Ladies and Gentlemen, taking her  
inaugural stroll down the catwalk, may  
I present to you: Miss Known World!

Waving, throwing kisses, smiling through her tears, Miss  
Artiphys walks the runway, accompanied by Salmoneus and the  
combo.

SALMONEUS

(singing)

"Stand back, let her through;  
She's the one girl who'll do;  
She's Miss Known World.  
A beauty so mythic;  
Her figure's terrific;  
She's Miss Known World.  
A face and a form so sublime,  
She's a legend within her own time.  
Make way, let her pass.  
Take a look at that ass!  
She's Miss Known World!"

As Miss Artiphys finishes center stage, the other  
contestants rush in for congratulatory hugs. But it's Xena  
Miss Artiphys wants and, seeing her, he grabs her and  
plants a big, happy kiss smack on her lips!

Reacting, Gabrielle stares at the sight of Xena kissing Miss  
Artiphys!

But as Miss Artiphys draws back, he winks a thanks to Xena  
whose grin assures him no thanks are needed. Then, taking  
his arm, Xena raises it in triumph. And ON this image --  
half-"Rocky," half-"Thelma and Louise" -- we...

FADE OUT.

THE END