

XENATM

WARRIOR PRINCESS

"WHEN IN ROME . . ."

by
Steven L. Sears

SEASON 3
EPISODE #16

Prod. #V0416

XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS

"When In Rome..."

Written by
Steven L. Sears

Directed by
John Laing

Revised Pages: 17, 18, 21, 22, 25, 26

Executive Producers

Sam Raimi, Robert Tapert & R.J. Stewart

SHOOTING DRAFT

Dec. 19, 1997

Rev. Jan. 05, 1998 - Pink

Rev. Jan. 06, 1998 - Blue

Rev. Jan. 14, 1998 - Yellow

Prod. #V0416

XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS

"When in Rome..."

CAST LIST

XENA
GABRIELLE

| | |
|--------------|----------------|
| CAESAR | |
| BRUTUS | (BROO-tus) |
| MENDALA | (MEN-da-la) |
| CRASSUS | (CRA-sus) |
| VERCINIX | (ver-KIN-icks) |
| POMPEY | (POM-pay) |
| BOAT CAPTAIN | |
| CENTURIAN | |
| GUARD | |

Referred to in Dialog:

| | |
|----------|-----------------|
| EMPERIUS | (em-PEER-ee-us) |
| GARDINUS | (gar-DEEN-us) |

Prod. #V0416

XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS

"When in Rome..."

SET LIST

INTERIORS:

CAESAR'S PALACE - LONG ROOM
- BEDROOM
BOAT - HOLD
PRISON

EXTERIORS:

EMBATTLED VILLAGE
BARTHO CAMP
TRAIL TOWARD HARBOR
ROAD TO HARBOR
ROAD TO ROME
BOAT - TOP DECK
ROMAN SUBURBS
COLISEUM - CAESAR'S BOX
- ARENA INCLUDING CAESAR'S BOX

Prod. #V0416

XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS

"When in Rome..."

CHRONOLOGY

| | |
|---------|-----------------|
| DAY 1 | SCENES # 1 - 10 |
| NIGHT 1 | SCENES #11 - 14 |
| DAY 2 | SCENES #15 - 21 |
| NIGHT 2 | SCENES #22 - 24 |
| DAY 3 | SCENES #25 - 33 |

XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS

"When In Rome..."

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 EXT. EMBATTLED VILLAGE - DAY - ON SWORDS CLASHING

1

Sparks fly as the blades collide. PULL BACK to see a village in the middle of an attack. Barricades have been set up and obviously overrun. The attackers wear familiar uniforms of the Roman Legions. The defenders wear the tattered "uniforms" of a people's army. Over this, we SUPER: "GAUL"

VERCINIX is the largest of the Gauls. Handsome and muscular, he is almost godlike in his appearance and presence. He dispatches Roman Soldiers left and right with determination. It's obvious the battle has been going on for quite some time because Vercinix and his followers are tired. Near the wall of one building are elderly men, women and children, huddling in fear. The Romans retreat, giving Vercinix and his Soldiers a brief rest. He turns to them.

VERCINIX

They're regrouping.

One of his followers, a warrior woman named MENDALA, rushes up to him.

MENDALA

Vercinix, the Romans have attacked the pass. We can hold them but...

VERCINIX

How long?

MENDALA

Not long. Enough time to get everyone out. Most everyone.

Vercinix takes only a second to consider.

VERCINIX

Clear the village. Take to the northern hills and regroup.

(to the Soldiers)

The Gauls will not be defeated!!

They cheer and begin to clear out the civilians. Mendala sets herself for the battle.

VERCINIX

No... Mendala... go with them.

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED:

1

MENDALA

But...

VERCINIX

They'll need you. Someone has to lead.
And someone has to stay here.

MENDALA

You against a Roman legion...

VERCINIX

I'll give you as much time as I can.
And take a few of the bastards with me.

She stares at him. Then kisses him. This is not the normal soldier relationship. As they separate...

VERCINIX

Now go. Get our children to safety.

MENDALA

I love you.

And she is gone. And Vercinix is alone.

Then... there is the YELL of a charge in the distance. Vercinix picks up his spear and throws it. It hits the first Roman Soldier in the chest. But he is followed by many others.

The battle is furious. Vercinix fights like a madman protecting his family and village. Finally, a horse rides in with a huge soldier on its back. This is RESPICK. He has a net in one hand and a club in the other. He tosses the net onto Vercinix, then wheels his horse around, swinging the club. Vercinix brings his sword up to block the expected blow, but Respick slips to the side of his saddle to aim low at Vercinix's legs. Vercinix is knocked onto his back. Soldiers jump onto the netted Vercinix, but he throws them all off. As he turns, Respick gallops by, nailing him on the head with the club. Vercinix falls. Respick leaps off his horse and walks to Vercinix, standing over him. A BEAT, then another horse walks in. Through bloody eyes, Vercinix looks up to the rider on the horse.

With the sun behind him, we can't make out the features until the horse shifts position and we can see the leader of the Romans. CAESAR.

CAESAR

So, the legend is lacking. You're not quite the god the stories make you out to be.

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED: 2

1

VERCINIX

Mortals can be conquered, Caesar.
But you'll never conquer Gaul. My
people...

CAESAR

Your people mean nothing to me. Yet.
I only want you, Vercinix. Because
with you... I'm going to secure an
empire.

Off that cocky smile of Caesar's, we:

DISSOLVE TO:

2 EXT. PARTHO CAMP - DAY

2

Over this, we SUPER "MESOPOTAMIA." The camp of a victorious
army. This time, though, the dejected prisoners are Roman
Soldiers. They are paraded through the camp to the jeers of
Parthian Soldiers. The Romans are halted and stand at
attention. A PARTHIAN LEADER walks in front of the lines,
examining the Romans. He reaches past some Soldiers and
grabs CRASSUS, another big, godlike man, who is wearing
distinctive armor showing him to be a leader of the Romans.
The armor is tarnished, however, by his recent defeat. But
he walks tall as he is dragged to the middle of the camp.
The Parthian Leader checks the blade of his sword, obviously
in preparation of executing Crassus.

A familiar YELL is heard. Everyone looks about in a bit of
confusion as a LARGE BAG sails through the air and lands in
the middle of the Romans and breaks open. It contains
swords. Lots of swords. A fraction of a BEAT, and the
Romans pounce on the swords and begin fighting the
Parthians, trying desperately to escape.

Into this mass confusion rides XENA on ARGO. Crassus looks
amazed...

CRASSUS

Xena...

Xena knocks over a couple of Soldiers to get to Crassus.

XENA

Hello, Crassus. How's your backside?

Without waiting for a response, she throws a rope around his
waist and takes off. Crassus sails backwards, landing on
the aforementioned backside, and is dragged ignominiously
out of the fighting camp.

CUT TO:

3 EXT. TRAIL TOWARD HARBOR - DAY

3

Gabrielle is waiting as Xena rides in quickly, dragging Crassus. Xena jumps off Argo.

GABRIELLE

The Captain said he'd hold the boat for us. But I don't think he's going to hold it for long.

XENA

Fine with me. One of those armies is going to be coming up this trail any minute.

She helps Crassus to his feet as Gabrielle looks nervously down the road.

CRASSUS

Xena. I'm reluctant to thank you for saving me. After all, last time I saw you you said you'd kill me on sight.

GABRIELLE

Talk later. We really should be getting on...

XENA

That was before you became useful.

CRASSUS

Crassus, a member of the Triumvirate of Imperial Rome, useful to Xena?

XENA

I'm going to exchange you for Vercinix.

CRASSUS

Vercinix... he was captured by Caesar last...

(dawning)

You're... going up against Caesar?
I have to admit... I wouldn't want to miss this.

*
*
*

XENA

I guarantee... you'll have a front row seat.

*

And off this, we:

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

4 EXT. BOAT - TOP DECK - DAY

4

Crassus stands near the rail, hands tied to a beam.

A BEAT, then Gabrielle brings him food.

GABRIELLE

We'll be pulling into port soon. Here. I hope you like gruel. I know it's not what Roman Elite are used to eating...

CRASSUS

You hate me, too. Why?

GABRIELLE

I don't hate you...

CRASSUS

I've looked in the eyes of a thousand men at the end of my sword. I've seen fear, surprise... and hatred. I know the look.

GABRIELLE

You're a friend of Caesar.

CRASSUS

Ah. And you remember the stories Xena told you about him. Or, perhaps... you have your own story of Caesar?

(no response)

Well, let me set you straight. I'm not a friend, I'm a convenience. Just as he is to me. As Pompey is. The Triumvirate is not an easy alliance.

GABRIELLE

Triumvirate? What's that?

XENA'S VOICE

It means three warlord rulers instead of one.

She walks up.

CRASSUS

Warlords? Far from it. It's politics. It's all about...

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED:

4

XENA

Power, nothing more.

(to Gabrielle)

Caesar, Pompey and Crassus share control of Rome and the provinces. Each one serves as a balance to the others. They hate each other... but they need each other.

CRASSUS

(smiling)

And now there is no balance, because of you. Yes, Xena, it is about power. The appearance of it. The possession of it. The wielding of it. You're quite familiar with that, aren't you?

GABRIELLE

That's not who she is now.

CRASSUS

Yes. I heard about the adventure with Boadicea. You're now on moral campaigns, are you?

XENA

I pick and choose my battles.

CRASSUS

Based on what? Your hatred of Caesar? Hardly seems objective.

Xena moves to him and grabs his hands. Applying pressure on the fleshy part of his thumb, she immobilizes him long enough to take his ring off. She releases him.

CRASSUS

And a thief. I'm impressed.

XENA

I need to prove to Caesar that I have you. That way I can make the deal for Vercinix.

CRASSUS

Do you think Caesar is going to release a man with the reputation of Vercinix? His capture is a source of power. As will be his execution.

XENA

Not for long.

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED: 2

4

CRASSUS

(considering)

I see your logic. Caesar needs me. He's cultivated quite a following at home, but at a cost. I still have an army in the field. He needs that. And the bankers that finance him... I control them.

GABRIELLE

And what does Caesar give you?

CRASSUS

The people love him. Which is why trading Vercinix for me is impossible. They're looking forward to an execution. Then again... this isn't about Vercinix, is it?

XENA

I thought so. But why don't you tell us.

CRASSUS

Assassination. Caesar's blood on your blade. This is your way of getting to him.

GABRIELLE

You're wrong.

CRASSUS

Am I? Have you ever seen Xena when she's around him? That wild, obsessed look that she has? Her judgement gets a little impaired... and others suffer.

Gabrielle shoots a look at Xena. Xena doesn't react.

XENA

I'm over that. Just like I'm over this conversation.

(to Gabrielle)

Take him below. And be careful of him. He's smart.

And she walks away, leaving Gabrielle and Crassus.

CRASSUS

I touched a nerve, didn't I? Then you know. He'll seduce her.

GABRIELLE

Not likely.

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED: 3

4

CRASSUS

Then she'll kill him.

Gabrielle takes a beat as he fixes his eyes on her.

CUT TO:

5 EXT. ROME - DAY (ESTABLISHING)

5

6 INT. CAESAR'S PALACE - LONG ROOM - DAY

6

This is the "office" of Caesar. A showcase, mostly, of treasures he has captured in his campaigns. Caesar is dressed in his senatorial robes, sitting at a long table, eating some fruit. In front of him is POMPEY, a strikingly handsome man with hard-cut features. Pompey is dressed in a military uniform. If Caesar's Palace is designed to intimidate visitors, it fails with Pompey. At the moment, Caesar is on the defensive.

CAESAR

Out of the question, Pompey! You're asking too much.

POMPEY

Am I? You've got no choice. With Crassus dead, I can take what I want.

CAESAR

You do and you'll get a civil war. The people are with me. I'm the Roman who captured the great hero of the Gauls, Vercinix. It's spectacle, Pompey. That's what they want! And I give it to them!

POMPEY

Yes, the people. An army of citizens up against the hardened legions of Pompey, the Magnus. Oh, what a battle that would be.

*

CAESAR

(dark)

To think there was a time when I admired you.

POMPEY

You still admire me. You just hate me.

(intense)

I want control of the aqueduct.

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED:

6

CAESAR

I'm not completely without power, you know. There is a vote coming up in the senate, and I need your support...

At that moment, a CENTURION enters the room and salutes.

CENTURION

Caesar... there is someone here to see you. Demands to see you. To be honest, sir, we couldn't keep her out. She's unarmed, but...

POMPEY

"She"?

Xena enters the room, followed by Gabrielle and three cut and bruised Roman Soldiers holding their swords at the ready. Caesar is in shock.

CAESAR

Xena...! This is impossible! You walk right into... this is Rome...! You... You...

XENA

There's a sentence in there just dying to get out. Sorry about your soldiers. We played tag in the forum. They don't lose well.

POMPEY

(appreciative)

This is Xena?

Caesar recovers.

CAESAR

(indifferent)

Yes. An old friend. Then enemy. Then friend; enemy... I forget where we left off.

XENA

We weren't on speaking terms. *

CAESAR

I see... Hello, Gabrielle. How are you?

(nothing)

Pompey, if you will excuse us...

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED: 2

6

POMPEY
Not likely. Besides, if this concerns Rome, it concerns me.

XENA
And who are you?

POMPEY
Pompey, the Magnus.

GABRIELLE
Magnus?

POMPEY
Short for Magnificent. As Caesar knows, a deserved title. And you had something to tell us?

Xena holds up Crassus' ring.

XENA
Crassus.

POMPEY
Crassus is dead. The Parthians...

XENA
(going on)
Crassus still has a viable army, he still has money. And I have him.

CAESAR
I see. And you're just going to hand him to me?

XENA
Yes. As soon as you hand me Vercinix.

Caesar and Pompey react.

CAESAR
That's not a small request. His capture means a lot to my people.

XENA
(re: ring)
I'll send you the finger this belongs on tomorrow. I'll be creative after that.

She turns to walk away.

CAESAR
How do I know Crassus hasn't been killed?

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED: 3

6

XENA

I'll take you to him.

CAESAR

How do I know I won't be killed?

GABRIELLE

I'll stay here in your place.

(a look to Xena)

They're not going to hurt me when
you've got him.

(CONTINUED)

XENA GABRIELLE.COM

6 CONTINUED: 3

6

A beat, then Caesar gestures to the Centurion.

CAESAR

If we aren't back by nightfall, kill her.

With that, he exits with Xena, leaving Gabrielle alone with the Centurion and Pompey.

CUT TO:

7 EXT. ROAD TO HARBOR - DAY

7

Xena is leading Argo. Caesar is on Argo's back, wearing his uniform, arms tied to his waist, and blindfolded.

CAESAR

My forces waited off the shore of Britannia for three days. But once I received word that Pompey was ready to move into Rome, I left. Britannia's not going anywhere.

A beat as he sniffs the air.

CAESAR

The ocean... you're taking me to... the beach? Or the harbor at Vilium.

Xena lets go of Argo's lead, walks to a tree, reaches behind it, pulls out a surprised Roman Soldier, and decks him with a punch. As he drops...

CAESAR

(smiling)

Don't worry. There was only one following us. I thought you'd be disappointed if I didn't try.

(sniffs air again)

Ah, the ocean. That's where we met, Xena. Do you remember those nights?

XENA

I remember the first time I stepped in cow dung, too.

Caesar laughs at this as they continue on.

CUT TO:

8 INT. CAESAR'S PALACE - LONG ROOM - DAY

8

Gabrielle is here, guarded by the Centurion. She is looking around the room, inspecting the spoils of Caesar's campaigns, careful not to touch anything. A BEAT, then Pompey enters the room with a bowl of fruit.

POMPEY

Eat.

Gabrielle looks at him suspiciously. He smiles.

POMPEY

Pick any one of these.

She points to an apple. He takes it and bites into it. She takes an orange and begins to peel it.

GABRIELLE

Sorry.

POMPEY

Don't be. This is Rome. Your instincts were right. But if I wanted to kill you, I wouldn't waste the poison. A blade is quicker.

Pompey settles into a chair and regards her.

POMPEY

Caesar has a great respect for this Xena... tell me about her.

GABRIELLE

What do you want to know?

POMPEY

All I've heard is the legends and they can be a bit biased. I'd like to hear a personal point of view.

GABRIELLE

(smiles)

Know your enemy. So you can stop her.

Pompey raises an eyebrow.

POMPEY

Stop her from what? Is there more to this than just a trade?

GABRIELLE

(covering)

No. It's just the trade. That's all.

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED:

8

POMPEY

Right.

But we can tell he's thinking. He stands and exits.

CUT TO:

9 INT. BOAT - HOLD - DAY

9

Xena takes the blindfold off Caesar to see Crassus.

CRASSUS

Caesar... I knew you'd come.

CAESAR

I don't know why I bothered. I thought you were a useful ally. A good balance against Pompey. But look at you. Captured and chained... by a woman I captured and chained. I don't know...

CRASSUS

Don't even go there. You need me, we both know it. Now make the trade and let's get out of here.

CAESAR

Unfortunately, you're right. Pompey has been pressuring me since the word of your death. But the trade can't happen right away. I've already planned a party for this evening to show off Vercinix.

Caesar walks over to Xena and stands close.

CAESAR

I'd like you to accompany me. Without your weapons, of course.

She stares back into his eyes.

XENA

Whatever it takes. Let's just get it over with.

And Xena moves toward the gangway. Alone for a brief second, Caesar turns to Crassus:

CAESAR

Her friend is the key. Divide and conquer, Crassus.

(CONTINUED)

"...Rome..." #V0416

14.

Shooting Draft 12/19/97

9 CONTINUED:

9

And, with that, Caesar follows Xena up the ramp. Off
Crassus' look, we:

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

XENA GABRIELLE.COM

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

10 EXT. ROAD TO HARBOR - DAY

10

Xena is walking Gabrielle past the boundaries of Rome.
Xena leads Argo.

XENA

I'll get back to the boat as soon as
I've scouted things out. When this
starts moving, it's going to move fast.

GABRIELLE

Assuming I can get Vercinix into the
cell...

XENA

You have to do it. Caesar's not
going through with this trade. That's
why we have to make the switch with
Vercinix. By the time he discovers
it's Crassus in his cell, it'll be
too late for him to do anything.

GABRIELLE

And that is the plan, right? The
whole plan?

XENA

What are you getting at?

GABRIELLE

I mean, I know you want Vercinix out.
But... I just want to make sure that
there's not another part of the plan
that I don't know about. Like...

XENA

Like assassinating Caesar?

GABRIELLE

Like that, yeah.

XENA

That's not why I'm here.

GABRIELLE

Right. But the opportunity might
present itself and...

There is a BEAT as they look at each other.

(CONTINUED)

10 CONTINUED:

10

XENA

This is the wrong time to have a crisis in faith. You have to trust me, Gabrielle. I'm not going to give into that. If this works out, the only one in danger will be Crassus.

GABRIELLE

Crassus? You don't mean he might be killed, do you?

XENA

That's up to Caesar and I really don't care. Crassus is not my concern. Freeing Vercinix is.

GABRIELLE

But if Caesar kills Crassus... and I helped put him there... I can't just send a man to his death.

XENA

A man? Crassus stopped being a man a long time ago. The village of Gardinus was his crowning achievement. It surrendered to him without a fight. He then crucified over a hundred men, women and children along the Appian Way.

(then)

Look. It doesn't matter. Caesar will make the decision. And Crassus is valuable to him.

And, with that, Xena turns, mounts Argo, and rides back toward Rome.

CUT TO:

11 INT. CAESAR'S PALACE - LONG ROOM - NIGHT

11

It has now been made into a beautiful reception hall. Decorated in a decadent Roman style, the elite of Rome move about the hall talking and socializing. Slaves move about with food for the guests.

Pompey is standing near the wine fountain. BRUTUS walks up to fill his glass.

POMPEY

Brutus... You were with Caesar when he met Xena. Is she to be trusted?

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED:

11

BRUTUS

No. Except in her hatred of Caesar.
Don't think of using her. She'll kill
you.

POMPEY

But she hasn't killed Caesar yet.
I wonder why that is?

BRUTUS

(beat)
Opportunity.

And Brutus moves off. Pompey considers this.

HORNS announce the arrival of Caesar. The crowd turns and
faces toward the entrance as Caesar steps through, adorned
in the beautiful white robes of royalty. There is APPLAUSE
as he stands for a moment. Then, holding up his hand, Xena
enters, touching his hand lightly. She is dressed in the
finest Rome has to offer: purple, white and gold with
jewelry to match.

There is SILENCE as he kisses her hand, then APPLAUSE as
she is received into proper Roman society. She promptly
takes a napkin and wipes her hand where he kissed her.

*
*
*

CAESAR

I was going to present Vercinix at
first, but I didn't want anything
spoiling your entrance. He can
come later.

XENA

Why bring him in at all when you're
going to free him?

CAESAR

Let me handle that. Vercinix has
become quite an issue with my people.
He defeated four Roman legions before
I brought him to heel.

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED: 2

11

Caesar goes over to speak to Brutus. Xena considers this, then looks over to see Pompey staring at her. He raises his glass in a silent toast. She does the same back at him. He takes this as a cue to walk over. Xena takes a knife and starts to cut into an orange. *

POMPEY

So... why do they call you the Warrior Princess?

XENA

Because "Caesar" was already taken.

He LAUGHS out loud at this.

POMPEY

I like you.

XENA

Don't. I'm not a friendly person.

POMPEY

Good. Neither am I. But common enemies make friends overnight.

XENA

Common enemies? Anyone in particular?

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED: 3

11

POMPEY

(smiling)

Don't assume all Rome loves Caesar. These people are impressed with his victory over Vercinix. But there are those who wouldn't cry over Caesar's death.

With a look, he walks away. Xena looks over to Caesar, then looks at the knife in her hand. And back to Caesar's vulnerable neck. And the knife in her hand. It would be quick, simple...

The HORNS blare again. Caesar nods to Brutus, who steps up to get everyone's attention. *

BRUTUS

Citizens of Rome! I present to you the prize that has eluded all... all, except the great Julius Caesar! The Barbarian, Vercinix!

Soldiers drag Vercinix into the room. He is chained to a yoke around his neck. He's wearing rags and stares at the Romans with hatred. They peer at him like a strange animal. Dead SILENCE as Caesar approaches and looks at him. The Soldiers hold tight to his chains. *

CAESAR

Descended from a line of great warriors. Master of Gaul. A legend like no other! Ladies and Gentlemen, I give you Vercinix, the Magnus. *

He tosses his wine into Vercinix's face and walks away. The crowd erupts in LAUGHTER and APPLAUSE. Caesar shoots a smug look to Pompey. *

Xena stares, the anger in her building.

CUT TO:

12 INT. BOAT - HOLD - NIGHT

12

Crassus sits on a crate, arms tied behind his back and roped to a beam, as we last saw him. Gabrielle is making her bed to sleep in. Crassus studies her again.

CRASSUS

When did she say she would be back?

GABRIELLE

When she's ready to come back.

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED:

12

CRASSUS

Does she often leave you in the dark with her plans?

GABRIELLE

No.

CRASSUS

But she has done it, hasn't she?

(nothing)

I understand. You forget, I'm a warrior, too. Many times, if I'd told my soldiers my plans, I would have had a mutiny.

GABRIELLE

Why? Did your soldiers have something against murdering innocent people?

CRASSUS

Innocent? There are no innocents on a battlefield! No matter what she told you, innocents were never harmed. Violators were executed on the spot. I ran an army, not a mob. Xena's opinion of me is hardly objective.

GABRIELLE

What about the people of Gardinus?

CRASSUS

(beat)

That was... regrettable. I was chasing bandits to the north when it happened. The soldiers responsible were crucified.

(then)

Who knows? Maybe Xena really believes those stories. Most people do. It's what they want to believe.

A long beat, then:

GABRIELLE

Just go to sleep, okay? I trust Xena.

CRASSUS

Well, I can't. It's my life on the line.

GABRIELLE

You're not going to die. Caesar won't let it happen. We'll get Vercinix and everyone is happy.

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED: 2

12

CRASSUS

I hope you're right.

Gabrielle turns over to sleep, but her eyes are open as she thinks...

CUT TO:

13 INT. PRISON - NIGHT

13

There are two cells across from each other. One contains a couple of Drunks, sleeping it off. The other has Vercinix. He has been put into his cell. The GUARD is just closing the cell door. Caesar stands nearby.

Xena goes to the bars and peers through at him.

XENA

Vercinix... My name is Xena. I'm working to get you out of here.

(no response)

Mendala sent me.

Vercinix looks up at her. During this, unknown to Caesar, Xena presses some clay into the keylock.

VERCINIX

My wife... she escaped the Romans?

XENA

Yes. And your children. They're safe. And they want their father home again. I'm here to make that happen.

Xena pulls a perfect clay mold from the keyhole and pockets it as she follows Caesar. They get to the door when Caesar turns to Xena, cornering her against the wall. He is standing close... too close...

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED:

13

CAESAR

The prison hardly seems the place to tell you this, but... you look incredible. Roman finery becomes you.

XENA

We're not going down that road. This is business.

CAESAR

It's never business with you and me, Xena. It's hatred, it's war, it's conflict... and it's love.

*

There is a moment of animal heat between them. Caesar doesn't lean in for the kiss... he's waiting for her to make the move. Waiting for her to fall into his charm. She leans forward and says the words he never thought he'd hear...

XENA

(seductive)

Caesar... I have to go to the bathroom. Are we done here?

Caesar reacts, then steps back, out of her way. She walks out the door.

CUT TO:

14 INT. BOAT - HOLD - NIGHT

14

Gabrielle is asleep. Crassus, however, is wide awake. He looks around the room and notes the candle on the crate near him, just out of reach. Silently, he stretches himself out, trying to reach the crate with his leg. He can barely touch it, but manages to hook his toe onto the edge of it and pull it towards him. Once the candle is within reach, he turns and puts the flame to the ropes on his wrist. A slight SIZZLE is heard as it burns his flesh.

Then, the rope breaks. Crassus quickly sheds the other ropes and heads silently up the gangway.

A beat, then CRASSUS comes SAILING BACK DOWN THE GANGWAY in a heap! Gabrielle is up instantly, her staff in her hand.

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED:

14

Crassus rolls to his feet in time to get a kick in the face from Xena, who bounds down the gangway. She quickly puts the "pinch" on him. He drops.

(CONTINUED)

XENA GABRIELLE.COM

14 CONTINUED:

14

CRASSUS

You're going to kill me... I knew it!

GABRIELLE

Xena! Don't!

XENA

I'm not going to let him die.

Xena grabs a rope and quickly ties him up again. She releases the "pinch." He gasps as she drags him to the crate and sets him down again. Xena tosses a key to Gabrielle.

XENA

I had this made before I left Rome. There are two cells. It fits the lock on both of them.

(beat)

We have to move quickly. Caesar has decided to have gladiatorial fights in the coliseum tomorrow. I think he's moved the execution up.

GABRIELLE

You were right. He wasn't going to make the trade after all. But it doesn't change our plan, does it?

XENA

No. Not our part of it...

GABRIELLE

What do you mean by that?

XENA

It seems that Vercinix is more of a prize than I thought he was. Caesar has put his reputation on the capture and execution of him. He's not about to let that go.

GABRIELLE

But... when he knows it's Crassus...?

XENA

It won't matter. The execution will go on. And Crassus will die. I'm sorry.

And she moves away, leaving a devastated Gabrielle in her wake.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

15 INT. BOAT - HOLD - DAY

15

Xena is preparing to go back to Rome. A worried Gabrielle comes over to her. Crassus is in the background, out of earshot.

XENA

You've got to be in place by the time the games begin. If I'm right, the execution will be the finale.

GABRIELLE

We have to talk about this. There's got to be another way.

XENA

There isn't. The time Crassus buys us by walking into the arena is the time we need to escape Rome.

GABRIELLE

But if the horses are in place earlier... or we ride real fast...

XENA

Gabrielle, if I could accomplish my plan without Crassus' death, fine. If it means his death, so be it. We can't think about that.

GABRIELLE

And I can't avoid it! You're making me a part of a murder! I can't believe you're so casual about it!

XENA

It has nothing to do with being casual. It has to do with focus.

GABRIELLE

Focus on Caesar.

XENA

(angry)

Just drop it, Gabrielle. This is about saving a good man. Crassus is a cold-blooded murderer. I've seen his work. The only thing I regret is that it won't be my sword that brings justice.

Gabrielle takes a long beat, thinking. Then:

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED:

15

GABRIELLE

I'll do my part.

XENA

Good.

(then)

We will talk about this later. It's something we have to clear up.

She puts her hand on Gabrielle's shoulder, but Gabrielle doesn't react. Xena exits.

DISSOLVE TO:

16 EXT. ROAD TO ROME - DAY

16

We find Gabrielle walking in front of Crassus. He is now wearing a ragged cloak that disguises his ropes. They come upon a well and Gabrielle stops to drink. As she leans over the well to bring up the bucket... Crassus makes a break for it. Gabrielle spins around, grabs up her staff, and launches it at his legs. The staff hits in the back of his knee and drops him to the ground. Gabrielle has grabbed up her staff, drags him to his feet and takes him back to the well.

CRASSUS

I thought you were different from Xena. I thought you had a regard for life, no matter whose.

GABRIELLE

You're not going to die. I told you I would switch you. But if the guards recognize who you are, I have no control over that.

CRASSUS

Most of Rome doesn't know what I look like.

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED:

16

Gabrielle holds up Crassus' ring. *

GABRIELLE
It's your royal ring. It identifies
you in every province. Once we're
gone, you just show it to the guards. *

CRASSUS
(smiling)
Sorry about what I said. I
underestimated you. As Xena has,
apparently. Thank you.

GABRIELLE
Here. Drink. We've got to keep
moving.

She scoops water with the ladle and, unseen by Crassus, she
dumps some powder into the water before offering it to him.
He drinks deeply as Gabrielle watches him.

CUT TO:

17 EXT. BOAT - TOP DECK - DAY

17

Brutus is here with a couple of Roman Soldiers. The BOAT
CAPTAIN is with them.

BOAT CAPTAIN
They paid me well. I stayed out of
here, so I don't know what was going
on.

BRUTUS
When did they leave?

BOAT CAPTAIN
The big woman left just after noon.
The girl and the man followed a bit
later. Headed East along the road.

BRUTUS
(thinking)
Toward Rome... that's very strange...

He turns and his Soldiers follow him out.

CUT TO:

18 INT. CAESAR'S PALACE - LONG ROOM - DAY

18

Xena is shown in by a Soldier and left alone. She looks around and sees something on the table... a dagger.

POMPEY'S VOICE

If you're anything like me, you feel naked without a weapon.

She turns to find Pompey entering the room.

POMPEY

Whether you use it or not, there's something reassuring about the weight and feel of a solid blade.

XENA

Funny. I wasn't aware I needed a weapon here. Or is there something I should know about?

POMPEY

Caesar has no intentions of trading Vercinix for Crassus. And more than that... he's sent Brutus out to find your friend, Gabrielle.

XENA

You mean to find Crassus.

POMPEY

No, it's your friend he wants. He seems to think she has some sort of power over you. He wants that power.

XENA

And you? What's your interest in this?

POMPEY

I'm but a servant of Rome. I want what is good for her. If Caesar and Crassus weren't in the way, I could do many things. For one, I could release the barbarian.

(then)

The dagger is a gift. One that will get the owner safely past my army outside Rome. Good-bye, Xena.

With that, he exits. Xena takes a second, then picks up the dagger.

CUT TO:

19 EXT. ROMAN SUBURBS - DAY

19

Roman Soldiers are racing through the street. People are YELLING. There is a huge argument going on and the Soldiers are trying to control it. We FOLLOW the Soldiers until we find Gabrielle and Crassus.

GABRIELLE

I can't take it anymore! You go to the tavern and come home like this!

Sure enough, Crassus has the drugged appearance of drunkenness. Gabrielle, too, is acting drunk as she "fights" with him. Merchants' carts are knocked over as the "fight" progresses. Finally, the Soldiers intervene and drag them both off.

GABRIELLE

Wait! It's not me! He's the drunken slob! What are you doing? Come on! I'll take you all on!

CUT TO:

20 INT. CAESAR'S PALACE - BEDROOM - DAY

20

Brutus stands at attention as he reports to Caesar.

CAESAR

Brilliant! Xena brings Crassus into Rome, right under my nose. The last place I'd look. And the girl, Gabrielle?

BRUTUS

Apparently still with Crassus. The tracks were easy to follow until we got into Rome.

CAESAR

Easy... perhaps too easy... What are you really after, Xena...?

He ponders this.

CUT TO:

21 INT. PRISON - DAY

21

Gabrielle and Crassus are thrown roughly into the drunk cell opposite Vercinix's cell. Crassus falls to the floor in a stupor.

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED:

21

GABRIELLE

I'm tellin' ya, it ain't me! I ain't
never been dranked... drunkened...
Drunkenened...

GUARD

Right. Sleep it off, girl. Then tell
it to the magistrate.

And he exits. A BEAT, then Gabrielle looks over to
Vercinix.

GABRIELLE

Vercinix! Xena sent me... We're going
to get you out.

VERCINIX

How?

GABRIELLE

Funny you should ask. You're just
going to walk out tomorrow.

Off his look, we:

CUT TO:

22 EXT. ROME - NIGHT (ESTABLISHING TIME)

22

23 INT. CAESAR'S PALACE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

23

Caesar is standing near his window, looking out over the
splendor of Rome. A BEAT, then he walks to his desk and
sits. His back to the window, he begins to go through some
paperwork.

Silently, Xena leaps up into the window in a crouch. She
is wearing her black tunic. Pompey's dagger is between her
teeth.

She stares at Caesar, as if she is trying to decide her next
move. Then, like a cat, she steps down from the window and
approaches Caesar. Slowly and quietly determined, she takes
the dagger from her mouth and holds it up, ready to strike.
Just as she is within striking distance...

CAESAR

Hello, Xena.

Caesar turns and smiles. In that instant, NETS fly from the
hidden shadows of the room and Soldiers descend upon Xena,
holding her down. She fights, but it appears there are just
too many men. Caesar picks up the dagger and inspects it.

(CONTINUED)

23 CONTINUED:

23

CAESAR

Roman design... interesting. I can't believe you would double-cross me, Xena. Just as I was about to double-cross you.

XENA

How did you figure it out?

CAESAR

You have one obsession and that's me. Because of that, I have you. And I have Vercinix. And somewhere, there is a young blonde girl who's about to follow a plan that no longer exists.

Off Xena's reaction to that, we:

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

24 INT. PRISON - NIGHT

24

Xena is thrown into Vercinix's cell. The door is SLAMMED shut. Vercinix looks at her.

VERCINIX

Take me back to when you said you would get me out of here...

Caesar is at the bars.

CAESAR

You'll be out soon enough. Tomorrow, as a matter of fact. To face the Headsman. As for you, Xena... you won't get a chance to see it. You'll already be dead. The opening act to my spectacle.

With that, he exits. The Guard follows him out. A moment of SILENCE, then:

XENA

Gabrielle?

Gabrielle comes to the bars and looks across at her.

GABRIELLE

I'm here. Crassus is still asleep. Catch!

Gabrielle tosses the key across to Xena. She grabs it and opens the lock.

XENA

Did you tell Vercinix the plan?

VERCINIX

Yes. You want to switch Crassus for me. But if you have the key, then let's go now!

XENA

No. We'd never make it. We have to wait until all Rome has their eyes elsewhere.

VERCINIX

On my execution...

XENA

Exactly. Call the guard.

(CONTINUED)

24 CONTINUED:

24

VERCINIX

Guard! Here! Caesar should know something about this woman! Guard!

Xena slumps against the door as the Guard comes back in.

GUARD

What? What is it that's so important?

VERCINIX

It seems... she has a key.

The Guard barely reacts before Xena has slammed the door into his face. He drops.

CUT TO:

25 EXT. ROME - DAY (ESTABLISHING TIME)

25

26 EXT. COLISEUM - CAESAR'S BOX - DAY

26

In the background, the people are pouring into the Coliseum. Caesar is in his regal robes as he talks to Pompey.

CAESAR

Look at those people. Look at them. Each one considers themselves an individual. With independent thought and movement. But together... they are like sheep. And sheep have one endearing quality.

POMPEY

(irritated)

And what is that, Caesar?

CAESAR

They're followers. The Ram has the power. He finds the food, protects them... He gives them what they want, and they follow him blindly.

(beat)

And today, they want the death of Vercinix. I intend to give it to them.

POMPEY

So you've rescued Crassus?

CAESAR

Crassus is in my city. It's just a matter of time before I have him.

(then)

Oh, by the way...

(CONTINUED)

26 CONTINUED:

26

Caesar takes something out of his robe and, with a flick of the wrist, the Dagger flies past Pompey's head into the wood pole.

CAESAR

I believe that's your dagger. *

Caesar gestures to Brutus. Brutus nods and gestures to another Soldier, who disappears.

CUT TO:

27 INT. PRISON - DAY

27

Four Soldiers come in. The regular Prison "Guard" opens the door and the Soldiers drag Xena out. Vercinix is slumped in the corner. He doesn't even look up.

CUT TO:

28 EXT. COLISEUM - CAESAR'S BOX - DAY

28

Xena comes out and is forced to her knees, facing Caesar. He stands, looks at her, then addresses the crowd.

CAESAR

Citizens of Rome. We are assembled here to mark the end of an era. The end of resistance in Gaul. Resistance led by the evil barbarian, Vercinix!

APPLAUSE and CHEERING.

CAESAR

But... But, first, I want to present to you an ally of the Gauls... and an enemy of Rome. Xena, the Warrior Princess. Just as we offer her the hand of friendship, she betrays us! But as I captured the great Vercinix, so I captured her. Let the combat begin!

And he sits. Xena is taken to the middle of the arena and the Soldiers leave. A BEAT, then, from the tunnel, comes the SOUND of a galloping horse. Not one, but two horses come galloping into the arena. Our master horseman, Respick, is on one of them. He is dressed in gladiatorial gear; helmet, breeches, metal shoulderguard, and a net in one hand. They charge her, passing on either side as she dives to the ground and rolls.

(CONTINUED)

28 CONTINUED:

28

As she manages to get back up, the Second Horseman starts at her again. He is carrying a club, which he swings at her. She rolls again, dodging him. But, unseen by her, Respick has begun his attack. She turns and, just as he is about on her, she LEAPS into the air, over him. Respick is quick, though. He flicks the net upward, catching Xena's ankle, and drops her to the ground hard. She has to roll quickly to avoid the onrushing hooves of the second horseman. Meanwhile:

CUT TO:

29 INT. PRISON - DAY

29

The ROAR of the crowd is heard in the background. Gabrielle immediately opens the door to her cell as the "Guard" comes up to her; it is Vercinix.

GABRIELLE

Okay, we've got Crassus in your cell being you and the guard in my cell being Crassus. The horses are waiting at the stable one block west. As soon as Xena sees me in the crowd, she'll know we're okay.

VERCINIX

Then let's get going. The longer we stay here, the longer she has to fight.

GABRIELLE

Hold on...

She enters the cell with Crassus and takes out his royal ring.

GABRIELLE

I have to put this on his finger. When the guards see it, they'll know who he is and free him.

VERCINIX

Wait...

She looks to Vercinix. He takes a moment, then relaxes.

VERCINIX

Never mind. I owe you my life, so I won't stop you. But Crassus and I will meet again. We have a blood debt to be settled from Gardinus.

GABRIELLE

What do you mean?

(CONTINUED)

29 CONTINUED:

29

VERCINIX

My brother and his family were there.
Crassus personally ordered the
massacre.

GABRIELLE

But... how can you be sure? If
everyone was killed...

VERCINIX

My niece survived. I found her
crucified... she told me before she
died.

Off her shocked look...

CUT TO:

30 EXT. COLISEUM - DAY

30

It really looks as if Respick has the upper hand on Xena. She is breathing heavily and stumbles a bit. The crowd is CHEERING her on. The horses are taking turns, now; charging at intervals and not allowing her any rest. Respick goes to the wall and exchanges his net for a spear. Like a joust, he charges her. She stands there, out of breath, waiting until the last moment. Then, she ducks to the side, grabs the spear and jams it into the ground. Respick loses his grip. Xena picks up the spear and throws it. Respick dodges in the saddle, the spear sailing past him into the ground. Respick milks it for the crowd as he gets his net. Then, he suddenly spurs his horse forward. Xena waits, but apparently doesn't see the other horseman as he comes up behind her and jams the club into her back. She drops. Respick throws his net, catching Xena. He begins to drag her around the arena. The crowd CHEERS like crazy. This is spectacle! Finally, he stops and drops his end of the net. Casually, the Second Horseman gets the spear and tosses it to Respick. Xena struggles lamely out of the netting and tries to crawl away. Respick trots over to her. And, still on horseback, he holds the spear high, aimed at Xena. She turns over and looks up at him.

They are CHEERING MADLY, THUMBS DOWN. Xena looks around. Then, in the crowd, she sees:

GABRIELLE

watching, trying to be seen.

BACK TO SCENE

Xena smiles. As Respick jams the spear downward, Xena kicks out, "hooking" the horse's hoof with her ankle and pulling.

(CONTINUED)

30 CONTINUED:

30

The horse stumbles, knocking Respick's aim off. The spear hits the ground next to her. She kips to her feet.

The Second Horseman spurs his horse onward to charge. Xena spins, using the spear as a staff to knock him off his horse. In a sweeping motion, Xena has mounted the horse and charges Respick. He's recovered and pulls a sword. He charges her. As they pass, he deflects the spear and CHOPS THROUGH IT. They turn and begin another charge. This time, as Respick raises his sword, Xena uses the broken spear pieces as chobos and lays into him, hitting his sword away and pounding his mid-section. She maneuvers her horse around Respick as she pounds away at him. Eventually, he falls from his horse. She doesn't stop. She leaps to the ground and continues the attack. The crowd is silenced.

Then, as he is on his back, beaten, she raises the sharp end into the air...

The crowd is now on their feet, CHEERING and giving Respick the THUMBS DOWN.

Xena stares at him with anger, then... she jams the spear into the ground next to his head! The disappointed crowd BOOS her as she walks toward Caesar's box.

INCLUDE CAESAR AND POMPEY

Pompey is quite amused. Caesar is not. He looks at her for a BEAT, then speaks to Brutus.

CAESAR

Have her taken to her cell. We'll deal with her later.

As Caesar fumes...

CUT TO:

31 INT. PRISON - DAY

31

Again, Xena is thrown into the cell. The Soldiers grab a wobbly "Vercinix" and take him away. As soon as they are alone, the "guard" (Vercinix) opens Xena's door.

XENA

Where's Gabrielle?

VERCINIX

She said she'd meet us at the stable.

Xena rushes out.

CUT TO:

32 EXT. COLISEUM - DAY

32

"Vercinix" (Crassus) is dragged out by the Soldiers and is stood in front of Caesar's Box, his head bowed. Caesar stands again and addresses the crowd.

CAESAR

Citizens of Rome! What you have been waiting for! The execution of the barbarian Vercinix!

And the crowd goes crazy! CHEERING! APPLAUDING!

At that moment, the prisoner's hood is pulled off and his head pulled back. As we already know, it is Crassus.

CLOSE ON CAESAR

Shocked! The CHEERS continue in the background.

BACK TO SCENE

Pompey stares, incredulous. Then, he smiles.

POMPEY

Well, Caesar. Give the people what they want.

With the CHEERING the background, Caesar takes a moment to compose himself. Then, with a vague wave of his hand, the soldiers take Crassus to the center of the arena, where a chopping block has been set up.

CLOSE ON CRASSUS AND SOLDIERS

Crassus comes out of it and realizes where he is.

CRASSUS

Wait... wait a minute! I'm not Vercinix! I'm Crassus!

The Soldiers ignore him.

CRASSUS

I tell you... my ring! Where did she put the ring! My royal ring!

He searches around until his eyes light on something flashing:

INCLUDE GABRIELLE - IN THE CROWD

She has a look of intense anger on her face. Her arms are folded. One of her thumbs, however, is the source of the flash: Crassus' royal ring. Crassus stares at her, but she doesn't move.

(CONTINUED)

32 CONTINUED:

32

CRASSUS

NO!!! Tell them who I am!

Gabrielle merely turns and walks away. The Soldiers push him down onto the chopping block.

GABRIELLE

walks through the crowd. In the background, we hear a CHOP sound. As the crowd CHEERS, she looks forward to see:

XENA

watching her with a sad look on her face. Off this, we:

DISSOLVE TO:

33 EXT. BOAT - TOP DECK - DAY

33

Gabrielle is near the railing, staring out at the ocean, Crassus' ring in her hand. A BEAT, then Xena comes over and leans against the railing with her.

GABRIELLE

What's happened to me, Xena? These last few months... what's going on? I'm not myself anymore. I did something that I never thought I would be able to do. I played judge, jury and... and executioner.

XENA

You only did what I told you to.

GABRIELLE

No. You were indifferent. You said it, Crassus living or dying wasn't the point. But I had a choice... and I made it.

XENA

Gabrielle... This was my fault! No, listen. I put you into a situation that I had no right to. I expected you to understand my logic and ignore your heart.

GABRIELLE

Xena, I know you were right...

(CONTINUED)

33 CONTINUED:

33

XENA

No! That's what I mean. I'm not right! I mean... it wasn't right for you. It wasn't who you are. But with the pain that it's causing you... If we had to do it again...

GABRIELLE

You'd still do it.

XENA

If I couldn't think of another way, I would. But I wouldn't include you.

GABRIELLE

And I would be hurt if you didn't. But where do I fit into all of...

Gabrielle looks to Xena and is shocked to see a tear rolling down her cheek. Xena looks at her.

XENA

How many times are you going to follow me blindly into things? How many more times am I going to hurt you? You're the most dear thing I have in this world. And yet... instead of protecting you, I...

Gabrielle hugs her.

GABRIELLE

I'm here because I want to be.

XENA

I know... And I need you. I just don't want you to hurt.

GABRIELLE

I love you, Xena.

XENA

I love you, too.

And, as they embrace, Crassus' ring slips out of Gabrielle's hand and into the ocean.

FADE OUT.

THE END