



"THE PRICE"

by

Steven L. Sears

**SEASON 2
EPISODE #20**

Prod. #V0217

XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS

"The Price"

Written by
Steven L. Sears

Directed by
Oley Sassone

Revised Pages: 10-11, 20, 22, 31-33, 37-39

Executive Producers
Sam Raimi & Robert Tapert

SHOOTING DRAFT
Jan. 23, 1997
Rev. Jan. 27, 1997 — Pink
Rev. Feb. 05, 1997 — Blue

XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS

"The Price"

CAST LIST

XENA
GABRIELLE

MENTICLES	(MEN-ti-cleez)
MERCER	(MER-ser)
GALIPAN	(GAL-i-pan)
GAREL	(ga-RELL)
ATHENIAN #1	
ATHENIAN #2	
DROWNED ATHENIAN	
WOUNDED ATHENIAN	
FATIGUED ATHENIAN	
GASHED ATHENIAN	
G'KUG	(ge-KUGG)
HORDEMASTER*	

Referred to in Dialog:

Calmai	(CAL-my)
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* (non-speaking)

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XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS

"The Price"

SET LIST

INTERIORS:

HOSPITAL
COMMAND HUT
SUPPLY ROOM

EXTERIORS:

RIVERBANK
SMALL INLET
RIVER
WATERFALL
OUTSIDE KRALL - NEAR WAGON/GATE
 - NEAR WALL
 - BATTLEFIELD
KRAAL - BATTLEMENTS
 - COURTYARD

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XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS

"The Price"

CHRONOLOGY

DAY 1
NIGHT 1

SCENES # 1 - 35
SCENES #36 - 40

DAY 2

SCENES #41 - 44

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XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS

"The Price"

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 EXT. RIVERBANK - DAY - ON GROUND 1

A bare patch of earth. We HOLD ON IT for a second as we HEAR:

XENA'S VOICE
Watch it, Gabrielle! He's moving to your right!

GABRIELLE'S VOICE
I'm on it! I see him!

XENA'S VOICE
Let me take him!

GABRIELLE'S VOICE
No, Xena! This one's mine! He's lunch!

We HEAR Gabrielle GRUNT and... a FISH drops into frame. He flops a bit, still trying to dislodge the line in his mouth.

WIDER - INCLUDE XENA AND GABRIELLE

Gabrielle stands above her defeated enemy with a satisfied look on her face. Xena, in the background, holds a stick in one hand and a line in the other. Argo stands, saddle off, near some trees.

GABRIELLE
(to fish)
Well fought, friend fish. But know that I don't do this for pleasure.

XENA
Don't talk to your breakfast.

GABRIELLE
(continuing)
You go to a far, far better place.

With that, she pats her stomach. Xena smiles and whips her line into the water. Gabrielle pulls the line from her catch, walks back over to the water's edge and gently tosses her line in. Xena is flipping her line back and forth over the water like a fly fisherman. Gabrielle looks around, appreciatively.

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED:

1

GABRIELLE

This is beautiful. I wonder if we're the first people here?

XENA

The fish seem to think so. They practically jump onto shore...

She snags a fish and pulls it in.

GABRIELLE

I have this theory about fish.

XENA

The one about them being cold, wet and slimy? I've heard it.

At that moment, Gabrielle snags one. She starts pulling it through the reeds toward shore as she continues:

GABRIELLE

No. I think we all once came from the ocean. And the fish are just people waiting for that magic moment when they can reach out and touch the land...

As she leans forward to grab up her catch, AN ARM BREAKS THE WATER AND GRABS HER WRIST! She SCREAMS and falls back, pulling the soggy body from the river. Xena runs to her. The DROWNED ATHENIAN reaches up toward Gabrielle.

DROWNED ATHENIAN

My garrison... surrounded...! We were trying to get help when... The Horde!

And with that, he collapses, dead.

GABRIELLE

What did he mean? What "Horde"?

Xena rolls the man over. Embedded in his chest is an ornate ax, small with a "finger hook" on the handle (this aids in flipping the ax when thrown). Xena reacts. She stands.

XENA

Get your things... hurry!

GABRIELLE

What...? What's going --

XENA

Now! Don't argue with me!

Gabrielle rushes over to her pack, next to the river. As she approaches it, her eyes widen...

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED: 2

1

GABRIELLE

Xena!

Xena turns to see Gabrielle looking into the river. Bodies are floating by, axes buried in several of them.

XENA

No...

Gabrielle grabs up her staff as Xena runs to Argo and pulls the bridle off her. Xena gives a LOUD WHISTLE and Argo takes off, galloping into the woods.

XENA

We'd never make it out on Argo. Too big of a target.

GABRIELLE

(scared)

What is going on, Xena?

XENA

We're surrounded. That's the way they work. Those men were Athenian Infantry. They must have been ambushed.

GABRIELLE

Surrounded by who!?!

A SCREAM answers their question as they turn and see two canoes pull up on the bank, two men in each, HOWLING LIKE WOLVES. Even before the canoes hit the shore, the men are leaping out of them onto the riverbank. These men are huge. Their semi-naked bodies are covered with ornate markings; tattoos burned into their bodies. Every small bit of clothing on their bodies was made from a living creature. And each has an ax dangling from each hip on a belt. Xena hasn't pulled her sword yet.

Gabrielle sets herself with her staff, but notices...

GABRIELLE

Xena...? Your sword...

XENA

Run!

GABRIELLE

Run?

Xena pushes Gabrielle toward the trees. As they turn, though, three more men emerge from the brush. One of the men is extremely impressive. If the others were huge, this one is HUGE.

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED: 3

1

Almost seven feet tall, he has scars and tattoos running the full length of his arms like his men, but much more ornate. From his colorful belt hang all sorts of nasty things, including a few bony hands, as well as Kama-like axes: two axes joined by a rope, like nunchukas. This guy, the HORDEMASTER, is obviously in charge. He motions for his men to pursue. The two men howl and race toward our heroes.

Xena pulls Gabrielle up short. The men from the river are almost upon them. Thinking quickly, Xena YELLS to Gabrielle:

XENA
Get to the canoe!

And with that, Xena launches herself at the nearest man, kicking him with both feet and sending him into the other men. They recover quickly, but Xena is already off and running, following Gabrielle to one of the canoes.

Gabrielle jumps in as Xena pushes the canoe off. They begin to paddle as axes fly into the water around them.

XENA
Pull! Harder! Harder!

Behind them, the men clamber into the other canoe and prepare to follow. Xena takes her chakram and throws.

The chakram hits a rock, ricochets, cuts a gash in the side of the other canoe, another rock, and back to Xena's hand. The men jump out of the sinking canoe.

Gabrielle puts her back into it as they move down the river.

Xena can only stare back at the shore. And, more importantly:

THE HORDEMASTER

as he stares after them. No expression on his face. Like a lion watching his prey...

XENA

looks scared. Off this, we:

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

2 EXT. SMALL INLET - DAY - ON CANOE 2

It's pulled up on the shore at the moment.

XENA'S VOICE

The first time my army went west, we
ran into the Horde...

We PULL BACK to find Xena and Gabrielle sitting nearby.
Xena still has that look of fear on her face. She holds one
of the axes and stares at it. Gabrielle sits close, concern
for her friend on her face.

XENA

I had a scouting party looking for a
pass through the mountains... they were
below us in a ravine... when they
attacked...

GABRIELLE

The Horde.

XENA

I could only watch helplessly as my men
tried to hold them off, but... they
kept coming. They were butchered. I
can still remember the howling of the
Horde... the screams of my men...

(beat)

It took most of the day to get the rest
of my army into that ravine. By then,
the Horde was gone. And my men...
nothing but bones, stripped of their
flesh... tortured as they were
skinned...

Gabrielle reacts.

GABRIELLE

But... who are they? They must want
something.

XENA

Nobody knows. Fighting one or two
would be difficult enough, but they
hunt like a pack of dogs, surrounding
their prey until they attack.

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED:

2

GABRIELLE

I've never seen you like this.

She lets it drift off. The fear she feels from Xena impressing itself on her. Xena stands and looks around, assessing their situation.

XENA

We have to get out of here.

GABRIELLE

Maybe we could just follow the river?
It's got to go somewhere.

XENA

Yes. Somewhere. But we don't know
where they are...

(then)

Gabrielle...

She pauses, not sure what to say.

GABRIELLE

What?

XENA

Things are going to get worse.
Especially what I have to do to get us
out of this.

And with that, she moves toward the canoe.

DISSOLVE TO:

3 EXT. RIVER - DAY

3

Seemingly calm and serene. A moment, before we close in on Xena and Gabrielle in the canoe. It is deadly quiet.

CLOSER - XENA AND GABRIELLE

as they paddle slowly. The only sound is the sound of the paddles in the water. The two of them keep their eyes on the shoreline. (NOTE: This should have the tension of the river scenes from "Heart of Darkness;" "Apocalypse Now" or "Aguirre; Wrath of God.")

Every now and then, Gabrielle shifts her gaze to her friend. There is something new about Xena's attitude that bothers Gabrielle. A combination of fear and something else. Something foreign to her... Play this suspense for a while until we HEAR drums in the distance. Xena takes a deep breath.

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED:

3

GABRIELLE

Xena?

Xena shakes her head to silence her. She is concentrating. Underneath the drums is another sound. A low, dull MOANING sound like the voices of Tartarus.

Then, Gabrielle sees the first body. It is draped on an "X" shaped cross mounted on the riverbank. Broken and battered, but not quite dead, it is an Athenian soldier. Gabrielle stops paddling and stares. More bodies are mounted along the bank. More broken bodies, and the vast majority of them still alive. This is the source of the moaning. And the voices are all crying "Athena..." "Mercy on us!"

The riverbanks now form a gauntlet of the dying.

GABRIELLE

Xena, we have to save them!

XENA

No! Be quiet!

Gabrielle is taken back for a second, then:

GABRIELLE

They're crying for Athena! They want someone to help them!

XENA

It's not going to be us. Those men are dead.

GABRIELLE

But we have to try!

Suddenly, another sound is heard. A "WHOOSH-WHOOSH" sound of something spinning through the air. Xena spins, pulling her paddle into the air in front of Gabrielle's face as an ax IMPALES ITSELF ON THE PADDLE.

Gabrielle's eyes go wide as Xena shakes the ax off and starts paddling. Gabrielle takes a BEAT, then puts her back into it.

AXES BEGIN TO FLY FROM THE TREES! The attackers are unseen at the moment, but the whooshing sound is incredibly LOUD as the weapons fly toward our heroes. They duck down as they paddle furiously. Most of the axes SPLASH harmlessly into the water, but a few THUNK into the side of the canoe.

GABRIELLE

Xena!

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED: 2

3

XENA
It's okay... hold on...

An ax slices through Gabrielle's paddle, leaving her with the handle.

GABRIELLE
Define "okay"! This is not okay!

Gabrielle starts grabbing the axes that are stuck in the canoe and throwing them overboard.

Up ahead, someone SPLASHES into the water. It is an Athenian. An older man, bloodied and bruised like the others, but making a desperate attempt to escape. We will call him GALIPAN.

Xena and Gabrielle see him at the same time.

GABRIELLE
We can't leave him!

Xena doesn't respond at first.

GABRIELLE
He's trying to escape!

Another BEAT, then Xena alters course, bringing the canoe closer to the shore, toward Galipan.

Horde members appear at the shore, HOWLING, throwing axes at Galipan. Two of the Horde carry a canoe, which they drop into the water and climb in.

Galipan struggles to make it to Xena's canoe, but he's too weak. He starts to sink under.

XENA
Grab him and hold on!

Gabrielle reaches out, grabbing Galipan's arms and holding on as Xena begins pulling with all her strength.

The other canoe is in pursuit.

GABRIELLE
Xena... they're catching up...

XENA
I know, Gabrielle.

GABRIELLE
I mean they are really catching up!

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED: 3

3

Actually, Xena is doing better than the Horde warriors expect. They are gaining, but barely. If Gabrielle wasn't dragging Galipan in the water, it might be more of a race. Galipan knows this.

GALIPAN
They'll catch us all! Let me go!

XENA
No!

GABRIELLE
No!

XENA
We've already got you, we're keeping you!

THE HORDE CANOE

The two men are really putting their backs into it.

XENA

stops for a moment, listening...

XENA
Wait... we've got trouble...

GABRIELLE
Excuse me? Now we have trouble?

XENA
Up ahead... a waterfall.

4 EXT. WATERFALL

4

So that we can establish this is not just a simple matter of getting wet. This would be a long drop.

BACK TO SCENE

Gabrielle looks at the canoe behind them; the Horde on the shore; and toward the SOUND of the waterfall.

GABRIELLE
(grim)
Could be worse...

Then, she looks down into the canoe and sees the water seeping in from the strained sides. She doesn't have to say it; it is worse.

THE SHORE

where the Horde warriors are running along the bank, following; waiting for Xena to turn into shore.

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED:

4

THE CANOE

Xena realizes they have no choice.

XENA

When we get close to the shore, jump in
and swim as hard as you can!

GABRIELLE

I'm not leaving you!

XENA

I can't fight them if I'm worrying
about you, Gabrielle. Do what I say!

Gabrielle nods her head. Xena starts heading to shore.

THE SHORE

The Warriors stop, realizing that she's coming in. They
prepare to throw their axes when:

MENTICLES' VOICE

Now! Attack!

Suddenly, SPEARS coming sailing through the air. The Horde
Warriors are taken by surprise as a contingent of Athenian
soldiers rise up and fire their weapons into the Horde
ranks. They are led by a young, dark-haired man named
MERCER. Mass confusion as the Horde Warriors are scattered
back into the brush.

THE CANOE

hits the bank and Xena jumps in the water, pulling Galipan
to the shore. Athenian soldiers grab up the wounded man.

MERCER

This way!

Gabrielle runs toward the safety of the men, but one of the
Horde warriors in the canoe rises up and draws back his ax,
ready to let it fly.

Xena turns and sees it. With a CRY:

XENA

Gabrielle! Down!

Gabrielle hits the dirt without question. Xena takes her
whip and snaps it as the Horde Warrior lets the ax fly.

ON THE AX

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED: 2

4

sailing through the air until the end of Xena's whip wraps around the handle.

*
*

BACK TO SCENE

*

as Xena snaps the whip back and out again (exactly as we saw her do when she was fly-fishing in the Teaser) and sends the ax right back at the Horde Warrior. It hits him solidly in the chest. He falls onto the other Warrior, who loses his paddle. The current of the river takes them toward the waterfall.

*
*
*
*
*

(CONTINUED)

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4 CONTINUED: 3

4

*

THE WATERFALL

A canoe with two occupants sails over: one dead; one soon to be dead. As it hits the rocks, we:

CUT TO:

5 EXT. OUTSIDE KRAAL - DAY

5

It's a quickly constructed fortress made up of clay; rock; logs; whatever was available. The exterior of this quickly-built fortress shows the sign of war. Bodies lying all around; sharpened spikes stuck in the ground and pointing toward the woods. Bodies of Horde Warriors dangle from the spikes and lay about the ground. The entrance to the fortress consists of a reinforced wagon that is moved aside as the Athenian contingent, along with Xena and Gabrielle, rush past the bodies and into the fort.

6 EXT. KRAAL - COURTYARD - DAY

6

The wagon moves back. Mercer orders his men:

MERCER

Take him to the hospital. Man the battlements; watch for an attack!

Xena scans the fortress. These men are all worn and weary, barely standing on their feet. Their shallow cheeks show that they have eaten little.

And the bandages on them all attest to the brutality of the attacks. Galipan gasps weakly...

GALIPAN

Mercer... They have to be stopped...
They have to be...

And, with that, he dies. A beat, then:

MERCER

Take him away. Put his body in the pit with the others.

(to Xena and Gabrielle)

The two of you, wait here.

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED:

6

Men drag Galipan away as Mercer turns to the rest of his men who are staring at him.

MERCER

I said man the walls! They could attack at any moment!

ATHENIAN #1

Who cares? We're dead anyway!

ATHENIAN #2

Yeah! What's the difference?

Mercer turns to push the men toward the battlements. Athenian #2 turns and pulls his sword on Mercer. Mercer deflects it and nails the man in the face. He drops to the ground, sobbing.

ATHENIAN #2

We're going to die, Mercer! Those things out there... They're going to kill us all!

MERCER

Pick yourself up. Get to the wall. Now.

The man stumbles to his feet and heads off. The rest of the men on the walls stare grimly at Mercer.

XENA AND GABRIELLE

Watching.

GABRIELLE

What's going on here? Are they so scared they won't listen to reason?

XENA

You can't reason with dead men, Gabrielle. And they're as dead as those men on the riverbank.

*

Off this, we:

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

7 EXT. OUTSIDE KRAAL - NEAR WALL 7

where we can see piles of wounded. Through this, we HEAR the word "Kaltaka" being cried and moaned by members of the Horde.

8 EXT. KRAAL - COURTYARD - DAY - ON BATTLEMENT 8

Gabrielle is looking out over the battlement upon the carnage. She shakes her head in disgust. Suddenly, the "whoosh-whoosh" SOUND is heard. She ducks down behind the battlement along with other soldiers as an ax comes sailing into the perimeter. She looks to the man next to her, an Athenian we'll call GAREL.

GAREL

How can we kill them if we can't even see them? *

Silence again, except for the MOANS of "Kaltaka." *

GABRIELLE

Who's Kaltaka?

GAREL

Probably their god of war. Even when they die, they call on him. "Kaltaka... Kaltaka..." Drives you crazy.

And he moves off, hunched over, until he comes to a place to sit down and rest. Gabrielle looks over to see Xena, walking the perimeter, inspecting the defenses. Every now and then she stops to test the wall, looking for breaches. Most of the soldiers watch her with vague interest. They look like fighting men, but they obviously have no fighting spirit. Gabrielle goes over to her.

GABRIELLE

You were right. These men have given up. They don't seem to care whether they live or die.

(then)

Is that what's going to happen?

A long beat, then:

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED:

8

XENA

Not without taking some of the Horde with us. If I'm going to die, I'm going to die as I am. A warrior with a sword in my hand.

She leaves Gabrielle and walks to Garel. He is lying with his back against the wall, his spear lying on the ground.

XENA

Taking a break, soldier?

GAREL

Yeah. From reality.

A few men give dry laughs.

XENA

You think you could grab your spear and get placed before they came over this wall?

GAREL

Lady, it just doesn't matter anymore. We're running out of food; we're running out of men; and we're running out of time. Those... "things" out there have us. Today, tomorrow... what's the difference?

Xena kicks the spear up with her foot and grabs it. She takes the staff end and whacks Garel on the shin. He reacts, leaning forward to grab his shin. As he does, Xena puts two fingers under his chin and, with the right pressure, forces him to his feet in extreme pain. She hands him the spear with her other hand, keeping the pressure under his chin.

XENA

Take this spear. You're going to get up on that wall and you're going to do your job. What they might do to you is nothing compared to what I'll do.

Another Athenian soldier comes to the aid of his comrade, rushing Xena from behind. Another comes toward her from the front. Without looking, she backhands the man behind her and front kicks the one in front of her. A "whoosh-whoosh" SOUND is heard. Xena reacts and GRABS THE AX in midflight. The soldiers stare.

GAREL

Who are you?

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED: 2

8

XENA

I'm Xena.

Suddenly, they all freeze. This is a different matter. Xena releases the pressure on Garel.

GAREL

Xena... The same Xena of Corinth? The Warrior Princess at Calmai? The one who defeated Callisto?

XENA

(wry)

You've heard of me.

General MURMURS throughout the soldiers as the news is spread. "It's Xena!", "Finally, we have hope," "She'll know how to kill them!" and so on. The mood becomes electric.

GAREL

What do you think we should do?

Xena scans the hopeful faces. Then:

XENA

First of all, place your weapons where you can get them. Stand at the wall, not under it or near it. Every fourth man is to take a break, the two men aside will cover for him. If anything moves between here and the trees, kill it.

GABRIELLE

Wait! What if it's a friend?

*

XENA

We've got no friends right now. Get used to it.

(louder)

We're not going to let those bastards take the elite of Athens, are we?

There is cheering.

GAREL

Tell us what to do, Xena.

XENA

Do? We're going to kill them all!

The soldiers go crazy, waving their weapons and YELLING in support. Gabrielle reacts to her friend's apparent bloodlust.

9 INT. COMMAND HUT - ON MERCER AND MENTICLES

9

They are looking over a map when they HEAR the cheering from the wall.

MENTICLES

What in the world...?

Off their puzzled looks, we:

CUT TO:

10 INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

10

This is a mess just slightly worse than "Doctor In The House." Mostly because nobody seems to be caring for the wounded. There is a mix of refugees and soldiers here. We spend a moment MOVING AMONG THE CASUALTIES until Gabrielle walks in and looks about. The MOANING is similar to what we heard on the riverbank... random moans and cries for "Athena." A WOUNDED ATHENIAN sits on a step, holding his shattered arm and rocking back and forth in his pain. Gabrielle goes to him. Next to him are a couple of other Athenians, wounded but not crippled.

GABRIELLE

Where are the doctors?

WOUNDED ATHENIAN

Look in the burial pit. We lost them in the first attack.

GABRIELLE

You mean there's no one?

WOUNDED ATHENIAN

No one except the goddess of mercy.

GABRIELLE

There is no goddess of mercy.

WOUNDED ATHENIAN

You got it.

Gabrielle scans the room. Then, with a deep breath...

GABRIELLE

Here we go again... Okay. You three just became nurses. We're going to separate the walking wounded from the people who can't move. I want this area cleaned of dirty bandages. We'll boil them later. Which means we'll need some wood.

*

(CONTINUED)

10 CONTINUED:

10

They look at her blankly. She claps her hands.

GABRIELLE
Come on! Let's get moving!

Responding to the authority in her voice, the men force themselves to their feet.

CUT TO:

11 EXT. KRAAL - COURTYARD - DAY

11

The men move around with more purpose now, transporting equipment, preparing for battle. Xena walks among them, urging them on, encouraging them.

XENA
We'll use sharpened spikes along the wall! We'll hang them up on the battlements!

Menticles and Mercer walk up and see what's going on.

MERCER
Amazing...

MENTICLES
What do you think you're doing?

XENA
Taking command. Someone has to.

One of the Athenians passes by with sharpened sticks.

ATHENIAN #2
Isn't it great, Commander? Xena's fighting with us! We'll teach those barbarians something now!

He heads off. Menticles and Mercer look at Xena with a new respect.

MERCER
Xena...!

XENA
Let's not make a big deal about it. I want to talk to both of you. Inside.

Xena heads into their makeshift hut. Menticles looks at Mercer.

MENTICLES
She's giving orders to us!

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED:

11

MERCER

Yes, she is.

And he follows her. A beat, then Menticles follows.

12 INT. COMMAND HUT - DAY

12

Xena is already unfolding a map. Mercer enters, followed by Menticles.

XENA

I didn't want to talk out there, but the situation is next to hopeless, you know that?

MENTICLES

As long as there are Athenian soldiers holding swords, we will never...

MERCER

Give it a rest, Menticles. We're not fooling anyone here.

(to Xena)

We figure we've got three days of supplies. Two days of arrows. If we're lucky, we can make the water stretch to six days.

XENA

The Horde will stay there until you come out looking for food. We've got to wear them down. If we can force their hand, they'll waste men trying to get in.

MENTICLES

Out of the question.

*

XENA

You have maybe one more day before you get mass desertions. The men are demoralized and beaten. They want to do something! Anything to make them feel as if they have a chance. And until reinforcements come, we need that.

MERCER

There are no reinforcements. General Galipan sent out a force to try and break through.

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED:

12

XENA

The soldiers we found along the river.
Where is Galipan? I almost fought
against him at Corinth. I'd like to
meet him.

MENTICLES

You already did. You brought him in.

A beat. Then:

MENTICLES

That means you're in command.
(off their looks)

I'm not stupid. I saw the men out
there. Xena's the only chance we've
got.

Off this, we:

CUT TO:

13 EXT. KRAAL - COURTYARD - DAY - ON DEAD BODY

13

being dragged across the ground. PULL BACK to see two men
dragging the body toward the wall. Already at the wall are
men placing dead bodies in an upright position at strategic
points. One of the bodies is Galipan's. From the Horde
vantage, it's going to look like the walls have been
reinforced.

Everywhere there is activity. Men moving about, setting
weapons at the ready, enthusiastic about the coming battles.

Xena walks into this. Menticles is behind her. She says
nothing, but points him toward the wall where the dead
bodies are being placed.

XENA

Make sure half the bodies go to the
south wall. If we're going to fool
them they have to believe we have
reinforcements!

Menticles nods. Xena continues on to:

14 INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

14

It looks in much better shape now. Gabrielle has made some
improvement to the situation. She's busy bandaging the arm
of a man. The cloth she uses as an apron is covered with
blood. Xena walks in.

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED:

14

GABRIELLE

Xena! Over here!

Xena walks over to her as she stands.

GABRIELLE

It took a bit, but I think I have it sorted out.

XENA

Which ones are going to die?

A little abrupt, but Gabrielle recovers.

GABRIELLE

Hopefully, none of them. But I have the more serious cases over there. The walking wounded have all become nurses.

XENA'S VOICE

If they can do that, they can carry weapons.

(calling out)

Those of you who can walk, report to Mercer! Outside!

GABRIELLE

Wait!

(then)

Xena... I need them here. I can't do all this myself. Someone has to feed all these men and get the water...

XENA

Get a water bag for yourself, but no food and water for seriously wounded. Only for the men who can fight.

*

GABRIELLE

(shocked)

But they'll die without water!

XENA

It won't matter if we can't defend the compound.

GABRIELLE

You expect me to decide who lives and who...

XENA

I want men outside. You figure it out, Gabrielle. And let Menticles know when they die. We'll need them on the wall.

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED: 2

14

And she exits. Gabrielle stands there, then turns to face the group. An obviously forgone conclusion raises his bloody hand up toward her, as if pleading.

GABRIELLE

I can't... I can't...

And that's where she leaves it, as we:

CUT TO:

15 EXT. OUTSIDE KRAAL - NEAR WAGON - DAY

15

As the wagon is moved to the side. A BEAT, then Menticles exits with his men. Moving cautiously, they head toward the woods.

They are almost there when "whooshing" begins and the first ax flies through the air. One of the soldiers falls.

And the HOWLING Horde attacks. Not the entire army, but a small group. From all sides. The soldiers pull their swords and defend themselves, but they are slowly being driven back to the wagon, which is slowly being pushed back into place. And, then, the soldiers panic and race toward the wagon. As they try to get back into the Kraal, the Horde SCREAMS with delight and presses the attack, eager to get inside the Kraal.

16 EXT. KRAAL - COURTYARD - DAY

16

The soldiers push past the wagon followed by the Horde! The barbarians SCREAM as they hack away at the soldiers inside. The soldiers defend themselves until:

XENA'S VOICE

Now!

Two things happen at once: From every barrel or barricade, Athenians stand up with arrows notched and bows pulled tight. At the same time, all the soldiers currently in the courtyard DROP TO THE GROUND and COVER THEIR BACKS WITH THEIR SHIELDS.

The Horde has a moment of surprise before the arrows fly. It's quick. Half of the Horde drop immediately. The rest run for the gate. Standing up from the top of the wagon, more Athenians including Xena. Arrows fly. More Horde members drop. And it is quiet.

ANGLE - GABRIELLE

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED:

16

as she steps from the hospital (wearing her water bag over her shoulder) and sees the bodies on the ground. Xena is still standing in the wagon, a determined smile on her face.

*
*

The Athenians CHEER and begin to chant "Xena! Xena! Xena!" Mercer and Menticles join in. Xena stands there, like the Warrior Princess she once was. And the look on her face is scary.

Suddenly, one of the Horde LEAPS TO HIS FEET and runs out the gate, arms pumping as he heads desperately toward the safety of the woods. Xena turns, notches an arrow, aims at his unprotected back and...

GABRIELLE

Xena!

...the arrow flies. And finds it's target. The Horde warrior drops solidly to the earth, dead. And the Athenians CHEER as if at a sporting event. Slapping each other on the back and waving their swords. Xena turns back and her eyes find:

GABRIELLE

who has a shocked look on her face. Off this, we:

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

17 EXT. OUTSIDE KRAAL - DAY 17

We PAN along the bodies lying on the ground. Again, we HEAR the groans and plaintive calls of "Kaltaka!" from the dying Horde members.

18 EXT. KRAAL - BATTLEMENT - DAY 18

There is a new energy with the Athenians. The men are not as defeatist as they stand vigil, watching the woods. Xena walks down the battlement, acknowledging the occasional "Xena!" salute she gets from the men. Mercer comes up to her.

MERCER

Nothing. Absolutely nothing. It's as if they just left. *

XENA

No. They're out there. We just gave them a bloody nose. They won't be stupid enough to enter the camp again.

MERCER

We can't stay like this forever.

XENA

No, we can't. We've got to get reinforcements. Make your rounds and meet me back in the command hut.

And he walks away. She takes a BEAT, then heads to:

19 INT. HOSPITAL - DAY 19

Gabrielle watches as Garel and another soldier walk through the area. Gabrielle is near the back, tending to someone. Garel inspects one of the men on the floor, then he and his soldier begin to drag the man toward the door.

GABRIELLE

Wait a minute!

She walks straight to them.

GAREL

Orders from Xena. *

(CONTINUED)

19 CONTINUED:

19

GABRIELLE

I don't care. While this man still
breathes, he's in my...

She kneels to check the man. Then, her head drops as she realizes he's dead. Garel and the soldier drag the man outside. Gabrielle sits, trying not to be overwhelmed by it all.

Xena walks in and looks around. She starts toward Gabrielle when she notices a FATIGUED ATHENIAN. He has a gash down his arm. *

XENA

You. Can you walk? *

FATIGUED ATHENIAN

Yes. It's just my arm... *

XENA

But you can still carry a sword in the other. Get to the wall. *

FATIGUED ATHENIAN

Very well. If I have to die anyway... *

XENA

At least you'll die like a warrior! *

He struggles to his feet and heads outside. *

Xena turns. All eyes are on her. Dead silent. Gabrielle is nowhere to be seen.

20 INT. SUPPLY ROOM - DAY

20

Xena enters. Gabrielle is sitting on some crates, her knees pulled up to her chest. She has a scared look in her eyes.

XENA

I told you to ration the food to the men outside.

(CONTINUED)

20 CONTINUED:

20

GABRIELLE

What's going on, Xena? Has Ares gotten to you again?

XENA

Ares has nothing to do with it. I'm trying to save our skins. Those "things" outside will kill us all.

GABRIELLE

But this is insane! You're letting these men die... You shot that man in the back!

XENA

He was inside our battlements! He saw our defenses. I couldn't risk it.

Gabrielle turns her head away.

GABRIELLE

I can't believe this... you're scaring me.

XENA

This is total war! What did you expect? There are no good choices, only lesser degrees of evil.

GABRIELLE

There is a choice. To stop fighting.

XENA

They aren't like us. There is nothing about them that we can or should understand.

GABRIELLE

Have we tried?

XENA

I know them, Gabrielle. There is nothing.

(then)

Make sure those rations get to the men on the wall.

And she turns and exits.

CUT TO:

21 INT. COMMAND HUT - DAY

21

Xena enters. Menticles is already here, examining a short stick that has a small clay jug hanging from one end. The clay jug has a strip of cloth hanging from it. (NOTE: this is a smoke bomb.)

MENTICLES

We made these the way you said. But I don't know what good they'll do. If they can't see, we can't see. *

She doesn't answer. Mercer enters. Xena refers to a map.

XENA

Trying to get out of this valley without reinforcements would be suicide. We're going to do something about that tonight.

She traces a line along the map.

MERCER

You plan to swim the river and climb down the cliffs?

MENTICLES

Hold on. You can't leave! The men would lose hope if you disappeared.

XENA

You're right. As much as I hate to admit it, I have to stay here. *

(then)

Mercer will go. Get ready.

The two men salute. Xena doesn't return it and they both leave. And with that, Xena exits.

22 EXT. KRAAL - COURTYARD - DAY

22

As Xena comes out, we see some soldiers handing out the clay jugs to other men. They hold the jugs by the stick. Gabrielle stands in the hospital doorway, looking concerned as Xena goes over to Mercer. He has removed all his armor.

XENA

Are you ready?

MERCER

I'll be in the water in seconds.

XENA

No! Move north, through the woods. Don't go for the river until you're past the trees.

MERCER

That'll take too long.

XENA

It won't matter, if you get yourself killed. Head north.

He nods his head reluctantly. Xena moves to the center of the courtyard and looks around. There are soldiers standing near the gate, armed and ready to fight. Xena gives the signal to the men with the clay jugs. They light the cloth strips and swing the jugs in an arc, then throw them over the battlements.

ANGLE - BATTLEFIELD - ON CLAY JUGS

as the jugs hit the ground and break open. A powder spills out and begins burning, creating a huge smoke cloud which covers the battlefield.

23 EXT. KRAAL - COURTYARD - DAY

23

Almost immediately, axes come flying into the Kraal. The Horde doesn't know what's happening, but they don't like it.

XENA

Open the gate!

The soldiers near the gate move the wagon. With a final look to Xena, Mercer slips outside and escapes into the smoke.

The sound of the Horde's HOWLING is heard and gets louder. From the battlements, Garel SCREAMS.

GAREL

Here they come!

(CONTINUED)

23 CONTINUED: 23

The Athenians on the wall begin to pour a hail of arrows into the smoke, aiming everywhere. In return, axes fly into the Kraal, hitting the random soldier. But, as soon as one drops, another takes his place at the wall and continues.

24 EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY - COVERED WITH SMOKE 24

Mercer appears in the smoke as figures rush past him. He pauses, then picks his route and moves. Meanwhile:

25 EXT. KRAAL - COURTYARD - DAY 25

The battle begins to dwindle. The HOWLING of the Horde recedes as they retreat into the woods.

MENTICLES

Cease fire! Save your arrows!

The soldiers CHEER and YELL at the Horde from the battlements. This is another solid victory as far as they are concerned. Gabrielle walks into the courtyard, looking about. She turns to Menticles.

GABRIELLE

Wait... where's Xena?

They all look around.

CUT TO:

26 EXT. OUTSIDE KRAAL - BATTLEFIELD - DAY - ON BODIES 26

The haze of the smoke is still thick. We PAN along the bodies of the dead and dying. Some of the men are still CALLING "Kaltaka." One of the bodies moves, and is turned over. Underneath it, we find Xena, covered in the blood and slime of this killing field. She crawls slowly on the ground, going from Horde body to Horde body as if looking for something. Finally, she stops at one Horde warrior. Satisfied, she starts to drag him away...

27 EXT. KRAAL - COURTYARD - DAY 27

Everyone still stands as we left them, wondering about Xena, when we hear from a soldier on the battlement:

ATHENIAN #1

Open the gate! It's Xena!

They quickly open the gate, let Xena in, and shut it. She carries the Horde warrior on her shoulder.

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED:

27

She turns to a soldier.

XENA
Take him to the hut. *

The soldier takes the Horde warrior away. Xena turns to Menticles.

XENA
It will be dark soon. Post double guards and make sure those torches stay lit.

Menticles nods and heads off. Gabrielle walks up.

GABRIELLE
Are you all right?
(then)
I don't get it. You go out of your way to tell me this is war, and then you rescue one of them? He's not even hurt very badly.

XENA
I didn't rescue him, Gabrielle. We need information. And he's going to give it to us one way or another.

And she turns and goes into the command hut. Gabrielle takes a BEAT, then, realizing, she follows.

28 INT. COMMAND HUT - DAY

28

The Horde warrior (we'll call him G'KUG) is on his knees. Menticles and the soldier stand in front of him. G'Kug stares straight ahead. Xena enters.

XENA
Let's try to make this simple.

Xena opens a map of the area on the ground and talks to G'Kug.

XENA
I know you don't understand me, but I want to make some things clear.
(referring to map)
This is where we are.

Of course, he isn't even looking at her. Without as much as a hesitation, she punches him in the side of the face. And it's not a tap, she nails him.

(CONTINUED)

28 CONTINUED:

28

GABRIELLE

Xena!

Xena shoots Gabrielle a look, then turns back to G'Kug. He is looking at her. She points to the room in general...

XENA

We... are here.

(points to map)

You...

(points to G'Kug; then to map)

Where?

He looks at the map, then to her and nods.

MENTICLES

Look... the animal understands.

Then, he stares off into the distance again.

MENTICLES

But he's not going to help. Let me try.

Menticles draws his sword. Xena stops him, then turns to Gabrielle.

XENA

Gabrielle, go outside.

GABRIELLE

No.

Gabrielle is defiant. We can see a little reaction in Xena's demeanor, but it doesn't stop her. She turns on G'Kug and gives him "the pinch."

GABRIELLE

By the gods... Xena!

MENTICLES

What'd you do?

XENA

I cut off the flow of blood to his brain. He'll be dead in moments... he knows it. He can feel his life draining away.

But G'Kug still stands resolute. Blood pours from his nose.

GABRIELLE

Xena, please... please... don't do this. It's murder!

(CONTINUED)

28 CONTINUED: 2

28

XENA
I told you, Gabrielle. It's war! Now
go back to the hospital.

GABRIELLE
Why? So I can pick out who lives and
who dies? So I can be a murderer, too?

A beat, then Xena turns her back on Gabrielle. It's pretty obvious that G'Kug is not going to give them the information they need. Another moment of suspense, then Xena quickly releases the "pinch." G'Kug drops.

MENTICLES
It's my turn.

XENA
No. If that didn't work, nothing will.
Take him to the supply room and tie
him up. *

MENTICLES
(surprised)
You mean kill him.

XENA
I mean tie him up.

She waits as Menticles and his soldier take G'Kug and exit with him, leaving Xena and Gabrielle alone.

GABRIELLE
Thank you.

Xena spins on Gabrielle with a flash of anger.

XENA
Don't you ever question my authority
or methods in front of my troops! I
said I would do whatever it takes. If
that means killing him later, I'll do
it!

GABRIELLE
Your troops...? I don't understand...

XENA
Go to the wall and listen, Gabrielle.
With their dying breath, the Horde
calls for Kaltaka, their god of war to
destroy us! I didn't choose this, but
if they want a battle to the death,
they'll get it. What part don't you
understand?

(CONTINUED)

28 CONTINUED: 3

28

GABRIELLE

You. Who are you? Where's the Xena I know?

XENA

That Xena can't save us now. If losing her is the price for saving us all, I have to pay it. This is just a part of me I didn't think I'd need anymore.

GABRIELLE

But...

XENA

Get back to work.

And Xena exits. A BEAT on a shocked and disoriented Gabrielle.

CUT TO:

29 INT. SUPPLY ROOM - DAY

29*

We find G'Kug tied to a crate.

*

GABRIELLE

comes walking into the room to get some rags. She looks lost and confused, then sees G'Kug looking at her. We play a moment of them studying each other. Then, as she starts to exit:

*

*

*

*

G'KUG

Kaltaka...

She nods her head. But he gestures with his hand.

G'KUG

Kaltaka!

She looks to where he is pointing. Her water bag.

*

GABRIELLE

Kaltaka?

He nods and points to his mouth. Gabrielle gives a DRY LAUGH.

(CONTINUED)

29 CONTINUED:

29

GABRIELLE

Kaltaka is water... Kaltaka isn't a
god! The dying men just want water!

She walks over to him and holds the bag up to his lips. As
he drinks, we see tears forming in her eyes. *

GABRIELLE

It's madness... all of this... you,
them... Xena... what's become of her...
it's not human. That's the real
price, isn't it? Losing your humanity.

He stops drinking and can only look at her, not
understanding.

GABRIELLE

You were right, Xena. If I'm going to
die here, I'm going to die as who I
am! I'm not paying the price!

With that, she stands, and heads outside. *

30 EXT. OUTSIDE KRAAL - BATTLEFIELD - DAY

30

The remainder of the smoke casts an eerie gray on the field.
Play this for a moment, then reveal: *

GABRIELLE *

She takes a BEAT before she hears the first plaintive call
of "Kaltaka." She moves into the piles of dead and dying.
She finds a wounded man.

GABRIELLE

Kaltaka... here. Water...

She moves to another, giving him water. More and more, the
men are calling for Kaltaka. At first she doesn't notice,
but shadows move in the haze. When she does notice, she
continues her good work. Meanwhile:

31 EXT. KRAAL - COURTYARD - DAY

31

Xena is pissed at Athenian #1.

XENA

You just let her out?

(CONTINUED)

31 CONTINUED:

31

ATHENIAN #1

She said it was your order! She
sounded pretty convincing.

XENA

Get the smoke pots. Have the soldiers
on the wall prepare for battle!

And, with that, she runs up the battlement. Meanwhile:

32 EXT. OUTSIDE KRAAL - BATTLEFIELD - DAY

32

The shadows are closer. Gabrielle continues her work,
giving the wounded water until, suddenly she looks up to see
two Horde Warriors standing directly in front of her! And
these are not wounded men!

33 EXT. KRAAL - BATTLEMENT - DAY

33

On Xena and Menticles reacting.

MENTICLES

They've got her.

Off Xena's reaction, we:

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

34 EXT. OUTSIDE KRAAL - BATTLEFIELD - DAY 34

Gabrielle is kneeling next to a wounded Horde warrior with the two unwounded warriors facing her. Then:

INTERCUT:

35 EXT. KRAAL - BATTLEMENT - DAY 35

Xena and Menticles stand with archers.

MENTICLES
Prepare to fire...!

XENA
Wait!

Menticles looks down to see:

BATTLEFIELD

As Gabrielle stands up, the Horde Warriors move forward... and pick up the wounded warrior. (NOTE: These warriors are unarmed.) Gabrielle looks around and in the clearing mist we can see that there are unarmed Horde warriors all over the place, retrieving their wounded.

BATTLEMENT

XENA
(realizing)
They're retrieving their wounded... *

MENTICLES
What? That's impossible! They must be trying to kill our wounded. *

XENA
No. They saw Gabrielle and they must have thought it was a truce.
(then)
I want some volunteers to go out there and get your men. Unarmed volunteers.

MENTICLES
That's suicide.

XENA
Do it. *

He salutes and moves away. Xena turns to the archers.

(CONTINUED)

35 CONTINUED: 2

35

XENA

Keep your eye on Gabrielle. If I give you the word, shoot anything near her.

*

BATTLEFIELD

The Athenian volunteers come out of the Kraal and cautiously move into the area. The Horde warriors barely give them a look. They're busy with their own men. The Athenians quickly begin to gather their wounded.

Xena comes up to Gabrielle and motions for her to keep silent. Gabrielle nods and, as she starts to move toward Xena, she looks down to see...

GABRIELLE

Oh, no...

Mercer! He's bloody and battered. Gabrielle kneels next to him. He opens his eyes and sees them.

MERCER

Gabrielle... Xena, you were right... I should have gone north.

Gabrielle looks to Xena.

GABRIELLE

There's no one coming to save us. Looks like you've got your battle to the death after all.

Xena doesn't respond.

TIME DISSOLVE:

36 EXT. KRAAL - VARIOUS SHOTS - NIGHT

36

This is to establish the peacefulness of the evening.

VARIOUS SHOTS - THE ATHENIAN SOLDIERS

waiting on the battlements. They look grim, tired and without hope. One or two are close to tears as they stare out at the underbrush, waiting for the eventual attack.

37 EXT. KRAAL - COURTYARD - NIGHT

37

A few of the refugees have built an altar to Athena and are praying for safe passage from this world.

MENTICLES

walks the grounds, occasionally speaking to a dispirited soldier, trying to keep the faith. Meanwhile:

38 INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

38

Gabrielle is tending to Mercer, who is bandaged and splinted. A BEAT, then a Gashed Athenian comes in. Behind him are two men with crates.

GASHED ATHENIAN

Xena told me to report to you.

GABRIELLE

Aren't you needed on the wall?

GASHED ATHENIAN

She ordered me to help you with the wounded. And she wanted this food to get in here.

Gabrielle takes a moment to smile slightly. Then:

GABRIELLE

Put the food over there and start feeding these men. You two, get some rags and start boiling them.

And everyone goes to work, as we go to:

39 INT. COMMAND HUT - NIGHT

39*

Xena sits on the table and stares... thoughtful... concentrating. A BEAT, then Menticles and Garel bring G'kug into the room.

*
*
*

Xena stands.

*

XENA

Cut him loose.

MENTICLES

Are you out of your mind?

XENA

Do it. And get his weapon. Now!

Menticles gives a nod to Garel, who goes off to get G'Kug's ax. Menticles pulls his sword, hesitates over G'Kug and, finally, slashes the ropes. G'Kug stands, a little wary. Garel walks up with the ax and hands it to Xena.

(CONTINUED)

39 CONTINUED:

39

XENA

Now, stand back.

Xena tosses the ax at G'Kug's feet. He takes a BEAT, then quickly grabs it up, holding it at his side, and turns toward Menticles, ready to defend himself. Xena pulls her sword.

MENTICLES

What are you trying to prove?

XENA

That we have something in common.

She takes a step forward. G'Kug reacts strangely. He shakes his head, nodding toward Menticles.

XENA

He doesn't want to fight me. He wants to fight you... or anyone else.

GAREL

Is it any wonder? I've seen you fight.

XENA

No, he's not afraid to die. It's because he thinks I'm in charge. And he's not worthy of my sword. Watch.

Xena raises her sword. G'Kug immediately drops to one knee, bending his head and moving the hair from his neck.

MENTICLES

Amazing...

Xena steps back. G'Kug stands again. This time Xena points to herself, then points outside. She repeats the gesture, this time adding a sword swipe to emphasize. Slowly, G'Kug nods his head. *

XENA

(to Menticles)

This I understand. Take him to the gate. Then release him. *

A shocked BEAT, then Menticles gestures to Garel and he takes G'Kug out. *

XENA

It may not make sense to us, Menticles, but they have a code. Understanding that... we might just have a chance.

Off this, we:

DISSOLVE TO:

40 INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT 40*

Things look much better for the wounded. Gabrielle is working on an unconscious man, putting bandages on his head wound. *

Xena come in and kneels next to Gabrielle, watching her. Then: *

XENA
(re: water)
Kaltaka. That turned out to be the key.

Gabrielle continues working. *

XENA
When you went out there, they thought it was a truce to retrieve the wounded. That means that they're not just human... they're humane. They have a code of honor. And, that's something I can understand.
(then)
I let my fear and hatred blind me to everything.

GABRIELLE
Sometimes the past can do that. If I had been through what you've been through...

XENA
No, not you. You understand hatred, but you've never given into it. You've never had to become that person that I was. You don't know how much I love that about you.

Gabrielle smiles. *

XENA
Take care of these wounded. I need to get ready for tomorrow. *

Gabrielle moves away. Xena continues her practice.

TIME DISSOLVE:

41 EXT. SUN - DAY 41

To establish morning.

42 EXT. OUTSIDE KRAAL - BATTLEFIELD - DAY 42

Xena stands at the open gate next to Gabrielle. Menticles calls to her from the battlement.

(CONTINUED)

42 CONTINUED:

42

MENTICLES

Xena! He's coming!

Xena nods and starts to walk. Gabrielle stops her.

GABRIELLE

Do you have to go out there? Maybe now we can talk to them.

XENA

Peace and understanding doesn't happen overnight. Right now, this is the only communication we both understand. A warrior's code of honor. And if I defeat their leader... I defeat their army.

(beat)

It's not much... It's not the perfect answer. But it's all we have.

Xena walks a few steps, then turns.

XENA

Gabrielle... If this doesn't work, get to the river --

GABRIELLE

No. Do what you have to do. But when it's over... we're going to walk down that road together. Just like we always have and like we always will.

Xena smiles and touches Gabrielle on the cheek. Then, she turns and walks away, with Gabrielle watching.

CUT TO:

43 EXT. OUTSIDE KRAAL - BATTLEFIELD - DAY

43

As Xena comes out of the gate and examines her enemy.

THE HORDEMASTER

He looks even more impressive than when we first saw him. Possibly the foot and a half height advantage over Xena has something to do with it.

INTERCUT:

44 EXT. BATTLEMENT - DAY

44

Gabrielle and Menticles watch.

(CONTINUED)

44 CONTINUED:

44

BATTLEFIELD

We now see the Horde standing near the treeline, watching. Xena moves toward the Hordemaster. He stands with his Kamas at the ready. A BEAT as they appraise each other. Then, with no warning or preamble, the Hordemaster attacks, swinging the Kamas. Xena barely has time to respond, pulling her sword and blocking the first blow. The Kama completes it's arc as the other blade comes slashing toward her. She dodges it but catches the tip of the blade on the side of her head. She rolls with the impact and comes up, blood dripping from under her hair. There is no time to react as the Hordemaster charges again. This time, Xena brings her sword up to parry, but he is ready for it. He drops to one knee and sends a foot into her midsection. Xena is launched backwards into a tree. She hits solidly and drops.

The Hordemaster swings one of the axes at her head. She drops and rolls as the blade slices into the tree, lodging there momentarily. The Hordemaster pulls on it as Xena takes the opening and swings her sword overhead. With his free hand, the Hordemaster CATCHES THE BLADE in his FIST. Even Xena reacts in shock as blood runs down his wrist. But he holds it firm as he stares into her eyes.

As he continues to hold the blade, his other hand pulls the ax free and he swings the Kamas around in preparation for the kill.

Much to his surprise, Xena reaches out, focusing on the center of the cord between the two axes and CATCHES THE KAMAS CORD. This time the Hordemaster looks amazed. For a moment it's a standoff. Xena does a flip and kicks him in the midsection, launching herself backwards.

Again, they are separated. This time, though, Xena holds the Kamas; the Hordemaster holds the sword. He looks at it, a bit confused. It's obvious this is not his weapon of choice. He gives a couple of clumsy swings. He looks at Xena holding the Kamas helplessly. He realizes that she is just as inept with them as he is with the sword. With a YELL, he holds the sword high and charges.

His realization was just what Xena wanted. With the flair of an expert, she dodges to the side while swinging the Kamas in an arc that knocks the sword from the Hordemaster's grip. At the same time, Xena does an ankle sweep and the Hordemaster stumbles. Xena is on his back. She has a grip on his neck and head and won't let go. He flails about, trying to dislodge her; slamming himself up against tree trunks; trying to crush her. But she won't let go. And slowly, he drops to the ground. When he is on his knees, she releases him. GASPING, he reaches for the Kamas.

(CONTINUED)

44 CONTINUED: 2

44

She does a double kick, knocking the Kamas from his hand and putting a boot into his face. He flips over and lands on his back, spread-eagle and defeated.

Xena stands. She looks at the Horde standing in the woods. Then she turns and walks away. Behind her, the Hordemaster wobbles to his feet. He raises his hands toward the sky. The Horde in the woods raise their axes, preparing to throw.

BATTLEMENT

Gabrielle sees this and SCREAMS:

GABRIELLE
Xena! Watch out!

BATTLEFIELD

Xena doesn't stop; she doesn't look back.

THE HORDE

let fly with the axes.

GABRIELLE

is beside herself with fear. Why doesn't Xena react?

XENA

still walking, not looking back. In the background we HEAR the thud of axes into flesh.

THE HORDEMASTER

drops to the ground, his body covered with the axes of his men.

THE HORDE

turn their backs on the Athenians and fade into the woods.

THE GATE

It opens and the Athenian soldiers cautiously look out. Gabrielle runs out and hugs Xena.

GABRIELLE
You knew...?

XENA
I knew. One of us had to die, no matter who was the victor.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

44 CONTINUED: 3

44

XENA (cont'd)
(to Menticles)
You can send out patrols, but you won't
find them.

MENTICLES
I don't want to find them. We're
moving out.
(then)
Thank you.

As he moves away, Xena stares off into the woods.

XENA
They'll be back. Maybe not this year,
but someday.

GABRIELLE
Can anyone stop them?

XENA
Yes, Gabrielle. But it won't be
warriors. It will be people like you.
I only hope that wherever the Horde is
from... they have a Gabrielle.

*
*

Gabrielle can't reply. Xena turns and walks back toward the
Kraal. Gabrielle looks off at the woods, as we:

FADE OUT.

THE END