



"THE BITTER SUITE"

by

Steven L. Sears & Chris Manheim

**SEASON 3
EPISODE #12**

Prod. #V0409

XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS

"The Bitter Suite"

Written by

Steven L. Sears & Chris Manheim

Directed by

Oley Sassone

Revised Pages: Sets, 3-3A, 5-8, 11, 13-14, 15-16, 23-28

Executive Producers

Sam Raimi, Robert Tapert & R.J. Stewart

SHOOTING DRAFT

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Rev. Oct. 20, 1997 - Pink
Rev. Oct. 27, 1997 - Blue
Rev. Oct. 28, 1997 - Yellow
Rev. Oct. 29, 1997 - Green

Prod. #V0409

XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS

"The Bitter Suite"

CAST LIST

XENA
GABRIELLE

JOXER
CALLISTO
EPHINY
ARES
SOLAN
LILA

MING T' IEN/THE TORMENT

CAESAR*

KHRAFSTAR*

SINGING WARRIOR #1

SINGING WARRIOR #2

SINGING WARRIOR #3

SINGING WARRIOR #4

SINGING VILLAGER #1

SINGING VILLAGER #2

SINGING VILLAGER #3

SINGING VILLAGER #4

* non-speaking

XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS

"The Bitter Suite"

SET LIST

INTERIORS:

AMAZON SWEAT HUT
TOWER OF BABEL - LARGE, CAVERNOUS ROOM
ILLUSIA'S DAHAK TEMPLE
SMALL GROTTO

*

EXTERIORS:

AMAZON SWEAT HUT
AMAZON VILLAGE
MOUNTAINTOP IN SNOW STORM
WATERFALL CLIFF - TOP
 - WATER BELOW
 - BEACH BENEATH
ILLUSIA - BESIDE A STREAM
 - ANOTHER PART OF THE STREAM
BESEIGED VILLAGE
PICTURE-PERFECT FARMING VILLAGE
TOWER OF BABEL

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Prod. #V0409

XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS

"The Bitter Suite"

CHRONOLOGY

DAY 1

SCENES # 1 - 13
#15
#17 - 25

NIGHT 1

SCENE #14
#16
#18

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XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS

"The Bitter Suite"

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 INT. AMAZON SWEAT HUT - DAY - ON THE FIRE 1

blazing in the center of the dark hut. O.S. we hear the SOUND of rhythmic DRUMS and low CHANTING as we PULL BACK to see... a masked SHAMAN circling a low, sheet-draped platform, sprinkling water from a ceremonial bowl onto...

...the DISCREETLY SHOT body of a naked woman which CAMERA GLIDES up to reveal is... GABRIELLE, lying on the platform, eyes open and staring, but clearly alive.

Putting the bowl down, the Shaman wraps Gabrielle in the sheet, eyes her a beat, then turns and exits the hut.

CUT TO:

2 EXT. AMAZON SWEAT HUT - DAY 2

The tribe continues their CHANTING and DRUMS as the Shaman emerges from the hut, shuts the door, and wearily moves off.

EPHINY (O.S.)

Three days now...

NEW ANGLE to reveal... EPHINY, Queen of the Amazons, as she gazes at the sweat hut, concerned.

EPHINY

She's been undergoing the Purification Ritual for three days.

ANGLE WIDENS to include... JOXER, who looks shocked.

JOXER

But that's crazy!

(starts toward hut)

We've gotta get her out.

(as Ephiny stops him;
objecting)

She could be dying in there!

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED:

2

EPHINY

She was dying out here! You didn't see her after the death of her child, when she and Xena parted, and she came to us.

(frowning to recall)

The pain she was in... the despair...

JOXER

But if we lose her --

EPHINY

She's already gone. Her only chance is to work through the pain.

JOXER

And if she can't?

Ephiny doesn't answer. But her grave face speaks volumes as a WAIL starts to rise, and we:

CUT TO:

3 EXT. MOUNTAINTOP IN SNOW STORM - DAY - HIGH ANGLE ON XENA

3

She's standing at the cliff's edge, releasing her anguish in a WAILING SONG that clearly brings no relief as CAMERA DESCENDS, CLOSING IN on her. Overwhelmed, Xena BREAKS OFF HER SONG, lifting her face to the sky in raw despair.

Laconic CLAPPING sounds behind her. Xena doesn't move.

ARES (O.S.)

Nice vocal...

ANGLE WIDENS to reveal... ARES, God of War.

ARES

...but you sure can't dance to it.

Turning, Xena just stares as Ares moves to join her.

ARES

Look, I feel your pain, okay? But how much longer before you do something about it?

XENA

My son is dead, you soulless bastard. What can I "do" about that?

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED:

3

ARES

Just goes to prove what I've been
telling you all along: no good deed
goes unpunished.

(off her confused look;
explaining)

Saving people, defending the weak...

(significantly)

...trusting someone who betrayed you...

Xena's face darkens with rage as she murmurs:

XENA

...Gabrielle...

ARES

(hides a pleased smile;
then)

This whole atonement kick you've been
on, it's not you. You're full of fire,
bending the world to your will. Full
of rage and... revenge.

(moving close; murmuring)

Accept it, Xena. Embrace it. You know
what to do. Who to kill?

(off Xena's lost nod)

Good. I'll be waiting.

And he's gone, leaving Xena, her eyes narrowing with a
steely resolve.

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

*
*
*
*

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ACT ONE

*

FADE IN:

*

4 INT. AMAZON SWEAT HUT - DAY - ON GABRIELLE

4

Her feverish eyes are wide and staring at the fire as if it's the last thing she'll see. But as she starts to expire...

A WOMAN'S HAND comes INTO FRAME, gently tilting Gabrielle's unconscious face toward the CAMERA where the woman's other hand SLAPS HER HARD!!!

Forcibly brought to, Gabrielle stares up at... CALLISTO.

GABRIELLE

No... You aren't real... you're in my mind...

CALLISTO

Does it matter? You're here for the truth. And the truth is, Xena made us both. Shaped our lives. Changed our fates. Killed our families...

(CONTINUED)

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4 CONTINUED:

4

GABRIELLE

No! I killed hers! Solan died because of my daughter.

CALLISTO

It's because of Xena you had a daughter! Her hatred of Caesar took you to Britannia in the first place.

GABRIELLE

Yes, but --

CALLISTO

-- Straight to Dahak where she deserted you to seek her own revenge, right? (pre-empting her)

Right?

GABRIELLE

(breaking down)

Yes...

CALLISTO

And you hate her for it, don't you? For failing you -- betraying you. You hate her, don't you? Don't you?

Pushed beyond endurance, Gabrielle screams:

GABRIELLE

Yeeesss...!!!

Spent, she collapses.

CUT TO:

5 EXT. AMAZON VILLAGE - DAY

5

In the shocked SILENCE caused by Gabrielle's scream, Joxer cries out:

JOXER

Gabrielle!

-- and races for the sweat hut where he slams into the door to break it down. It holds. Jarred, he grabs the handle for support, and it opens. Reacting, he rushes inside as:

EPHINY (O.S.)

(calls; surprised)

Xena!

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED:

5

Turning, the others see Xena riding Argo hard toward them. Immediately, the Amazons square off against her charge, spears poised to stop her. But just as Xena reaches them, she pulls Argo up sharply, using the momentum to launch herself, flipping through the air to land behind the Amazon line!

Whirling, Ephiny reaches out to Xena who takes her arm, and SNAPS it like a stick! As Ephiny collapses, Xena pulls her chakram and turns to the stunned tribe.

XENA

Where's Gabrielle?

Right on cue, Joxer emerges from the sweat hut, carrying the sheet-draped Gabrielle, unconscious in his arms.

JOXER

Help her -- please! Someone hel--

He stops, reacting to see... Xena's searing gaze as she turns it on Gabrielle. Then with a wrenching CRY --

*

*

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED: 2

5

-- Xena throws the chakram just as --

*

-- Ephiny lunges up from the ground, knocking Xena off-balance as the chakram leaves her hand!

ON THE CHAKRAM

as it flies toward Gabrielle -- missing her neck by a hair!

Reacting, Joxer tightens his protective hold on Gabrielle, looking around at a loss.

EPHINY

Run, Joxer! RUN!!!

Catching the chakram, Xena knocks Ephiny aside and starts after the fleeing Joxer as --

THE AMAZONS ATTACK!!!

EPHINY

(shouting an order)

No weapons! Don't kill her!

But Xena has no compunctions about using a weapon -- though she does not kill anyone -- as she grabs a staff and takes out three Amazons with a single swipe. Then, looking around, she frowns to see --

-- Joxer carrying Gabrielle towards the woods. But just before he gets to the trees --

-- Xena launches herself into a mid-air somersault that takes her directly into Joxer's path!

As she and Joxer lock eyes, Gabrielle begins to revive, blinking groggily from Joxer's arms.

GABRIELLE

...Xena?

Reacting, Xena starts for her when FOUR powerful AMAZONS attack from every side, distracting Xena while --

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED: 3

5

-- Joxer clutches the now conscious Gabrielle, carrying her over to:

A STRING OF HORSES (ARGO AMONG THEM), two of which are harnessed to a chariot. He quickly helps her aboard.

JOXER

Here -- get in and take the reins.
You've gotta make a run for it.

GABRIELLE

But Joxer --

JOXER

Just go!

Securing Gabrielle, he steps back, when suddenly --

A BULLWHIP CRACKS as it lashes at Gabrielle, coiling around her ankle! Reacting, Joxer and Gabrielle turn to see --

-- Xena holding the whip! Leaping onto the nearest horse, Xena spurs it into action, riding off in a CLATTER OF HOOVES as --

-- Gabrielle is dragged off, getting bruised and battered as Xena pulls her mercilessly up a rocky slope to:

*
*
*
*
*

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7 OMITTED

7*

8 EXT. WATERFALL CLIFF - DAY

8

Reaching the top of the cliff, Xena halts her horse and leaps from the saddle, striding to --

-- Gabrielle, lying still at the edge of the cliff. Seizing her, Xena lifts Gabrielle high above her head, casting a SINGLE SHADOW behind her as she shrieks out:

XENA

Vengeance!!!

(CONTINUED)

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8 CONTINUED:

8

Poised to heave Gabrielle off the cliff, Xena doesn't see the SHADOW they cast transform into a black, hooded specter (THE TORMENT) who watches when, suddenly --

-- Gabrielle corks Xena in the eye with her foot!

Reacting, Xena stumbles, dropping Gabrielle who sprawls to the ground, then whirls and screams out --

GABRIELLE

I hate you!

-- before lunging up to tackle the half-blind Xena who staggers under the impact and loses her balance, which takes them both PLUNGING OVER THE EDGE OF THE CLIFF!!!

CUT TO:

9 EXT. WATER BELOW CLIFF - UNDERWATER SHOT - DAY

9

The downpour from the WATERFALL above creates a vacuum in the surrounding water as Xena and Gabrielle plunge deep into the sea on either side of it. Held under by the downpour, both women struggle in vain to reach the surface. As the watery darkness closes in, a FAINT, EVOCATIVE MELODY rises, perhaps accompanied by a DISEMBODIED VOICE that softly states: "All things begin with me..." As the MELODY LINGERS...

*
*

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

10 EXT. WATER BELOW CLIFF - UNDERWATER SHOT - DAY

10

The MELODY FADES as the SCREEN GRADUALLY LIGHTENS when, suddenly --

A GRASPING HAND plunges into the water and seizes

XENA

pulling her quickly toward the surface PAST THE CAMERA to reveal she's unconscious and completely nude.

CUT TO:

11 EXT. ILLUSIA - BESIDE A STREAM - DAY - ON A TECHNICOLOR SUN

11

from which we RACK FOCUS to see... Xena, lying unconscious on the shore as...

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED:

11

...A PAIR OF LIPS descend toward Xena's mouth to administer the "Kiss of Life."

Breath spent, Xena's mysterious resuscitator PULLS BACK while we...

...STAY ON XENA whose eyes flutter open, bleary at first, then coming into sharp focus as she sees...

...a little white dog grinning down at her. Seeing she's awake, the dog BARKS sharply before being moved aside by Xena's mysterious resuscitator, now revealed to be...

...CALLISTO! But it's a different Callisto than we've ever seen, dressed in the outfit of the Tarot Book's "Fool."

Reacting, Xena bolts upright as Callisto beams and, picking up a round, chakram-like circle, proceeds to spin, whirl, stretch, and bounce it around as she moves through the technicolor landscape till she winds up...

*
*

...back in front of Xena. Halting, Callisto frames her own face with the circle as she smiles down at Xena.

*
*

CALLISTO
(lyricizing)
Glad that you're feeling strong;
Thought I might lose ya.
Don't use words, sing a song...

*
*
*

Stretching the circle till it resembles the Warner Bros.' ring Porky Pig pops through to say: "Th-th-that's all, folks!" Callisto bursts through the ring and strikes a pose.

*
*

CALLISTO
...This is Illusia!

*
*

HOLD on Xena's reaction, as we...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

12 EXT. ILLUSIA - BESIDE A STREAM - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

12

Eyeing the posed Callisto, Xena blinks and shakes her head, trying to clear it as Callisto starts the incantation that intros the SONG: "What's Still Unwritten..." (Song of Illusia).

CALLISTO

(chanting)

Xena be warned, Xena beware!
By closing your eyes, you can see what
isn't there.

Reaching out, Callisto COVERS THE CAMERA LENS, BLACKING OUT the SCREEN.

CALLISTO

Xena be calm, open your eyes
Lies may be truth, and truth may be
lies.

Callisto UNCOVERS THE CAMERA LENS on the words "open your eyes," and we PULL BACK to reveal... Xena, dressed in the robes and crown of the Tarot Book's "High Empress," and seated on a stone throne, flanked by a SPHINX and an ANUBIS.

XENA

(knocking off the crown)

Alright, Callisto, cut the
song-and-dance. What's going on?
Where are we?

Callisto looks puzzled. Then, brightening, she crosses to the large ring she popped through and spins it, transforming it into a wheel, which she uses to toy with Xena as she SINGS:

Callisto:

Fate is a wheel - it will reveal
All you've become - all that you feel
Destiny knows what has to be
You'll pay the price - nothing is free
I'll be your guide, take the hand of
your Muse, ya
Just might lose your way in the
Land of Illusia.

*
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*
*

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED:

12

On the words "take the hand of your Muse, ya," Callisto has seated Xena back on the throne, so that by the end of the verse, the little white dog runs up and jumps in Xena's lap during the short musical intro into the rest of the song.

Callisto: Illusia is music, a world built on rhyme.
It's carved out of space
in the absence of time.
You tasted how evil and good co-exist
The bitter and sweet of it.

White Dog: All in the lips that you kissed.

*
*

The dog licks Xena's face as Callisto CHANTS the next verse, pulling little cards from the knapsack she carries, and throwing them one by one onto the Wheel where they become the fantastical Tarot creatures ringing the Wheel of Fortune, who JOIN IN THE SONG where indicated.

CALLISTO
Lion and bull, eagle and snake
To live or die, it's a choice you've
got to make.
Can you undo what you create
Step through the Wheel
follow your fate.

*
*
*

Callisto handsprings through the center of the Wheel which closes behind her, as:

CHORUS:

All Animals: The Fates have a fix on you,
We can play tricks on you,
We deal in truths you're too troubled to
face

ON ANUBIS Gamble the worth of you
And the rebirth of you.

ON SPHINX Don't turn away
Don't start to fade.
What's still unwritten... you can erase!

*

Callisto opens the center of the Wheel, now a door, to SING:

Callisto: Your villainous infamy tortures your soul
Descent into evil must levy its toll
The darkness that rots you has
brought you to this

The Snake shoots out into Xena's face.

Snake: Surrender serenity, suffer sweet misery

*

Xena grabs the Snake by the throat, choking its voice.

Snake: Sin seeks its cursed abysssss.

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED: 2

12

Xena lets the Snake go and it snaps back OUT OF FRAME.

Anubis: Oh Xena, with death there is always rebirth.

Sphinx: Come see with a vision denied you on earth.

Callisto reappears and moves to the Wheel.

Callisto: Illusia is waiting we'll show you the way.
But all consequences are your own creation
And there's a price you must pay.

Callisto spins the Wheel; its center IRISES CLOSED over her, as:

CHORUS:

All Animals: The Fates have a fix on you
We can play tricks on you
We deal in truths you're too troubled to
face.
Gamble the worth of you
And the rebirth of you.
Now is the Time.
This is the Place.
What's still unwritten... you can erase!

CALLISTO
(reappearing; shouting OVER
THE SONG)
You can erase!

TAG:

All Animals: Illusia is music, a world built on rhyme
It's carved out of space
in the absence of --

Music/Joe LoDuca Lyrics/Pamela Phillips Oland

Fed up, Xena grabs the Wheel, stopping it, and sending the Tarot creatures flying off the Wheel in all directions. The Anubis flies at Callisto who ducks, and when she rises -- Xena's in her face.

XENA
Look, I don't know what you're up to.

*

*

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED: 3

12

But Callisto simply smiles and shrugs.

*

CALLISTO

(singing)

*

I'm merely your guide, dear,

Along for a grin.

You get no free ride here.

You want to know more...

*

(crossing to Wheel)

...then spin.

Xena crosses to the Wheel, casting her SHADOW on it as she hesitates. Then, grabbing it, she spins the Wheel, sending it whirling in a blur of motion which continues, as Callisto takes her hand and pulls her off while, behind them...

...Xena's SHADOW remains on the Wheel. Shapeshifting, it slides off the Wheel, transforming into the black, hooded specter (THE TORMENT) as it watches Xena go.

CUT TO:

13 EXT. ILLUSIA - ANOTHER PART OF THE STREAM - DAY

13

CLOSE ON THE STILL SURFACE OF THE WATER which reflects...

...a "Hanged Man" (Joxer) suspended from a tree branch above the water by a rope tied around his left ankle. Suddenly, his arms plunge into the water where we FOLLOW in an UNDERWATER SHOT as he seizes --

-- Gabrielle who is nearly unconscious. As he drags her to the surface, perhaps we hear a DISEMBODIED VOICE softly advise: "Don't mistake reflections for reality," before --

-- Gabrielle breaks the surface, gasping as she's hauled on shore. For a BEAT, she lies, exhausted, as our "Hanged Man" slips from his noose, flips to the ground, and exits.

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED:

13

Then, raising herself on her elbows, she looks around, stunned by this colorful world.

GABRIELLE

...Elysian Fields! Wow! Only heroes wind up here.

(then; realizing)

...dead heroes.

(then; seeing she's NUDE)

...dead, naked heroes!

Hearing something O.S., she hides in a clump of tall grass as the approaching SOUND takes on a familiar TUNE:

JOXER (O.S.)

(singing)

Joxer, the Mighty; master of geography.

Here to guide you on your way.

Stick with me, you'll never stray.

If you're in a land that's new,

I'm the man who'll get you through,

(even when you're slightly nude).

I'm Joxer! Joxer, the Mighty!

*

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED: 2

13

Recognizing the song, Gabrielle peers wryly out of the tall grass.

GABRIELLE

So much for the Elysian Fields theory.

She looks off in the direction of the SONG as... JOXER'S HEAD pops out of the grass beside her and he peers off, too, following her searching gaze.

A BEAT. Then, nonplussed, Gabrielle turns back, sees Joxer beside her, and screams -- scaring Joxer who screams back.

GABRIELLE

Ahhh!!!

JOXER

Ahhh!!!

Bristling, Gabrielle glares.

GABRIELLE

How did you --? Go away! Can't you see I'm --

Looking around for something to cover herself with, Gabrielle grabs some tall shafts of grass that TRANSFORM into the flowing, green gown of the Tarot "Empress." Completely thrown, she stands, as does Joxer who takes her arm and leads her to a stone bench.

*
*

GABRIELLE

Okay, you've had your fun. Now what's going on? Where are we?

As if in answer, a WHIRLING SOUND rises and they turn to see... A LARGE, TAROT WHEEL OF FORTUNE like the one Xena spun, complete with the various fantastical creatures who ring it. Doing VOCAL EXERCISES, the creatures TUNE UP as the Anubis BLOWS A PITCH PIPE to cue them. But as they take a deep breath and open their mouths to sing the "Song of Illusia" --

JOXER

(stops them)

Skip the reprise, fellas.
I'll spread the word.

(to Gabrielle)

We're in Illusia.
You sing, or go unheard.

(leading her to Wheel)

So follow my lead, dear
Forget their whole spiel.
If you plan to leave here,
Go on -- spin the Wheel.

*
*
*
*
*

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED: 3

13

*

Gabrielle hesitates. But seeing he's serious, she eyes the Wheel a beat, then spins it, sending it whirling. Taking her arm, Joxer leads Gabrielle off. But as she exits...

...her SHADOW stays behind, morphing into the same hooded specter we saw watching Xena: THE TORMENT.

DISSOLVING into BLACK SMOKE, The Torment drifts up against the vivid moonlit sky where it joins MORE BLACK SMOKE.

PANNING down the smoke, we see it emanates from...

14 EXT. A BESIEGED VILLAGE - NIGHT

14

Callisto and her little white dog lead Xena into the midst of a THRONG OF WARRIORS who are sacking and burning the village. Recognizing Xena, they begin CHANTING as they seize her, tossing her up and down in the air exuberantly as they SING: "War and Peace" (Welcome Xena - Welcome Gabrielle).

And with every RISE UP TOWARD THE CAMERA, more and more of her "High Priestess" robes are being replaced with the armbands, epaulets, breastplate, etc. of the Tarot "Chariot" figure. Resistant at first, Xena begins succumbing to the SONG, as her outfit becomes more militant.

All Warriors: (chant) Hail Xe-Nah!...Xe-Nah!...

Praise the winds of chance that blew
Xena back where friends are true
We would fight to death for you, Brave Xena!

When your mighty chakram arcs
Throwing fierce magnetic sparks
No one ever hits her marks like Xena.

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED:

14

All Warriors: Famed for prowess with a sword
 Who's as feared and as adored
 You've not lived till you've been gored
 by Xena

Lifting her on their shoulders, the Warriors carry Xena up
 a staircase crowned by a large throne, its back to us.

W#1: You're the warrior princess who's as
 strong as an oak
W#2: You've got eyes that can tear out the heart
 of a bloke
W#3: With one look you can wilt a flower
W#4: Curdle milk or make men cower
All Warriors: Welcome home... Xena, Welcome Home!

The Warriors deposit Xena at the foot of the throne which
 spins around as the SONG HITS A NATURAL PAUSE, revealing...

...ARES, wearing the regally militant clothes of the Tarot
 "Emperor" as he casually polishes the glinting sword in his
 lap.

XENA
 Ares. I figured. But why the big
 production? What's the point?

Ares: (kissing his fingers; RECITATIVO)
 You are the most divine, delicious Warrior
 A man can't help saluting your return
 And if you start my heart, it's just the way
 you slash and burn!

Joining Xena, Ares toys with his sword as he and Xena
 descend the stairs and he SINGS:

Ares: Bewitching woman, straining at the armor plate
 You singe me with the ardor you inflame
 And in my carnal heart, there's not a sorry
 shred of shame.

Reaching the bottom of the stairs, Ares and Xena move
 through the throng of Warriors who join Ares in SINGING:

All: You and me love War!
 Doesn't matter what it's for
 Pandemonium reigns, and we're bludgeoning brains

 Give us War War War
 Keep it down to a roar
W#1: Words of wisdom Ares said:
Ares: When in battle keep your head!
All: Warriors love War War War!

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED: 2 14

Parting before them, the Warriors move aside to reveal...
a sphinx-drawn chariot. *

CUT TO:

15 EXT. A PICTURE-PERFECT FARMING VILLAGE - DAY 15

Colorfully dressed VILLAGERS go about their business as
Gabrielle follows Joxer into town, staring to realize: *

GABRIELLE
I know this place... that shop... these
people... It's home. It's Poteidaia!

The Villagers recognize her, too. *

VILLAGER #1
Hey, look! It's Gabrielle! *

VILLAGER #2
Gabrielle! You're back! *

The village BELLS start to PEAL as Gabrielle sees a large
haystack and reacts to see -- *

-- her sister, LILA, sitting atop the hay as the Villagers
begin to CHANT: *

All Villagers: (chant) Gab-rielle!...Gab-rielle! *

Accompanied by a GLISSANDO, Lila slides down the haystack
and makes her way toward Gabrielle as the Villagers SING: *

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED:

15

All Villagers: O'er the bridge of tears she's crossed
And she's paid a fearful cost
Her blood innocence is lost, Gabrielle

*

Now the past has set her free
And she's traveled home to be
With her old friends you and me, Gabrielle

*

As the Villagers take SOLOS, Gabrielle makes her way
through them toward Lila.

*

*

V#1: You've been plucked out from the heart of our lives
for so long

V#2: Now we're grateful you've come back to the place
you belong

V#3: For what ails you, the panacea

V#4: Surely waits in Po-tei-daia

All Villagers: Now that you're here; Welcome Home,
Gabrielle, Welcome Home!

Reaching each other, Lila and Gabrielle hug warmly.

*

GABRIELLE

Lila?! Sister? I can't believe it!

Lila: (singing) Villains, fools and kings have made
their mark on you
Leave their easy evil in the dust
If your child had lived we'd make her welcome, too

As the Villagers SING, Lila ushers Gabrielle through the
crowd which parts before them to reveal... a little donkey.
A BURLY VILLAGER lifts Gabrielle up to sit sidesaddle on
the donkey as the SINGING CONTINUES:

*

*

*

*

All Villagers: You and me love peace
With the ducks and goats and geese
Wile the hours away - baking bread,
pitching hay

We love Peace! Peace! Peace!
Simple joys never cease

V#1: Nothing changes but the time

Lila: We don't even change our mind

All Villagers: Villagers love Peace! Peace! Peace!

INTERCUT:

16 EXT. BESIEGED VILLAGE - NIGHT

16

With Ares and Xena aboard, the CHARIOT moves through the
throng of Warriors as Ares SINGS:

*

*

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED:

16

Ares: Pulverizing foes requires strategy
There's no mortal born who meets your skill.
Xena join my vision, it's your destiny

*

As he SINGS the phrase "meets your skill," Ares presents
the sword he's been playing with to Xena who... takes it.

*

*

All Warriors: You and me Love War!
Doesn't matter what it's for
W#2: Chop the tree down, burn the root
Ares: Vengeance can be such a hoot
All Warriors: Warriors love War! War! War!

INTERCUT:

17 EXT. FARMING VILLAGE - DAY

17

With Gabrielle aboard the donkey, Lila leads it through the
crowd of Villagers as she SINGS:

*

*

Lila: Xena was no friend, she worked to twist your mind
Though you tried to change her deadly ways
Take the scythe, it's just a case
of killing to be kind

*

As she SINGS the phrase "deadly ways," Lila presses the
scythe she's mysteriously acquired into Gabrielle's hands.

*

*

All Villagers: You and me love Peace
With the ducks and goats and geese

V#1: Sit and watch the world go by
Lila: Vegetate until you die
All Villagers: Villagers love Peace! Peace! Peace!

INTERCUT:

18 EXT. BESIEGED VILLAGE - NIGHT/EXT. FARMING VILLAGE - DAY

18

Lost to the MUSIC, both Xena and Gabrielle cast long,
ominous SHADOWS as they move toward doors in the huts of
their respective villages as the two SONGS OVERLAP each
other with countermelodies:

*

*

Warriors: We Love War
Villagers: Peace is such a lovely state...War can kill
you so can hate

Warriors: Fear! Lies! Smite and smote and
pulverize

Villagers: Here the simple life's a de-lite

(CONTINUED)

18 CONTINUED:

18

Warriors: Pus And Gore

Villagers: Just you put your hand in mine, sure your future's on the line

Warriors: You've a son you must avenge, know you must extract revenge

Villagers: You must know that when

Warriors: Don't be put aside by beauty, Xena you must do your duty!!

Villagers: Hope died she freed you!!

Xena and Gabrielle open their doors, see each other, and freeze.

All Voices: Ah ah ah ah ah ah ah --
Ah ah ah ah ah ah ah --

Shrill Stabs: Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah!

Villagers: Peace!

Warriors: War!

Villagers: Peace!

Warriors: War!

Gabrielle brings her scythe down at Xena who deflects it, then legsweeps Gabrielle to the ground on the Farming Village side of the door. Looming over her, Xena plunges her sword straight into Gabrielle's heart!

*

All Voices: (one final harmonized) Ah!!

Music/Joe LoDuca Lyrics/Pamela Phillips Oland

Gabrielle stares up at Xena... then dies. HOLD on Xena's hate-filled face.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

19 EXT. FARMING VILLAGE - DAY

19

Xena stands over Gabrielle's body, her sword still stuck in Gab's chest. The background Villagers and Warriors are frozen. Xena stares down at the body, her face unchanged from the expression of rage that she held.

Someone SNICKERS in the background. Then another person LAUGHS. Xena's eyes dart to the crowd, then back to Gabrielle. A BEAT, then she PULLS THE SWORD from Gabrielle's body abruptly. Joxer moves to Gabrielle, kneeling down, and resting her head in his lap. He looks up at Xena who meets his eyes defiantly.

*
*
*

Then Ares walks up to her AND BEGINS TO SING HIS SONG TO HER AS CALLISTO TRIES TO INTERVENE WITHIN THE SONG, "Melt Into Me."

Ares: You're lost and confused
 But I understand
 This once beloved friend
 Has been slain by your hand

 You feel all alone
 Betrayed and adrift
 But maybe her loss
 Can be viewed as a gift

 Now I'll be your rock
 Your strength and support
 Your close confidant
 With whom you can consort

 I know you completely
 Come melt into me
 Unleashing the power
 Of your destiny

 You've proved to yourself
 Now that you've made the kill
 That you're just like me
 With as evil a will

 Our forces are meant to
 Be merged into one
 The world will be panicked
 When our work is done

(CONTINUED)

19 CONTINUED:

19

Ares (cont): (Let) the music of war
(With) its notes of despair
Be both our love song
And the passion we share

Imagine how fearsome
Together we'd be
So feel what I'm feeling
Come melt into me

Callisto: Did that fill you with glee
To kill your little friend
Did that ease your suff'ring
Or bring it to an end

All your days were consumed
With her blood on your mind
Now you've got your trophy
What pleasure can you find
Let go

All of your anger will poison you yet
Unless you can just
Let go

Xena finally extricates herself long enough to look at Gabrielle. Then:

ARES

Nothing more,
Need to be said,
Ding dong,
The bitch is dead.

And, with a bow, Ares disappears.

Xena continues staring at Gabrielle as Joxer moves away from the body. The enormity of what she's done begins to hit her. The victory versus the cost. Crossing to Gabrielle's body, Xena takes it in her arms.

*
*

XENA

(not singing)

I... I killed her. I have my
revenge... I killed my best... I killed
Gabrielle.

GABRIELLE'S VOICE

You killed me?

Xena looks up to see Gabrielle coming out of one of the houses. Xena looks at her, then looks down at Gabrielle's body. Gabrielle sees the body as well. A beat, then everyone SHIMMERS AND DISSOLVES -- including Gabrielle's body -- leaving Xena alone with Gabrielle:

*
*
*

(CONTINUED)

19 CONTINUED: 2

19

Joining Xena, Gabrielle stares at where her "body" once lay. Xena's response is one of quickly covered relief and confusion.

GABRIELLE

By the gods... you did. You killed me.
You were trying before, but I didn't
know if you would really...

XENA

Wait...

(to herself; mental wheels
whirling)

None of this is real... Callisto,
Joxer... Ares... I didn't kill you...
I killed an illusion.

GABRIELLE

If that's supposed to make me feel
better --

XENA

Stop! I need... I need to think.

Glancing around, Xena spots:

THE FLOATING WHEEL

hanging in the air. Gabrielle notices it, too, and follows
Xena as she crosses to it.

GABRIELLE

That wheel again... what is it? What
does it mean?

Reacting to the fact Gabrielle's seen the Wheel before, too,
Xena eyes it speculatively.

XENA

Us. Somehow it's all about us.

And gripping the Wheel, she spins it, HARD.

*

*

(CONTINUED)

19 CONTINUED: 3

19

*

The Wheel rotates into a blur, the center glowing until a LIGHTNING BOLT strikes from the sky, hitting the Wheel and casting a blinding white light. Xena and Gabrielle turn to protect their eyes. The WHITE FLASH obliterates them like a nuclear blast. Then, the WHITE FLASH disappears, leaving the FLOATING WHEEL, as it spins lazily to a stop. Xena and Gabrielle are nowhere to be seen. A beat of this, then:

CUT TO:

20 OMITTED

20

21 EXT. TOWER OF BABEL - DAY

21

A large, imposing temple-like structure. Looking mysterious and ancient, it reeks of evil malevolence. The shadows reflect back on themselves, giving it a certain Escher-like feel. Over it, blue-grey clouds boil. Suddenly, a LIGHTNING BOLT screams from the clouds and hits the tallest tower on the temple. It holds there, as the bolt writhes.

CUT TO:

22 INT. TOWER OF BABEL - LARGE, CAVERNOUS ROOM - DAY

22

It looks like this might have been the home of a great civilization at one time, but not anymore. The ceiling is high and the walls are covered in decayed remnants of a warrior culture. Our ever-present Wheel of Fortune floats nearby.

*
*

LIGHTNING FLASH

which WHITES OUT the room. As it recedes, we find Xena and Gabrielle. A moment of silence as they both take in their surroundings, then:

XENA

(thinking aloud)

Everything about this place -- this "Illusia" -- has been bright and cheery. The colors, the music. But this place is dark. It's meant to scare us.

*

(CONTINUED)

22 CONTINUED:

22

GABRIELLE
And what if you're wrong?

XENA
You got any better ideas?

GABRIELLE
You're asking me?! That's a first.
Ever since we met, you've always made
the decisions.

ECHOES start building from the words, "Ever since..."

XENA
Because you always take so long to
reach one. Writing down the pros and
cons, weighing the options --

MORE ECHOES (stemming from her words "always take so long")
join the others in a RISING DIN of deafening SOUND that
makes Xena and Gabrielle cringe and hold their ears till the
ECHOES DIE DOWN.

(CONTINUED)

22 CONTINUED: 2

22

GABRIELLE

What was that? I didn't notice any echoes when we first got here.

XENA

Just keep your mouth shut till we get out. *

GABRIELLE

Don't try to shut me up! You always do that, always treat me like I'm -- *

The ECHOES build again to such a deafening SOUND, it forces Gabrielle to shut up and cover her ears till the SOUND DIES DOWN. *

GABRIELLE

What's causing that?

XENA

We are.

(then; testing her theory)

Or, I should say, you are.

GABRIELLE

(rising to the bait)

There you go again! Blaming me like always. Why is it never your fault when --

The ECHOES erupt again, and Xena claps her hand over Gabrielle's mouth.

XENA

(shouting over the ECHOES)

It's the past! It's when we accuse each other about the past. The echoes start and we can't hear!

(CONTINUED)

22 CONTINUED: 3

22

Gabrielle has her hands over her ears.

GABRIELLE
How can we stop it?

XENA
Tell me how you feel. Right now.
Nothing from the past.

Gabrielle looks at her, perplexed. She thinks. Finally, she admits:

GABRIELLE
I... I hurt. Inside.

The ECHOES DIE ALMOST IMMEDIATELY. But Gabrielle remains focused on Xena, her face desolate as she asks:

GABRIELLE
...Don't you?

Seeing Gabrielle's suffering, releases an awareness of her own deep pain and Xena turns away. Then, moved beyond mere words, XENA SOFTLY STARTS TO SING the FIRST HALF of "Our Hearts Are Hurting."

Xena: My heart is hurting beyond words.
The pain is tearing up my soul.
These days have seen my spirit die.
My life propelled out of control.

My wounds lie naked to the world.
My depth of suffering exposed.
This damaged past can never heal
Until this nightmare book is closed.

Hearing her, Gabrielle hesitantly starts to reach out to Xena as she, too, SINGS:

Gabrielle: My heart is hurting beyond words.
The pain is tearing up my soul.
Please tell me how I can retrieve
The life that all this sadness stole.

Sensing Gabrielle's effort to reach her, Xena stiffens and moves away, prompting Gabrielle's returning anger as she SINGS:

Gabrielle: Because of you this happened
Because you had to carry out
Your vengeful little plans.

The ECHOES start again as she dredges up the past, inflaming Xena who whirls on her angrily as she SINGS:

(CONTINUED)

22 CONTINUED: 4

22

Xena: It's you who should feel guilty
 Because of you my child is dead
 His blood is on your hands.

MORE ECHOES as she, too, casts blame from the past.

Gabrielle: If only you had never brought me there.

Xena: If only you had done what you were told.

The ECHOES keep BUILDING and BUILDING and --

(CONTINUED)

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22 CONTINUED: 5

22

Gabrielle: It's you who's to be blamed.

Xena: And you should be ashamed.

Gabrielle: It's your fault!

Xena: No it's yours!

Gabrielle: How could you!

Xena: How could you?

There is a massive EXPLOSION OF SOUND as --

THE CENTER OF THE WHEEL EXPLODES!!!!

Xena is knocked to the opposite wall, Gabrielle is knocked to the ground. The center of the Wheel is now inky blackness.

Suddenly, FLAMING TENDRILS (like the ones in "THE DELIVERER") snake out from the center of the Wheel and grab Gabrielle, who SCREAMS.

GABRIELLE

No! Not again! It's Dahak! He's got me!

And the tendrils begin to drag her toward the Wheel. Xena rises, as if to move to help her friend. Suddenly, Ares appears, manifesting himself between Xena and Gabrielle.

ARES

Let her go, Xena. After all she's done, all she's cost you... What can she possibly mean to you now?

Xena holds Ares' gaze as Gabrielle is dragged toward the Wheel, her nails making marks in the floor. Then Xena slowly turns, and starts to walk away, as --

-- Gabrielle SCREAMS.

Xena takes two steps, then launches herself at the wall in front of her. Bouncing off it, she backflips OVER ARES and lands next to Gabrielle. Grabbing her, they are both dragged INTO THE WHEEL with a fiery explosion!

23 OMITTED

23*

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

24 INT. ILLUSIA'S DAHAK TEMPLE - DAY

24

As we remember it the first time we saw it in "THE DELIVERER." The altar is intact. It all seems the same. Except for blood... on the Altar, dripping from the side, forming a pool near the base. A beat.

A FLAME erupts from the end of the room and travels the length, circling the Altar, encompassing it, and moving away, depositing Gabrielle. As the flames dissipate, Gabrielle looks down to see the blood on the altar... on her hands. She looks at them and around the room as fear overcomes her...

GABRIELLE

No... not here...

Then, in the background, a low CHANTING begins.

GABRIELLE

Dahak...! It's where it started.
I can't -- Not again. I can't!

Panicked with fear, she rises to run when HANDS SEIZE HER and, PULLING BACK, we see Xena drawing her close.

XENA

Gabrielle, no! Don't run away.
Think! Everything about this world
has been a torment! We've been pulled
through it... guided through it for a
reason! And whatever it is...
whatever happens, one thing I know:
we have to face it... together.

Gabrielle looks up, searching Xena's eyes for the possibility of a way back to each other when:

THE ALTAR

begins to open, and BLACK SMOKE seeps out. Rising, it starts to coagulate as it SINGS -- low at first, then growing louder and stronger -- the SONG: "Hatred is the Star" (sung at a good clip):

(CONTINUED)

24 CONTINUED:

24

The Torment: It begins very small,
 Seems like nothing much at all
 Just a germ, just a speck, just a grain
 But the seed has been sewn,
 And before you know it's grown
 It has spread through you like a stain

Having solidified, the smoke has become... THE HOODED
 TORMENT who issues a HORRENDOUS HERALDING that opens
 CRYPTS from which MORE BLACK SMOKE spews before it
 transforms into SIX robed and hooded FIGURES. *

As Xena and Gabrielle react, the HERALDING STOPS and, one
 by one, four of the Figures pull off their hoods to
 reveal... CAESAR... KHRAFSTAR... CALLISTO... ARES. *

As Xena reacts with a flash of realization, A SERIES OF
 FAST CLOSE SHOTS reveal it's too late as she and Gabrielle
 are strapped up and chained down by the Figures while THE
 TORMENT keeps SINGING: *

The Torment: And its power will strangle
 Your love and your joy
 And its hunger consumes
 For it lives to destroy

A MUSICAL CARRY lets us PULL BACK to reveal the entire
 tableau: Xena strapped to a cross at the head of the altar
 on which Gabrielle is chained. The six Figures stand
 alongside them, two still hooded, while the Torment stands
 at the foot of the altar. *

 XENA
 Gabrielle, it's hate! That's what
 we're fighting! Hatred! These are
 all people we hate!

Revelling in their certain victory, the Torment and his
 crew SING the CHORUS with gusto: *

CHORUS: Hate is The Star
 It becomes who you are
 Not the hated but the hater
 Has a torment that's greater

 It will eat you alive
 Consume you and spit you out
 Hate's gonna win
 That there's no doubt about
 Hate doesn't care who you are --
 Hate is The Star

As the SONG CONTINUES, the two remaining Hooded Figures
 move: one to pick up a large mallet, the other to pick up
 a dagger (the one from "The Deliverer"). *

(CONTINUED)

24 CONTINUED: 2

24

CHORUS: Learning hate is an art,
 Even people who are smart
 Can be caught, can be crushed,
 Can be creamed
 Hate has swallowed you whole,
 Did you think you're in control?
 Hate you thought, hate you spoke,
 Hate you dreamed

*

The Hooded Figure holding the mallet approaches Xena, while
 the Hooded Figure gripping the dagger approaches Gabrielle.

*

*

CHORUS: All your hate gave me substance,
 Your lives are undone
 It's your eye of destruction,
 Your hatred has won

*

Lyrics/Pamela Phillips Oland Music/Joe LoDuca

Throwing off their hoods, the two Figures reveal they
 are... Xena and Gabrielle!

*

*

GABRIELLE

*

*

Xena -- it's us!

Reacting, Xena's mind races for an answer as the Gabrielle
 Figure draws the mallet back, while the Xena Figure looms
 over Gabrielle, dagger poised above her when, suddenly --

*

*

*

CLOSE ON XENA

*

XENA

*

*

Ahhhh...!

PULL BACK and WIDEN as Xena's CRY transforms into the
 opening NOTE of the SECOND HALF of HER DUET WITH GABRIELLE:
 "Our Hearts Are Hurting." Eyes locked on Gabrielle, she
 prompts her to join in.

*

*

*

*

Xena: I never dreamed
 That we'd be distanced by a hate
 That all the trust we had would go.

*

Gabrielle: How could I hate you?

*

Xena: How could it come to pass, this awful
 twist of fate?

*

*

Gabrielle: How could I hurt you?

*

Xena: This Madness can't be so

*

Gabrielle: I can't believe it

*

(CONTINUED)

24 CONTINUED: 3

24

Xena: I never dreamed that any barriers could rise.

Gabrielle: Or that I'd ever see the Stranger in your eyes.

Xena: Our hearts were hurting both the same

Gabrielle: The hurt was tearing up our souls

Xena: The fury in us made us blind.

Gabrielle: We could not see beyond the pain.

Xena: If we can turn again to love.

Gabrielle: If we can heal these open wounds. *

Xena: We'll leave this hatred far behind.

Gabrielle: So not a trace of hate remains.

Both: We'll overcome our damaged past. *
And we'll grow stronger side by side.
To stand together through the storms
We're safe 'cause love will be our guide.

Music/Joe LoDuca Lyrics/Pamela Phillips Oland *

The effect of the song on the Figures is immediate as, one by one, they EXPLODE until we are left with... the Torment who disappears as their SONG ENDS.

As the last note fades, their ropes and chains fall away, freeing the women who scramble off the altar and cross. Collecting themselves, they turn to each other. But before they can speak, a RUMBLING SOUND distracts them and, looking O.S., they react to see:

(CONTINUED)

24 CONTINUED: 4

24

THE WHEEL OF FORTUNE

floating in the air against a background of blue sky and clouds. Suddenly, a sparkling WATERFALL erupts from the center of the Wheel which splits and PULLS AWAY to either side, taking the clouds and blue sky with it to reveal:

*
*
*
*

24A INT. A SMALL GROTTO - DAY

24A*

The waterfall thins and widens as BRIGHT SUNLIGHT shines through from the other side, backlighting the FIGURE OF A YOUNG MAN.

*

XENA
(staring; incredulous)
Solan...?

GABRIELLE
It's the way out! It's gotta be!
(grabbing Xena's hand)
Come on! Let's go! It's the way home!

Pulling Xena after her, Gabrielle runs to the Waterfall where SOLAN'S IMAGE HAS DISAPPEARED. Rushing into the water, Gabrielle pulls Xena after her when, suddenly --

-- Xena SCREAMS and releases Gabrielle's hand, recoiling from the Waterfall as she stares down at her hand and arm to see...

...her skin is blistered and burned where the Waterfall has touched it!

MALEVOLENT LAUGHTER sounds behind her. But the look on Xena's face says it's no surprise to her as she turns to face...

...the hooded Torment who reappears and glides toward her, his LAUGHTER BUILDING.

*

GABRIELLE
(from within waterfall)
Hurry, Xena! Come on! Quick!

XENA
(eyes locked on the Torment)
I can't, Gabrielle.

(CONTINUED)

24A CONTINUED:

24A

GABRIELLE

Yes, you can! Here --
(reaching through waterfall)
Take my hand!

XENA

It's no use. Go, Gabrielle, while
you still can.

GABRIELLE

I won't leave you. I'm coming back.

XENA

NO! You do and you'll never get
out!

GABRIELLE

(starting back through)
I don't care! I'm not afraid of some
hooded --

SOLAN

-- It's Ming T'ien!

With a SAVAGE LAUGH, the unknown Torment throws back his
hood to reveal it is, indeed... MING T'IEN.

Through the glistening water, we see Gabrielle's confused
shock as Ming T'ien's LAUGHTER RISES.

XENA

I killed him, Gabrielle. I told you
I didn't -- promised I wouldn't, but...

GABRIELLE

You lied... You knew what it meant.
You gave me your word, and still...
(profoundly betrayed)
...You lied.

Ming T'ien HOWLS with LAUGHTER. But Xena stays focused on
Gabrielle as, softly first, then with growing passion, she
SINGS A SONG ASKING GABRIELLE'S FORGIVENESS.

Torn, Gabrielle hesitates, conflicted. But behind her in
the waterfall, SOLAN'S IMAGE REAPPEARS, growing stronger.

Seeing him, XENA INCLUDES HIM IN HER SONG, apologizing for
never having been the mother he deserved, for failing him
in so many ways... for failing them both.

But Solan simply smiles, then turns to Gabrielle who holds
his gaze a BEAT, drawing wisdom and comfort from it.

(CONTINUED)

24A CONTINUED: 2

24A

Then Gabrielle turns to Xena... and extends her hand, her eyes warm with forgiveness.

Heedless of the danger, Xena reaches for Gabrielle and, as THEIR HANDS MEET, the Ming T'ien Torment EXPLODES!

Drawing Xena into the waterfall, Gabrielle and she share a smile that's been a long time coming. Then the EVOCATIVE MELODY rises and Gabrielle steps aside to reveal...

...Solan. Rushing to him, Xena reaches for her son as he moves into her arms.

XENA

Solan, I'm so sorry... so sorry...

SOLAN

I know, Mother. I've always known.
(pulling back; eyeing her warmly)
That's why I did all this.

XENA

So it was you.

SOLAN

(nods)
You had to fight your hate before it killed you -- killed what you'd become... with Gabrielle.
(earnestly)
You don't know now, but it's important, Mother. You'll see.

But all Xena sees is her son, restored to her as if to give her a second chance to say what she's wanted to tell him all his life:

XENA

I love you, Solan...

And reaching for him, Xena hugs him close as the SUNLIGHT behind them glows BRIGHTER and BRIGHTER...

MATCH DISSOLVE TO:

25 EXT. BEACH BENEATH CLIFF - DAY - ON XENA'S EMBRACE

25

as she draws back, reacting to find... Gabrielle has replaced Solan in her arms. A bittersweet pang quickly transforms to a look of joyful peace as Xena meets Gabrielle's eyes.

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED:

25

We're home. GABRIELLE

*
*

At last. XENA

*
*

And reaching out, they hold each other, as we:

*

FADE OUT.

THE END

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