



"THE FURIES"

by

R.J. Stewart

SEASON 3
EPISODE #1

XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS

"The Furies"

Written by
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Directed by
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Revised Pages: 11, 18 (w/header denoting new production number)

Executive Producers
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SHOOTING DRAFT
March 06, 1997
Rev. March 13, 1997 - Pink
Rev. March 24, 1997 - Blue
Rev. March 25, 1997 - Yellow
Rev. March 25, 1997 - Green
Rev. March 26, 1997 - White
Rev. March 27, 1997 - 2ndPink

XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS

"The Furies"

CAST LIST

XENA
GABRIELLE

ARES
CYRENE
ALECTO
TISIPHONE
MEGAERA
RUFINUS
LYSIS
KEEPER

(a-LECK-toe)
(tih-SIFF-on-ee)
(meh-GARE-ra)
(ROO-fin-us)

*

Referred to in Dialog:

ORESTES
ANDREAS
CLYTEMNESTRA

(or-EST-eez)
(an-DRAY-us)
(CLY-tem-ness-tra)

XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS

"The Furies"

SET LIST

INTERIORS:

HALL OF THE FURIES
TEMPLE OF THE FURIES
CYRENE'S TAVERN
CELL

EXTERIORS:

COUNTRY ROAD #1
COUNTRY ROAD #2
CAMPSITE
VILLAGE
COUNTRYSIDE
CLUSTER OF BUILDINGS
CLIFF
HILLSIDE
WOODS

Prod. #V0224 - 3/25/97 - Yellow

XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS

"The Furies"

CHRONOLOGY

DAY 1
NIGHT 1

SCENES #1 - 4
SCENES #5 - 7

DAY 2

SCENES #8 - 26A

*

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XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS

"The Furies"

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 INT. MOUNT OLYMPIAN HALL OF THE FURIES - DAY

1

THREE BEAUTIFUL but horrifying women do a hideous dance in this murky hall. Their movements are brutal, irrational, angry and dissonant. Is it a dance at all? Or rather an expression of the mad chaos that lies behind the grid of sanity we project onto the world. These are the FURIES. Their thing is madness. One of them, ALECTO, is spinning like a top and shrieking at the top of her lungs. Another, TISIPHONE, looks like she's going through convulsions, saliva-froth bubbling on her lips. The third, MEGAERA, is doing a dance so sensual I get aroused just thinking about it. Alecto comes out of her spin and suddenly leaps through the air and lands on the lap of:

*

*

ARES

who sits in the hall watching this madness. Alecto is all over him like a crazed lap dancer. She's practically inhaling his ear. She's a little too kinky even for Ares.

*

ARES

Alecto, I came here on business.

*

ALECTO

I know. Xena. You're obsessed with her.

*

ARES

Call it what you will. I think I've made an excellent case against her. I want a judgement.

(she's giving him a hickey)

Now!

She pulls back, looks at his scowling face, and steps off his lap. She turns to the other women.

ALECTO

Furies!

*

Tisiphone and Megaera come out of their trance-like states and focus on Alecto.

*

ALECTO

Ares, God of War, has need of our judgement.

*

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED:

1

ALECTO (cont'd)
You've all heard his complaint against
the Warrior Princess. How do you
judge?

*

Tisiphone sticks her thumb in the air for a moment and then thrusts it toward the ground. Megaera moves her thumb before her eye, parallel to the ground, watching it with fascinated wonder, as if she has no idea which way it will point. Then it points to the ground.

Alecto turns to Ares, walks up to him, places her upward pointing thumb on his lips and then points it toward the ground.

*

ALECTO
It's unanimous. The Furies have found
Xena guilty of all charges.

*

Ares' eyes gleam with anticipation.

ARES
And the sentence?

ALECTO
(to the other Furies)
What will it be? Persecution or
madness?

*

ARES
How about persecution and madness?

Alecto turns back to Ares and eyes him with a glint of admiration. This is one dedicated dude.

*

ALECTO
It's highly unusual to do both.

*

Ares reaches out and draws her to him.

ARES
I'll be most appreciative.

She stares down into his ruggedly handsome face.

ALECTO
It shall be done.

*

She leaps back with a BLOODCURDLING SCREECH. She holds her arms up toward the roof of the hall.

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED: 2

1

ALECTO

Hear me, gods and goddesses. Xena, Warrior Princess, has committed a terrible crime. She will be punished by persecution...

(looks towards Ares)
...and madness.

Off Ares' content smile, we:

CUT TO:

2 EXT. COUNTRY ROAD #1 - DAY

2

Xena and Gabrielle walk along, leading Argo.

GABRIELLE

Come on. What are you afraid of?

XENA

I'm not afraid of anything. I just don't gamble.

GABRIELLE

You don't gamble? Who are we kidding here? Everyday of your life is a roll of the dice.

XENA

Well, what would we bet?

GABRIELLE

(thinks)
If I win, you cook breakfast for me tomorrow.

XENA

You'd call that winning?

GABRIELLE

Good point. If I win, you have to collect the firewood for a week.

*

XENA

And if I win, you have to make me those big dumplings with the red stuff on top.

*

*

*

GABRIELLE

It's a deal.
(points)
To that cypress up there.

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED:

2

XENA

All right. How big a lead did you say? *

GABRIELLE

Just three strides.

Gabrielle takes three strides forward. She gets into a racing stance. She throws a glance back at Xena who looks ready in a much more casual way.

GABRIELLE

On your mark, get set...

Gabrielle, in a barefaced display of cheating, starts to run.

GABRIELLE

Go!

THE FOOT RACE

Gabrielle speeds toward the cypress. Xena strolls casually after her. Gabrielle is a few strides from the finish line. *

ON XENA

She goes into a series of forward, leaping somersaults. *

ON GABRIELLE

She is about to pass the cypress. She holds her arms up in victory.

GABRIELLE

I wi--

Xena lands in front of her, wearing a smile. Gabrielle brings up short to keep from running into her friend.

GABRIELLE

That's cheating!

Xena draws her sword and assumes a battle stance.

GABRIELLE

All right, cheating is a bit of an overstatement.

Then she notices that Xena is looking past her. Gabrielle spins around to see:

TEN TOUGH WARRIORS

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED: 2

2

have come out of the clump of trees and stand in the middle of the road. They all have their weapons drawn. Their leader's name is RUFINUS.

XENA

Hey, boys. Out for a morning hunt?

RUFINUS

Yeah. And you're the quarry, Xena.

XENA

And why's that?

RUFINUS

There's a bounty on your head and we plan to collect it.

XENA

A bounty? Look, guys, there're less painful ways to make a dinar. But if you insist, give it your best shot.

They charge and the fight is on. Xena is banging heads and Gabrielle is taking on one of the ruffians with her staff.

INTERCUT WITH:

3 INT. MOUNT OLYMPIAN HALL OF THE FURIES - DAY

3

The Furies are continuing their frenzied dance. Ares is watching with keen eyes as Alecto does a chant. (Keep in mind this is intercut with the fight.)

*

ALECTO

*

Oh, demons of the soul, over Xena's reason roll, replace sanity's sweet illusion with the poison of delusion, to Xena's head do not be kind, for it's your job to make her lose her mind.

COUNTRY ROAD

Xena is in midfight when suddenly she steps back and shakes her head as if she's trying to clear the cobwebs out. WE CLOSE IN ON HER FACE. She looks confused for a moment and then a little smile creeps onto her face as if she just thought of a good joke.

DIFFERENT ANGLE

Xena and Gabrielle are surrounded by the bad guys, who are cautiously looking for an opening.

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED:

3

Xena tosses her sword aside, leaps into the midst of the warriors and proceeds to apply a series of Three Stooges blows to them. First there's the nose pinch and pull. Then the multiple slaps to one of their faces before she flattens him with a head butt. She catches one of their hands as it flies toward her. She then kisses it gently, before she flips him to the ground.

XENA

Are we having fun yet?

Gabrielle is pummeling a guy with her staff, but can't help throwing looks Xena's way.

Xena lands a classic three face Stooges slap to a trio of attackers sending them sprawling. She then turns to one last warrior. He holds a sword.

She kicks his sword out of his hands. It lands a few feet away.

XENA

Wait! That's not what I meant.

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED: 2

3

She picks up the sword and hands it back to the warrior.

XENA
Let's do that again.

Gabrielle has polished off her opponent and can't believe what's going on. The warrior attacks Xena again. Xena kicks his sword out of his hand. It flies into the air and lands on his head, knocking him out.

XENA
That's what I had in mind.

She turns to Gabrielle, wearing a big grin.

XENA
I love the smell of warrior sweat in the morning.

Off Gabrielle's confused look, we:

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

4 EXT. COUNTRY ROAD #1 - DAY 4

ON GABRIELLE

as she watches something in disbelief.

ON XENA

She's busy playing with her chakram. She's spinning it on one finger. Then she flips it up and balances it on her nose, flips it in the air over her head, catches it on her foot and flips it onto her head like a crown.

XENA

This thing is great. And to think I've only been using it for a weapon.

GABRIELLE

I'm worried. You're acting very strangely. *

XENA

Don't be ridiculous.
(to Argo)
Let's go, Argo.

She mounts the horse so that she's sitting backwards in the saddle.

XENA

I like this. I can see where I've been.

GABRIELLE

Xena! That warrior said something about a bounty on your head. Don't you want to know what that's all about?

XENA

Love to.
(leans over and whispers to Gabrielle)
But I don't think he'll tell me.

GABRIELLE

Maybe you should put the pinch on him.

XENA

Good idea.

She does a somersault off the horse and strolls over to Rufinus, who is just recuperating from the punch.

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED:

4

Xena puts the pinch on him and squats down next to him.

XENA
I've just cut off the flow of blood to your brain and other pertinent parts of your body, if you get my drift. Now, tell me. How old were you when you lost your virginity?

GABRIELLE
Xena.

XENA
This is important.

RUFINUS
I was fourteen.

XENA
Oh, come on.

RUFINUS
All right. I was nineteen.

XENA
There you go, Gabrielle. I knew I'd get the truth out of him.
(to Rufinus)
What was the first thing you ever stole?

Rufinus is dying. Gabrielle squats down next to Rufinus.

GABRIELLE
Quick. Tell us who put the bounty on Xena's head.

RUFINUS
The priest.

GABRIELLE
What priest?

RUFINUS
At the temple of the Furies.

GABRIELLE
(stunned)
The Furies!

XENA
(to Rufinus)
What's the capital of Assyria?

Rufinus is almost dead.

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED: 2

4

GABRIELLE

Xena. I want you to take the pinch off him right now.

XENA

All right. But there's still lots I think he could tell us.

She takes the pinch off. Then she stands and starts walking away.

GABRIELLE

Xena, where are you going?

XENA

I'm going to get something to eat. I'm starving.

GABRIELLE

What about the Furies?

XENA

They can get their own food.

Gabrielle runs up to Xena and grabs her by the arm.

GABRIELLE

Listen to me. Something terrible has happened to you. You're not thinking clearly.

XENA

You know how I am when I miss breakfast.

GABRIELLE

No! I'm afraid the Furies are punishing you for something. Legend has it that they punish with persecution... that would explain the bounty... and... madness.

XENA

Madness? What are you talking about, Gabrielle? I've never felt better.

GABRIELLE

Let's just go to the temple of the Furies and find out what's going on.

XENA

No.

GABRIELLE

Please, Xena. For me. Do it for me.

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED: 3

4

Xena eyes Gabrielle for a moment. Then, with an indifferent shrug:

XENA

All right.

With a LAUGH, she somersaults onto Argo, lands backwards in the saddle and gallops away. A very concerned Gabrielle follows.

5 EXT. CAMPSITE - NIGHT

5

Gabrielle paces around the fire, talking to Xena.

GABRIELLE

There are several crimes the Furies punish with madness.

*
*

XENA (O.C.)

Why are you telling me this? I'm not crazy.

Gabrielle turns to look at:

XENA

who is standing by a vine-covered tree. She's wrapped the vines around her neck, head, and breastplate. She has daisies stuck in her hair.

XENA

How do you like this look?

GABRIELLE

We've got a real problem here, Xena.

XENA

Don't panic. I could lose the daisies.

She starts pulling the daisies out of her hair.

GABRIELLE

I'm not talking about your new look. I'm talking about what's going on inside your head.

XENA

You don't want to go there. It's terrifying.

GABRIELLE

Doesn't that concern you?

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED:

5

XENA
Nah. It's my dark side acting up
again. It'll pass.

*
*
*

GABRIELLE
No, Xena. This is different. There's
something else going on.

*
*
*

Xena rips off a leafy branch and puts it on top of her
head.

*
*

XENA
What do you think of this? Too leafy?

*
*

GABRIELLE
(with a sigh)
Why don't you try to get some sleep.

*
*

XENA
All right.

She lies down by the fire. She closes her eyes and fakes
snoring. Gabrielle sits down by the fire, her back against
a tree. She's very concerned.

*

CUT TO:

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6 EXT. CAMPSITE - NIGHT - LATER

6

Gabrielle has dosed off against the tree. Suddenly, she stirs and looks around. Xena is gone.

GABRIELLE

Xena!

She leaps to her feet. She spots something that alarms her.

XENA'S CLOTHES

Leather, arm rings, undergarment, all of it, hanging from the tree branch that Xena was hanging from earlier.

ON GABRIELLE

She takes off into the night in search of her friend.

CUT TO:

7 EXT. VILLAGE - NIGHT

7

Xena stands in the middle of the village square - buck naked. She's holding a torch and on her face is an expression of self-righteous fury. Villagers cower in the shadows.

XENA

You'll pay for what you've done here.
I'm going to level this place.

ON GABRIELLE

She runs into the village and spots Xena.

GABRIELLE

Xena.

Xena turns to her.

GABRIELLE

What are you doing?

XENA

I'm delivering the wrath of justice, Gabrielle. These people are evil incarnate. I'm going to torch the place.

GABRIELLE

Why? What have they done?

XENA

What have they done? Can't you see?

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED:

7

Gabrielle looks around and sees only a crummy little town.

XENA

The women and children! They've
crucified the women and children! *

GABRIELLE

The only women and children in trouble
here are the ones afraid of you. *

Xena looks around.

XENA'S POV - THE VILLAGE

Now, in a moment of lucidity, Xena sees the village for what it is. The frightened face of a LITTLE BOY can be seen peering out of the shadows. We lock in on the face for a moment.

ON XENA

She stares at the child for a moment. She looks down at her naked body and then looks at the torch as if its light were the source of her confusion. She throws it into a horse trough and turns back to Gabrielle. There is fear of something horrible in Xena's eyes.

XENA

I'm insane, aren't I, Gabrielle? *

Gabrielle grabs a blanket off a clothes line, rushes over to Xena and throws it over her shoulders.

GABRIELLE

I'm here for you. We'll get through this. We have to get to the temple of the Furies, right away. We need to find out what's going on.

XENA

The Furies. Right.

She looks around again and sees:

THE LITTLE BOY

crouching in the shadows, frightened.

ON XENA

A pained look creeps onto her face.

XENA

I'm sorry.

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED: 2

7

This sorry comes from a place deep down where the meanings are. She's apologizing to all the children she ever hurt or frightened in her life. As Gabrielle leads Xena from the village, we:

CUT TO:

8 INT. TEMPLE OF THE FURIES - DAY

8*

The temple priest, LYSIS, is in the middle of a ceremony in which he is placing a bowl of fruit on the altar. Poles at different levels jut out from the walls. Draped on them are tapestries representing different scenes of the Furies. Below and between the tapestries burn sacrificial fire-altars. Suddenly, a SPASM OF GIGGLES comes from the back of the temple. Lysis turns and frowns angrily toward the giggler.

*
*

LYSIS

Who's there?

ON XENA AND GABRIELLE

They stand inside the door. Xena has reached the "I can't stop laughing" part of insanity.

GABRIELLE

Xena, try to pull yourself together.

Xena mimics pulling herself together by jerking on her arm and legs. Then she erupts into MORE GIGGLES.

ON LYSIS

He recognizes Xena.

LYSIS

Ah, the Warrior Princess. You've heard about the bounty, I take it.

XENA

Yes, yes, yes. A price on my head.

She rushes to the altar and places her head on it.

XENA

If it's my head you want, take it, cause it's driving me cccrrraazzzyyy.

She goes into another SPASM OF LAUGHTER. Lysis seems frightened, not of Xena, but of her madness.

LYSIS

I didn't know.

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED:

8

GABRIELLE

You didn't know what?

LYSIS

The Furies have punished her with both persecution and madness. They must be appalled by her crime.

GABRIELLE

What is her crime?

LYSIS

A breach of duty that the Furies are sworn to punish.

Xena goes into absolute LAUGHING FITS as if Lysis is a standup comic.

GABRIELLE

What is it? What must she do?

LYSIS

Avenge the murder of a member of her family.

Xena suddenly springs at Lysis like a demented beast and slams him onto the altar, her hand on his throat. She isn't laughing now. Gabrielle tries to pull her off of the priest.

XENA

Anyone who says I didn't avenge my brother's death is a liar. The man who killed him died by my hands.

LYSIS

Not your brother.

XENA

Who then?

LYSIS

Your father.

Xena hops back as if hit by a two-by-four. She's very confused right now.

XENA

My father?

LYSIS

Yes. He was murdered.

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED: 2

8

Off Xena's startled face, we:

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

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ACT TWO

FADE IN:

9 INT. TEMPLE OF THE FURIES - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

9*

Xena stands thunderstruck, her tormented mind spinning. Gabrielle and Lysis watch her carefully.

XENA
Father was murdered.

GABRIELLE
(to Lysis)
By who?

LYSIS
That I don't know, but Xena's
punishment will continue until this
crime is avenged.

Xena starts spinning around as if her body is now expressing the whirling vortex that exists inside her head.

GABRIELLE
Xena, maybe you should sit down.

Suddenly, Xena bursts for the door. Gabrielle tries to stop her but Xena bulls past her and runs out into the night.

CUT TO:

10 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

10*

Xena runs through the countryside. This is a woman of action wanting desperately to solve a problem but the mad chaos in her mind prohibits her from focusing on it carefully.

XENA'S POV

as she runs. The scenery is moving, not just from her running but because she's beginning to hallucinate. A tree starts to go rubbery and lose its shape. Soon it MORPHS INTO BACCHUS.

THE MAD KALEIDOSCOPE

A series a horrifying images from shows past bombard Xena's senses.

A HARPIE

springs out of a bush.

(CONTINUED)

10 CONTINUED:

10

A CYCLOPS

morphs out of a tree.

A TITAN

is suddenly standing in front of her. You get the idea.

This entire sequence is based on meticulous research into schizophrenia and a bad trip I had in college when I dropped some purple haze. Suddenly, a rock explodes into a smirking Callisto. Xena's sword appears before us and strikes at Callisto.

GABRIELLE'S VOICE

Xena, it's me.

ON XENA AND GABRIELLE

Xena stands over Gabrielle with her sword pressed at Gabrielle's breast. Xena shakes her head as if coming out of a haze.

GABRIELLE

Xena. I'm here to help you.

Xena starts walking around Gabrielle in a circle, muttering to herself as she goes, building up to an insane rage.

XENA

To the gods...

GABRIELLE

Xena, I want you to listen to me. We need to find out who murdered your father.

XENA

...we're bugs, little worthless insects...

GABRIELLE

Maybe if we bring the murderer to justice, that will satisfy the Furies.

XENA

...they kill us for entertainment...

GABRIELLE

This is exactly what happened to Orestes of Mycenae. He didn't avenge his father's murder either. If I could learn more about him, maybe I could --

*

(CONTINUED)

10 CONTINUED: 2

10

Suddenly, Xena spins around, wearing a murderous look as she stares at Gabrielle.

GABRIELLE
(backing up nervously)

Xena.

Xena stalks toward her, looking insanely deadly. Gabrielle is frightened by her look and tries to run. Xena reaches out, grabs Gabrielle by the hair and drags her toward a tree. Gabrielle is very frightened now.

GABRIELLE
It's me... Gabrielle.

Gabrielle struggles to get away but the relentless Xena drags her to the tree. Xena then tears vines off the tree and uses them to tie Gabrielle to it. *
*

XENA
For their sport they kill us,
Gabrielle. Their sport. I'm sorry you
can't come with me but...
(she looks around
conspiratorially; then with
a whisper)
I can't be trusted, you know.

She darts off into the night as Gabrielle struggles with her binds.

CUT TO:

11 EXT. COUNTRY ROAD #2 - DAY

11

Xena marches along with great intensity. Her lips are moving as she appears to be talking quietly with herself. Her right arm starts moving erratically.

XENA
(to her arm)
Hey, pull yourself together.

Suddenly, her left arm starts moving strangely.

XENA
Not you, too?

As she walks, her arms are moving sporadically, out of control.

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED:

11

ON RUFINUS

and some of his men as they peer out from the cover of trees
and eye Xena. They then set out in pursuit of her.

CUT TO:

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12 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

12

Gabrielle successfully tears free from her binds and sets out in search of Xena. *

CUT TO:

13 EXT. CLUSTER OF BUILDINGS - DAY

13*

Fifteen Thugs wait for something. Suddenly; Rufinus appears in the distance and runs towards the Thugs. *

RUFINUS

She's coming right at us. *

The Thugs draw their weapons and hide in several different places. PEASANTS stand around watching the Thugs hide and then turn to see Xena approaching. The Peasants scurry for cover. *

Xena approaches walking funny, as now it's one of her legs that's acting up. *

XENA

(to her leg)

You behave or I'll leave you behind. *

She passes some some of the buildings. *

ON RUFINUS

He and some of his Thugs come out from behind a building. *

RUFINUS

She's a babbling idiot. She doesn't even know we're here. This should be easy.

He signals to someone ahead.

ON FIVE OTHER TOUGHS

as they come out from behind other buildings and approach Xena's flank. Rufinus is right. She doesn't even notice that they're there. *

FIVE MORE THUGS

appear in the road ahead of Xena. *

ON XENA

She's surrounded and doesn't seem to be at all interested as she continues to walk toward the guys in front of her, all the time trying to get her leg to obey.

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED:

13

DIFFERENT ANGLE

as the warriors close on the seemingly oblivious Xena. They're all within arms reach and are about to strike when, suddenly, Xena extends both arms and begins to spin like a top. She whirls around, sending warriors sailing everywhere. She whirls through the bunch of them, building to such speed she looks like a top, as in "The Mask."

She then comes out of the spin and continues walking. Her pesky limbs seem under control now.

CUT TO:

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14 EXT. TAVERN - DAY

14

Xena approaches the tavern. People see her coming. She's dirty, wild-looking. Her lips are moving as she keeps up an unheard conversation with the voices in her head. This is one scary bag lady.

CUT TO:

15 INT. TAVERN - DAY

15

Xena enters and walks up to:

CYRENE

who is tending to some customers. She spots Xena and GASPS.

XENA

Mother...

*
*

CYRENE

Xena. What happened?

An emotionally drained Xena collapses into her arms. Off Cyrene's horrified look, we:

CUT TO:

16 EXT. TAVERN - DAY

16

Gabrielle makes her way toward the tavern. She enters.

17 INT. TAVERN - DAY

17

The tavern is empty now of everyone but Cyrene and Xena, who lies in a feverish state on a cot. Gabrielle walks up to Cyrene.

GABRIELLE

Cyrene, she --

CYRENE

She's been driven mad by the Furies.

GABRIELLE

She was able to tell you that?

CYRENE

No. She's incoherent. But ever since I heard what the Furies did to Orestes, I've been hoping against hope that this day would never arrive.

GABRIELLE

You know what happened to her father, then?

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED:

17

CYRENE

He was murdered.

GABRIELLE

Do you know who killed him?

CYRENE

Yes, I do.

GABRIELLE

Who?

Cyrene hesitates.

GABRIELLE

Cyrene, we have to know who did it.
Perhaps we can bring the murderer to
justice and satisfy the Furies.

CYRENE

Gabrielle, do you think that Xena, even
in this state, could kill her mother?

Gabrielle doesn't get it at first.

CYRENE

I killed Xena's father. And the only
way to avenge his death is to kill me.

Xena MURMURS.

ON XENA

She sits up on the cot, absorbing all this. This has been a
real bad couple of days.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

18 INT. TAVERN - DAY

18

Xena paces nervously, her lips moving silently, as Cyrene tries to explain what happened. Throughout this scene we see Xena's reactions to what Cyrene says. She's trying desperately to focus on a solution; she's still the hero, but now she has to solve the problem through the fog of insanity. As we will find out later, even now there's a method to her madness. However, to make the drama work, the audience needs to feel she's totally gone.

CYRENE

Xena was seven. Her father came home from the temple of Ares, drunk and angry.

XENA

(a distant whisper)

Ares.

CYRENE

He told me Xena had to die.

Xena reacts to this like she was shot with an arrow.

CYRENE

He was confused, Xena. The priest at the temple must have told him to sacrifice you to Ares. Your father was very dedicated to the God of War. I told him that I wouldn't let him do that. He said he'd kill me, too, then.

Xena growls like an animal.

CYRENE

He went to the stables to sharpen a knife. He was so methodical, the way he planned to kill his own daughter.

Suddenly, she turns to Xena and tells her straight to her face what she did next.

CYRENE

I took an axe and... I stopped him.

Short and sweet. Her story is over.

ON XENA

(CONTINUED)

18 CONTINUED:

18

There's a note of sympathy for her mother in her eyes for a moment and then she twitches as the Furies dig their talons into her reason.

ON GABRIELLE

She's in almost as much anguish as Xena.

GABRIELLE

This is the same mess Orestes was in.

CYRENE

Yes. The circumstances are the same. His mother killed his father, and so his obligation, according to the code of the Furies, was to kill his mother.

GABRIELLE

Did he?

CYRENE

I don't know. I heard he still lives in a village not far from here. Andreas.

GABRIELLE

He might be able to tell me more about this, give me some kind of clue of how we can get out of this.

CYRENE

Perhaps.

GABRIELLE

That's where I'm headed, then. Andreas.

She turns and walks up to Xena. She reaches out to embrace Xena. Xena jerks away and looks at her suspiciously.

GABRIELLE

I know you're in there, Xena. We're going to figure a way out of this. We always do.

There's a sneering snarl from Xena. A worried Gabrielle exits. Cyrene sees her to the door. As she closes the door behind Gabrielle, she turns to see:

XENA

standing right behind her. Xena has a mad twinkle in her eye. She's holding her sword casually on her shoulder.

XENA

So Mama killed Papa.

(CONTINUED)

18 CONTINUED: 2

18

Xena and Cyrene eye each other. Cyrene is frightened.

XENA

Tell me, Mother. Did you hit Daddy in the head with the axe or was it the back?

CYRENE

Xena, don't.

XENA

Not that it makes much difference. You were saving my life, weren't you? I guess I'm supposed to be grateful. But you must admit, you did put me in a bit of a jam, didn't you?

With sword still drawn she starts to stroll around the room. Cyrene is afraid.

XENA

I have an interesting choice. I could kill you.

(throws a look at Cyrene and grins)

Or I can live my life shuttling between states of babbling idiocy and vivid clarity. And I do mean clarity. Right now, I can see life exactly for what it is. You see, Mom, it turns out that what we call sanity is just a veil the gods throw over our eyes to keep us from seeing the truth.

*

*

(CONTINUED)

18 CONTINUED: 3

18

CYRENE

What is the truth, Xena?

XENA

That life's a joke, Mother. A barroom
joke at that. And you know what the
punch line is?

She starts to chuckle as if she really is telling a joke and
is too amused by the punch line.

XENA

No matter what we do, we all end up as
worm food anyway.

She continues to chuckle, examines her sword, and lays an
arm around Cyrene's shoulder.

XENA

You know, Mom, there's only one way out
of this mess.

Cyrene bows her head.

CYRENE

Go ahead. Do it.

Xena laughs.

XENA

Oh, you're not getting out of it that
easy. No. I leave you to continue to
entertain the gods. I, on the other
hand, plan to retire from the stage.

CYRENE

No, Xena!

XENA

Mom, I'm a lunatic with lethal combat
skills. If I hang around much longer,
a lot of innocent people are gonna get
hurt. I'm doing everybody a favor.
Good-bye.

She exits cheerfully. Cyrene rushes to the door.

CYRENE

Xena. Please. Come back.

CUT TO:

19 EXT. CLIFF - DAY

19

Xena approaches the cliff with an almost carefree stride. It's all over for her. Why fret now? She looks down the cliff at the rocks below. She tosses her sword away, then her chakram. And prepares to jump.

ARES (O.C.)

Xena. What are you doing?

We see a look on Xena's face that suggests she expected Ares to show up. She turns to him.

(CONTINUED)

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19 CONTINUED:

19

XENA

Hello, Ares. Why am I not surprised that you have an interest in this?

ARES

Of course, I do. You're my favorite, you know that, Xena. I don't want to see you throwing yourself off a cliff. If for no other reason, it's such a tastelessly melodramatic way out of this life.

XENA

But if you've been paying attention you'd know, I'm quite batty, Ares. I have limited choices here. Madness is a rotten way to go through life. It has it's highs, sure, but then you come to your senses and you're in the middle of a field on all fours eating grass. Not a pretty picture.

(jerks her head toward the cliff edge)

I'm out of here.

ARES

Now, Xena, don't do that. There is another solution.

XENA

Killing Mommy. I don't think so.

ARES

Well, I heard what you said to your mother. You were right of course. What you said about life.

XENA

I was ranting.

ARES

Like a prophet. You were never so close to the truth. Xena, you've spent the last few years trying to find a meaning in your existence. At times you thought you found it in being a protector of the weak. Now you see the uselessness of all that, don't you?

*
*
*

XENA

If you're trying to convince me life's worth living, this isn't the best strategy.

(CONTINUED)

19 CONTINUED: 2

19

ARES

No. Life isn't worth living. It's to be taken, wrestled, beaten and formed in your image. That's where the meaning lies, in what you can twist life into. For those who just endure life, it is a very nasty joke. But for those who mould it with their will, the joke is on those who get in the way.

XENA

I'm definitely crazy. You're actually beginning to make sense to me. *

ARES

This melodrama with your family. Put it all behind you. So your father got jealous and tried to punish his wife by hurting the child. Do you know how common that is? That's not a tragedy, but a boring fact of human nature.

(he moves close to her)

Do you understand what I'm saying?

XENA

(with a mad twinkle in her eye)

Yes, I think I do.

ARES

Satisfy the Furies and give your mother to the worms. As you said, it's where she's going to end up anyway. It's all a matter of timing. Make the inevitable happen now, and you will sever yourself forever from those cowardly limitations men call morality. You're on the brink of ultimate freedom, Xena. Take the next step.

As Xena's sparkling mad eyes gleam with excitement, we:

CUT TO:

20 OMITTED

20

21 EXT. HILLSIDE - DAY

21

Xena and Ares stand staring down at Cyrene's tavern.

ARES

Do it, and you'll be reborn into a world of true choice, beyond good and evil. You'll not only regain your sanity, you'll see the world as few have seen it, a playground for your will. Do it.

Xena looks pretty whacko at the moment. She pulls her sword and starts to descend the hill toward the tavern. Suddenly, she stops and tosses a paranoiac look back at Ares.

XENA

But how will the Furies know if I do it?

ARES

They'll know.

XENA

(getting angry)

But how?

ARES

(impatient)

They'll know.

XENA

(suddenly insanely angry)

And I'm supposed to trust you. I'm crazy, not stupid. If I'm going to whack my Mom, I want to get something out of it. I want to know the Furies are watching.

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED:

21

ARES

They'll see it. It's a god thing.

XENA

(screaming hysterically)

I WON'T DO IT UNLESS IT'S IN FRONT OF
THE FURIES!

ARES

All right. It can be arranged.

XENA

(suddenly cheerful)

Good. I'll fetch Mother.

She walks toward the tavern.

CUT TO:

22 INT. TAVERN - DAY

22

Cyrene sits looking worried. Xena enters. Cyrene stands
and runs to her.

CYRENE

Oh, Xena. You're alright.

She's about to embrace her when Xena extends her hand to
stop her.

XENA

Mother. I'm anything but alright.

The mad sparkle in her eye is unmistakable.

CYRENE

Yes, of course. I'm so sorry this
happened to you. Maybe Gabrielle --

XENA

(suddenly full of rage)

Stop it! I'm sick of your false little
hope. Gabrielle couldn't save a cat in
a tree without me. She's a useless
little pissant, really, now that I see
things clearly.

CYRENE

That's not true. I don't think you're
seeing things clearly, at all.

Xena is driven to the edge of twitching anger by this rebuke
from her mother.

(CONTINUED)

22 CONTINUED:

22

XENA

(slow burn)

Mom. Do you really think this is a good time to be arguing with me?

(takes a deep breath)

Of course, what difference does it make one way or the other? I'm crazy and you're dead. Let's go.

CYRENE

What are you saying?

XENA

Don't push it, Mom. It's best I do it in front of the Furies. Because that Ares bastard can't be trusted, you know.

Cyrene now understands what she's saying.

CYRENE

Xena. If that's what you feel you have to do --

Xena grabs Cyrene's head between her two hands and pulls her close to her.

XENA

Don't be the sacrificing mother. It's such a cliché.

(peers into Cyrene's eyes)

Let me ask you something. When you and Daddy were conceiving me, rolling around like a couple of crazed weasels, was it good?

CYRENE

Oh, please, Xena. Let's just get this over with.

XENA

I have the right to know about the act that brought me into this world.

CYRENE

I can't talk about that!

XENA

Mother, I'm losing my patience.

CYRENE

(with a sigh)

Your father had been away at war. Suddenly, one night I awoke and he was there with me. And, yes, it was good.

(CONTINUED)

22 CONTINUED: 3

22

XENA

As you said, let's get this over with.

CUT TO:

23 INT. CELL - DAY

23*

ORESTES sits chained to a wall. He is struggling to free himself from his chains. From the frozen look of rage that twists his face, we can assume that this struggle goes on every second of the nightmare that has become his life. The door to the cell opens.

ON GABRIELLE AND A KEEPER

Gabrielle stoops down next to Orestes. Her face wears a look of pained compassion.

GABRIELLE

Orestes.

Orestes doesn't respond. He's in another world.

GABRIELLE

(to Keeper)

So he didn't do it.

KEEPER

Didn't do what?

GABRIELLE

Avenge his father's murder.

KEEPER

Oh, yeah, he did. He killed his mother, Clytemnestra.

GABRIELLE

But I thought --

KEEPER

He would be liberated from his madness if he killed his mother. It's all a lie. If they persecuted him for not avenging his father's death, what were they going to do to him for killing his mother? There was no way out for him.

Off Orestes' impotent rage, we:

CUT TO:

24 INT. TEMPLE OF THE FURIES - DAY

24

Cyrene lays on the altar. Ares stands beside her. Lysis stands to the side, in awe of what is going on.

ARES

Furies, hear me. I, Ares, God of War, demand your presence at this act of redemption.

ON THE FURIES

as they materialize in front of the altar.

ALECTO

(nods toward Cyrene)
She's the murderess?

*

Ares nods.

ALECTO

And the avenging party?

*

Ares smiles and steps aside. Behind him stands:

XENA

Her back is to us. She turns. Her face is twisted into a mask of blind fury. A ghoulish smile creeps onto her face as she steps up to her mother, raises a knife in the air and is ready to plunge it into her mother's heart.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

25 INT. TEMPLE OF THE FURIES - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

25

Xena stands above Cyrene ready to strike.

ON ARES

He positions himself in front of the altar. His eyes glimmer with excitement as he's about to win Xena back forever.

ON GABRIELLE

as she bursts through the door and rushes toward the altar.

GABRIELLE

Xena, don't. It won't do any --

She's silenced as Ares claps his hand over her mouth.

ON XENA

She smiles at Ares.

XENA

Sometimes that's the only way to shut her up.

She raises the knife again and is about to bring it down.

ON ARES

as he watches with glee.

ON THE FURIES

These aren't exactly dispassionate judges. They're salivating for this.

ON GABRIELLE

Constrained by Ares, she's struggling but Ares clearly has her well under control.

ON CYRENE

She looks resigned to this ultimate sacrifice.

ON XENA

She plunges the knife downwards.

ON CYRENE'S CHEST

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED:

25

The knife stops a centimeter over her heart. WE PAN up to Xena, who stands looking confused.

ON ARES

ARES

What's the problem, Xena?

DIFFERENT ANGLE

XENA

I'm confused. Why am I doing this?

ARES

She killed your father. You have to avenge his death or the Furies will torment you for eternity.

XENA

Right.

She raises the knife again. But again she stops, looking confused.

XENA

She killed my father?

ARES

Yes. Murdered him in cold blood. Don't show her any mercy, Xena.

XENA

But how could she have killed my father when my father is still very much alive?

(faces Ares)

Right, Daddy?

ON THE FURIES

as they throw confused looks at Ares.

ON GABRIELLE

as she darts a very confused look up at Ares.

ON CYRENE

as she does a double take toward Ares.

ON ARES

as he throws a calm glance at the Furies.

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED: 2

25

ARES

If you've noticed, she is crazy.

XENA

I am indeed. I'm completely out of my gourd. Who knows, I may cut up Mommy here soon, just for the fun of it. But not because she killed my father. Because you're my father, Ares.

She puts her hand behind Cyrene's head and lifts it toward Ares.

XENA

Look at that hunk of burning love you had, Mom.

Ares tosses Gabrielle aside and looks indignant.

ARES

This is nonsense. Don't you think Cyrene would have mentioned this before now?

XENA

Not a very good argument, Pops. Gabrielle, you're on.

Gabrielle is at a loss for a moment as to what Xena could want.

XENA

Do your thing.

Gabrielle gets it.

GABRIELLE

Ah... Oh, yeah. The legends say that Ares takes the form of his warriors and visits their wives when they're away at battle.

XENA

Your turn, Mom.

CYRENE

The night Xena was conceived, my husband had just come home unexpectedly from war.

ARES

This is all ridiculous.

Xena walks toward the Furies.

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED: 3

25

XENA

Do you ladies eavesdrop on us whackos
when you're tormenting us?

ALECTO

Frequently, yes. *

XENA

Did you hear the little rap Pop and I
had when he thought I was going to toss
myself off that cliff?

(turns to Ares)

Had you fooled there, didn't I, Dad? I
knew that would bring you out.

(to Alecto)

So, did you hear? *

ALECTO

Yes. *

XENA

Did you wonder why Ares used the word
"jealous" when talking about my alleged
father?

ALECTO

(looking suspiciously at
Ares) *

That was odd. Why jealous?

ARES

I meant he was jealous of the
attention Cyrene paid to Xena. It's a
common phenomenon. *

XENA

Here's my theory, Ladies.

(eyes the Furies)

You do dress the part, don't you?
Anyway, I figure Ares and Mom did their
thing, Mom gets ripe with me, not long
after that her husband comes home and
thinks his manhood did the trick. I
pop out and he thinks I'm his daughter.
Things go on like that for years until
one night somebody at the Temple of
Ares, maybe a drunken priest, maybe
him --

(gestures toward Ares)

spills the beans. Jealous rage
follows. Mom does her thing with the
axe, and here we are.

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED: 4

25

ARES
(to Alecto)
You're not buying any of this, are you?
I'm not her father!

*
*
*

The suspicious glance Alecto throws toward Ares tells us she most definitely is beginning to buy it.

(CONTINUED)

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25 CONTINUED: 5

25

ALECTO

(turns to Xena)

Why would he go to all this trouble to drive you insane?

XENA

He figures a mad Xena would be more sympathetic to his quaint world view. And he's right. I meant it when I said he's beginning to make sense to me. The really clever part of the plan is...

(to Ares)

This is the proud daughter talking.

(to Alecto)

...the part where I kill Mom. Thus dooming me forever to insanity and therefore complete dependence on him.

Alecto glares at Ares. This is all making a lot of sense.

XENA

I've got a way to prove it.

ALECTO

What's that?

XENA

He and I fight. If I'm half god, I should be able to hold my own. If I'm not, certainly the God of War will win.

ARES

This is ridiculous.

ALECTO

What are you afraid of, Ares?

XENA

Me. Because he knows I'm half god and all ccccrrraazzzyyy.

She draws her sword, flips in the air, lands behind Ares and the fight is on.

Xena leaps up and grabs one of the tapestry poles. She flips herself around it like Olga Korbut and does a flip to a pole at a higher level.

ON ARES

He leaps onto one of the poles and flips up to a higher level.

THE UNEVEN BARS FIGHT

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED: 6

25

Xena and Ares fight each other while going from one pole to another, swinging, leaping and being generally athletic. Xena throws her sword in the air, leaps over Ares, swings on a pole, flips up to another level, lands on her feet on yet another pole, and catches the sword as it comes down. As they go, the tapestries swing into the altar flames and catch fire. At one point, Xena swings through a burning tapasstry to give Ares a kick. He almost falls, but manages to steady himself.

*
*
*
*

ON XENA

As she hops from pole to pole, she knocks Ares back with a series of thunderous strokes. Ares blocks them all skillfully with his sword and then starts driving Xena back the other way. At one point, we fear she's going to fall into one of the altar fires. Xena does a side slip and Ares pitches forward and almost falls on the altar where Cyrene sits.

*
*

XENA

Come on, you two aren't gonna go at it again, are you? We've got some fighting to do.

Ares swings up and hurls himself at Xena. They exchange titanic blows, before Xena starts CHUCKLING uncontrollably.

XENA

You know, I just realized something. When you and Callisto rutted around like monkeys in heat, she was in the body of your daughter. You are the kinky one, aren't you, Dad?

Xena flips back and lands where Gabrielle is standing. Xena grabs her and holds her in between her and Ares, who is swinging toward them.

XENA

(mischievously)
Gabrielle, I think I'll use you as a shield.

Gabrielle looks at the flying Ares in horror.

XENA

(a mad laugh)
Just kidding.

She tosses Gabrielle aside, but Gabrielle's presence blocked his view of Xena till the last second. He's surprised to see Xena's sword come up from down below and knock his sword from his hand.

ON XENA

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED: 7

25

as she grins at her father.

XENA

I win.

She spins and strolls toward the Furies. As she goes, she passes the altar. She picks up a piece of fruit.

XENA

(takes a bite of the fruit)
I think I've proved my --
(spits out the fruit;
gestures towards Lysis)
He's been giving you stale fruit,
Girls.

ON LYSIS

He's horrified.

RESUME XENA

XENA

As I was saying, I think I proved my point.

ALECTO

Agreed.

Alecto makes a gesture toward Xena. Suddenly, Xena's mad glint disappears and she stumbles back, emotionally drained. Cyrene and Gabrielle rush to support her.

ALECTO

(to Ares)
Zeus and the other gods will hear
about this betrayal of a sacred trust.
(to Lysis)
We'll talk later about the fruit.

She and the other Furies disappear. A distraught Lysis runs out of the temple.

ARES

(with a shrug)
I've been on the outs with the family
before. I'll survive. They need me.
(to Xena)
You don't really think I'm your
father, do you?

XENA

It doesn't matter. The Furies believe it. That's all that counts.

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED: 9

25

ARES
That was brilliant. If I was your
father, I'd be very proud. Until we
meet again.

He glances at Gabrielle with irritated disgust.

ARES
(to Xena)
I still don't get what you see in her.

With that he's gone.

CUT TO:

26 OMITTED

26

26A EXT. WOODS - DAY

26A*

Xena, Gabrielle and Cyrene sit at a campsite. Cyrene looks
distant, wrapped up in her own thoughts. *

GABRIELLE
So, you knew what your mother would say
about the night of your conception, and
you knew exactly what I'd say, too.
(beat)
I don't know if I like being that
predictable.

XENA
I knew you'd say that.

Gabrielle throws Xena a look. Suddenly, Cyrene speaks with
great urgency.

CYRENE
Xena, about your father...

GABRIELLE
Why don't I look for some firewood? *

Xena gives Gabrielle an appreciative nod. Gabrielle exits.

CYRENE
I took him away from you.

XENA
Mother --

CYRENE
It seemed like the only way.

XENA
I'm sure it was.

(CONTINUED)

26A CONTINUED:

26A

XENA (cont'd)
(thoughtful beat)
I never really knew him, you know.
I guess the hardest thing for me is
giving up the hope.

CYRENE
The hope?

XENA
All these years I kept thinking I'd
run into him one day and really get to
know him... understand him...
understand myself... Now, I know
that'll never be.

CYRENE
Oh, Xena, can you ever forgive me?

XENA
There's nothing for me to forgive. You
saved my life. I owe you my thanks.
I'm just sorry that you had to carry
this alone inside you all these years.

Cyrene starts crying as years of repressed pain begins to
ooze out.

XENA
It's all right, Mother.

Xena reaches out to touch her mother's arm. At the feel of
Xena's touch, Cyrene collapses into her daughter's arms.

XENA
We'll go on from here, stronger than
ever.

Cyrene weeps like a baby. Xena comforts her like a loving
mother. For this moment, they're swapping roles and, in the
process, giving each other exactly what they need.

FADE OUT.

THE END