

XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS

* MASTER SCRIPT *

"Them Bones, Them Bones"

Production #V0908

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XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS
"Them Bones, Them Bones"

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 EXT. ROADSIDE - DAY1. (1.50) 2 pgs. 1

Gabrielle crouches, sifting through dirt and wondering:

GABRIELLE
What do these herbs look like again?

XENA

Standing behind Gabrielle next to Argo. Fingers absently tracing circles on her pregnant belly.

XENA
A closed tulip, only darker.

GABRIELLE
Here we go.
(plucks the herb;
rises)
And they'll help with the morning
nausea?

Xena BURPS. Steadies herself against Argo. Lets the queasiness pass a beat before:

XENA
Let's hope so.

Gabrielle hands over the herb. Xena throws it back, grinning:

XENA
Bottom's up.
(chewing)
Some Warrior Princess, huh?

GABRIELLE
Stop it, you look beautiful.

XENA
I look like a kangaroo.

Gabrielle's face flashes a trace of amusement.

XENA
What?

(CONTINUED)

GABRIELLE

I can tell, for the first time in a long time -- you're actually happy.

A dismissive wave from Xena. Walks on with Argo.

XENA

Get out of here.

GABRIELLE

And you know how I know?

XENA

Because my ankles are the size of tree trunks?

GABRIELLE

Because it's the only time you make fun of yourself.

Xena stops: touche. And smiles. Because Gabrielle knows her well enough to see that.

XENA

All right, maybe I am a little... and part of it's because I don't have to go through this alone.

Now it's Gabrielle's turn to smile. At the compliment. Then Xena's grin drops. Stomach seizes with a wrenching ACHE and she nearly falls. Gabrielle steadies her:

GABRIELLE

Xena? You okay?

XENA

Yeah, it's... just a cramp...

Another startling wash of pain and Xena can't help but CRY OUT a little.

GABRIELLE

Looks like a little more than that. I'm taking you to a healer.

XENA

No, really, I'm --

Again, she doubles over. **PRELAP:** Xena's guttural SCREAM --

2 INT. HOSPICE HUT - DAY1 (1.00) 1pg.

2pt

FRENZIED MOVEMENT -- Gabrielle and the local MIDWIFE darting through frame -- lifting Xena from a gurney and SHOUTING to each other over her WAILING:

MIDWIFE

How far along is she?!

GABRIELLE

About a season!

Xena's set down on an exam table. Fingers clawing empty air. Like she's fighting off some unseen force.

GABRIELLE

I'm here, Xena -- I'm here --

XENA

Gabrielle, something's wrong!

And before Gabrielle has a chance to say another word, eyes widen and lock on:

XENA'S BELLY

2pt2
VFX

Something's PULSING beneath the hump of flesh -- it's trying to BREAK THROUGH and

XENA

flails wildly -- arms shoot out with hurricane force -- knocking Gabrielle and the Midwife clear OFF THEIR FEET as --

XENA'S BELLY

begins to TEAR OPEN -- and rising out of it now to face the world -- a BABY SKELETON!

XENA

Seeing that, she closes eyes and belts out a deep and primal SCREEEEEEAAAAM until:

GABRIELLE (V.O.)

Xena!

Xena's eyes POP OPEN and we PULL BACK from her face to find ourselves:

Quiet. Gabrielle and the Midwife are standing there. Looking down on Xena who sits up, GASPING for breath. Eyes wild and darting, look down to see her perfectly UNSCATHED BELLY.

GABRIELLE

You were dreaming. You're all right.

Xena swallows. A dream. Just a dream. Blinking back to reality:

XENA

What happened?

MIDWIFE

When your friend brought you in, you were in considerable pain. I've given you a sedative.

XENA

My baby?

MIDWIFE

I can't find anything physically wrong with you, or your child. The best thing for both of you now, is bed rest.

The Midwife exits, as AMARICE bursts through the tent flap.

AMARICE

A trader told me he saw you come in here. Are you okay?

GABRIELLE

She's fine, now. She just has to rest.

Xena pulls herself up. Flings legs over the side of the table. Hops off.

GABRIELLE

Xena, what are you doing?

XENA

I have to see Yakut. She'll be able to help.

~~GABRIELLE~~ AMARICE

Who's Yakut?

XENA

A shamaness: the leader of the Northern Amazons.

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED:

AMARICE

The Northern Amazons? That's a pretty long journey for a pregnant woman to make.

XENA

~~I don't have a choice. The healer's wrong. That dream I had, wasn't just a dream. That wasn't just a dream, it was a premonition.~~

Hanging on the wall, her chakram. Xena spins it like a six gun and slides it onto her belt before:

XENA

Something's trying to kill my baby.

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

4 EXT. TUNDRA PLAINS - DAY 2. (1.50) 1.3/8

4p

~~Gliding, soaring into the wild blue...~~ expanse of Northern Territory sprawling below... MOVING IN we find Xena, Gabrielle and Amarice traveling...

4p2
2u
tran

WITH THEM

As they step off a dirt embankment onto the first patch of SNOW. Xena and Amarice are side-by-side. Up ahead, Gabrielle. Listening to:

AMARICE

You know, I've had days where nothing seemed to go my way, and others when it felt like I was leading a charmed life. But that's where my superstition ends.

XENA

What's your point?

AMARICE

My point is, to be making this trip in your condition just because you had a bad dream seems a little, I don't know... careless.

XENA

Wait until you're pregnant, Amarice. When it comes to your child, you won't be taking any chances either.

AMARICE

I didn't mean to imply you're a bad mother, Xena.

XENA

Yeah, you did. But it's all right. The way you see things, I'm not surprised.

AMARICE

The way I see things?

XENA

You only use your eyes.

(CONTINUE

AMARICE

Because what you see is what you get.
And if you can't show it to me, it
doesn't exist.

XENA

Have you ever made a promise, Amarice?

AMARICE

Yeah, sure.

XENA

Show it to me.

Gabrielle, eavesdropping ahead, CHUCKLES at that. Amarice
darkens. Put in her place and doesn't like it.

5 EXT. NORTHERN AMAZON CAMP - DAY 2. (0.35) 4/4pg

5

From a watch tower, an Amazon BLOWS a ram's horn. The NORTHERN
AMAZONS spill into camp, as Xena and Co. ride in. From her
hut, YAKUT emerges. Moves to Xena as she dismounts Argo with
Gabrielle's help.

YAKUT

Welcome, Xena. We've been expecting
you.

Into Gabrielle's ear, Amarice WHISPERS:

AMARICE

Let me guess: she saw it in a vision.

YAKUT

In fact, I did.

Amarice startles: no way Yakut heard her say that. Xena offers
a hand in friendship...

XENA

It's good to see you again, Yakut.

YAKUT

Come. We have much work to do.
(Xena, Yakut exit)

Added Action:

Amazon 1 approaches
Amarice

Am1 = what to be and you

Amarice = The United Sisterhood
of none if you had

6 INT. YAKUT'S HUT - DAY 2. (0.45) 5/8pg

6f

Xena lies on the floor as Yakut hovers over her. Eyes closed
in deepest concentration, the shamaness has a hand on Xena's
belly. HUMMING a meditation.

Now Yakut begins to trace a SYMBOL in the dirt with her free
hand: a SERPENT. Then opens eyes and says to Xena:

(CONTINUED

YAKUT

Your child is being drained of it's
life force in the spiritual realm.

XENA

Tell me what you saw.

YAKUT

The entity that stalks your child bares
the mark of the shamaness, Xena.

(off Xena's look)

You know who it is, don't you.

A beat before...

XENA

Alti.

WHITEWASH TC:

ALTI FOOTAGE: From the "Sin Trade," eps. to establish
character...

7

EXT. YAKUT'S HUT - LATER DAY 2 (1.00) / pg

7

Gabrielle's eyes staring disbelief back at Yakut.

(no Xena
in this scene)

GABRIELLE

But Xena killed Alti.

* Yakut

That's why she can only attack through
the spiritual realm.

AMARICE

All right, back up. I'm a little fuzzy
on this whole 'spiritual realm' thing.

YAKUT

Nature is composed of several planes of
reality, Amarice. And the only thing
that unites them all, is the mind.

AMARICE

Oh, well, that explains it.

YAKUT

Think of it this way: during the day,
when you're awake -- that's one
reality. At night, when you dream --
that's another. And what these
realities have in common, is your
awareness of them.

(CONTINUED

AMARICE

But this is the only one that's real.

YAKUT

Just as smoke expands to fill a room,
your mind must do the same to occupy
all levels of reality.

Amarice rolls eyes: what ever.

GABRIELLE

But how do you fight someone you can't
see?

YAKUT

Xena is preparing to do battle with
Alti in her realm, but in her
condition, I'm afraid she won't win.

GABRIELLE

Then I'll have to convince her to let
me go.

8 INT. YAKUT'S HUT - DAY (1.00) *TBC

8

XENA

No. I've watched Alti rip the hearts
out of people I loved, I'm not about to
take that chance with you.

*TBC
Xena has fought Alti

GABRIELLE

You don't have a choice, Xena.

XENA

~~Like hell I don't.~~ I may not have the
strength to stop Alti, but I can still
stop you.

Their charged eyes lock. And Gabrielle is the first to blink.
Vulnerable now. Taking time to form her words. And during
this, keeps eyes locked on the ground in deference:

GABRIELLE

You're right. Even with that baby in
your belly, I don't stand a chance
against you. But I can tell you this,
Xena... you're the only constant in my
life. And unless you know something I
don't, I'm not going anywhere. So I'm
going to say the most selfish thing
I've ever said to you: that baby's my
baby, too. And I deserve a chance to
fight for it as much as you.

*TBC variation.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

10
8

GABRIELLE (cont'd)

(a beat)

Please, let me.

She looks up now. To see Xena's face. And the hint of tears there. Xena takes Gabrielle's hand. And gently closes hers around it.

XENA

If you're going to do this, there's something you need to do first...

for the ways of the Shaman

9 EXT. FOREST - DAY 2 (1.00) 4/8 pg.

9p

From shadows, Gabrielle emerges wearing hunting outfit. Bow in hand. Stalking a DEER.

XENA (V.O.)

Our world is like the surface of a lake. And everything in it, the rocks, the trees, the clouds -- all just ripples on the water's surface.

Gabrielle creeps on... closer to the animal...

GABRIELLE'S EYES

follow the deer, as it moves off. Over this:

XENA (V.O.)

Don't you feel it, Gabrielle. Everywhere you look, you're looking at yourself.

Gab raises her bow + shoots the deer.

Gab has her blood ritual & cuts open the deer.

9p12
24

9A. EXT Amazon Camp. Day 2. (0.20) 3/8 pg.

9.

Gab returns triumphant.

10. EXT Amazon Camp. Dusk 2. (0.20) 1/8.

Amazon Ceremony begins with Yakut + Amarile.

11 INT. YAKUT'S HUT - Dusk 2. (0.30) 2/8pg.

11

Firelight shadows flit around Xena and Gabrielle, who in ritual robe, are kneeling by a fire pit.

XENA

(gestures)

Hand me the dagger.

Gabrielle looks: an ornate dagger on straw padding. Picks it up like an egg. And hands it to Xena, who takes Gabrielle's hand and slices DEEP into her palm. As Gabrielle winces --

12 EXT. AMAZON CAMP - Dusk 2 (0.20) 2/8.

12

DRUMS FASTER now. Yakut INTONES to the heavens:

YAKUT

Let the light that carries form into
our eyes reflect back, and let nature
bear witness and judge.

**use daughter/mother d.*

13 INT. YAKUT'S HUT - CONTINUOUS (0.30) 2/8.

13

Xena hands Gabrielle the dagger, with:

XENA

Now you do me.

Gabrielle takes the dagger. Looks at Xena's hand. And steeling her spine, slices DEEP into Xena's hand. Now Xena takes Gabrielle's hand, presses their bloody palms together. *13*
Fivulets of blood fall into a copper bowl over the fire. *21*

14 EXT. AMAZON CAMP - CONTINUOUS (0.20) 1/8.

14

Wilder dancing from the Amazons as Yakut continues:

YAKUT

Their strength will be their unity...

*H/A
dancers 11
5*

15 INT. YAKUT'S HUT - CONTINUOUS (0.45) 1.

15

Gabrielle ^{opens} ~~uses~~ the dagger to puncture a SACK OF BLOOD. Red liquid spills out onto the floor. Welling around Xena and Gabrielle's knees.

YAKUT (V.O.)

...their courage will be their guide...

Xena ladles blood from the pouch into a chalice. Adds the deer's blood to the boiling pot. Then using fingers, paints strange symbols on Gabrielle's face.

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED:

XENA

Once you drink, don't let go of the dagger. When you see Alti, strike fast. If you destroy her in her realm, you destroy her soul.

Gabrielle picks up the knife. Exhales.

GABRIELLE

I'm ready.

XENA

Remember, don't let go of the dagger.

GABRIELLE

I won't, if you don't let go of me.

XENA

I promise, I won't let go. Never.

That brings Gabrielle right to the edge. Tears well. Because she believes the promise. And also, because she's afraid. Xena pulls her into a hug.

XENA

I don't know how to thank you.

GABRIELLE

You thank me every day we're together.

Then Xena draws back, wracked by another stomach attack.

GABRIELLE

We're running out of time...

Fighting impossible pain, Xena dips the chalice into the pot, brings it to Gabrielle's lips. Gabrielle drinks... and closes eyes as the opiate spell takes effect...

(30) 2/2
16 EXT. AMAZON CAMP - SERIES OF DISSOLVES AND INTERCUTS - N.T.S 16

Whirling around Gabrielle -- the Amazon drums POUNDING, POUNDING -- Gabrielle LAUGHS and LAUGHS -- seems like she's floating -- and in fact now, she IS -- the DRUMS, the DRUMS -- and rising up over Xena, Gabrielle twirls in the air -- faster, faster -- she finally CRIES OUT and collapses into Xena's arms and we:

WHITEXASH TO:

17 EXT. GO TO STORY BOARDS / NEW SC 17.

17

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED:

ON GABRIELLE

Silence. Faintest hint of billowing WIND. Sand flits across Gabrielle's face. Itches her nose. Eyes open. They see:

ANGLE - THE SKY (GABRIELLE'S POV)

Birds and rain FROZEN MID-AIR... suspended in time...

GABRIELLE

rises. Clenching the knife. Looks around: barren wasteland. Middle of nowhere. Gabrielle turns. The only thing moving in this world. Or so we think. Because now:

ALTI

rises behind Gabrielle, flashing a wicked grin.

ALTI

You must be Xena's little bitch.

Gabrielle whirls -- WHACK -- Alti's fist is up with locomotive speed and CONNECTS with Gabrielle's jaw --

ALTI

Welcome to the doghouse.

Gabrielle goes flying and so does

THE DAGGER

which skids and stops an equal distance between Gabrielle and Alti --

GABRIELLE

rises to her knees, lunges for the knife -- Alti's hand lashes out -- a beckon -- the dagger rises OFF THE GROUND and flies THROUGH THE AIR toward Alti -- stops INCHES from Alti's face and hangs SUSPENDED IN THE AIR --

ALTI

You see, things don't exactly work the way they do in your realm. Here, the strongest mind wins.

With a casual smile, Alti plucks the dagger from the air and gives it a gentle throw. The dagger TURNS INTO A DOVE and

FLIES AWAY...

SC 17

STORYBOARD

17pt1. Foz Tableau
17pt2. Alti's Dreamscape
17pt3. Foz Tableau. (2u)
17pt4. Alti's Dreamscape (2u)

*InterCut with (1)
Sc 18.21. Int. Yak's Hut.

EXT. FROZEN TABLEAU - DAY 2a. (3/8 - 0.40)

17

Gabby opens her eyes. She is on the ground. Slight wind in her hair. Hear the sound of a fire crackling. Reveal a FROZEN CAMPFIRE near her.

She stands and looks up. BIRDS FROZEN in mid-air. Behind her, ~~pieces of tattered FABRIC FROZEN~~ as though being blown by wind. Off hear the sound of a splash. She turns to look. Reveal a stream with a FROZEN SPLASH OF WATER.

She walks forward a step, clutching the dagger, then notices something in the distance.

* 17pt2. ALTI'S DREAMSCAPE. (3/8) 1.00 Day 2a.

Her POV is of a figure cloaked in black. Suddenly, we are racing toward this person until we almost smash into her. Reveal Alti.

Ah..

ALTI

~~You see~~ Xena's little bitch.

Alti reaches off-screen and pulls Gabby into frame by the throat.

ALTI (cont'd)

Welcome to the doghouse.

* INSERT ACT BREAK ONE *

See the dagger in Gabby's clutch as she prepares to stab Alti. Brings it up out of frame.

Gabby raises the dagger to stab Alti. Reveal she is clutching nothing but air. Stares at her empty hand.

In a long shot see Gabby raise her empty fist to stab Alti. In the extreme FG see a dagger rise in sync with BG action. Reveal Gabby2 holding dagger on other side of the stream. Gabby2 realizes that she is watching herself out-of-body.

Alti smacks Gabby1 around a bit and Gabby2 reacts. Gabby2 swings the dagger into thin air trying to protect herself and Gabby1 mimics the action except only with a closed fist.

ALTI (cont'd)

You see, things don't exactly work the way they do in your realm. Here, the strongest mind wins.

GABBY

Your war's with Xena, not with her child. We'll die before we let you hurt the baby.

Alti grabs Gabby1 again by the throat and lifts her into the air.

We see Gabby2 lifted into the air by seemingly no one.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALTI

You've got me all wrong -- I don't want to hurt the child any more than you do. I need it to be born... Unfortunately, I don't need you

Holding Gabby1 by the throat with one hand, Alti grabs Gabby1's dagger arm and starts to press the empty fist toward her throat.

See Gabby2 with the dagger in hand, trying to fight off this unseen presence, as the dagger is pressing up to her throat. She appears as though she may cut her own throat.

With a final effort, Gabby1 manages to kick Alti hard enough to break her grip, dropping her.

We see Gabby2 hit the ground. Behind her Gabby1 hits the ground also, but Alti is nowhere to be seen.

Suddenly, appear Alti over Gabby2's other shoulder. Gabby starts to crawl away still clutching the dagger. Alti laughs.

ALTI (cont'd)

I'm going to count ten. During this, you will feel your body shutting down, your heart will stop, you will cease to breathe. By ten you will be dead. One...

Gabby is crawling away. Flash past images of Gabby in pain. Gabby reacts to these images.

ALTI (cont'd)

Two... Breathing is laboured, nerve endings twitch and spasm. Three...

More images of Gabby being tortured by various past villains. She is still trying to crawl but weakening.

ALTI (cont'd)

Four... You try to scream but you cannot... Five ~~SIX~~ Stabs of pain in your left arm as blood pressure drops. Black spots appear in your vision... ~~...~~...

Gabby reacts to everything Alti intones and now we begin to see other Gabby moments, just flashes, almost like seeing a near-death experience of seeing your life flash before your eyes. She stops crawling.

eight

ALTI (cont'd)

Seven... The brain is starving. Breathing is almost impossible. The heart is slowing... ~~Eight~~...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

nine

ALTI (cont'd)

~~More spasms. Muscles coiling.~~ Nine...
In one more count you will die... Ten.

Gabby falls onto the grass, body twitches slightly. Eyes stare. Dead. A moment passes. Then a hand slaps her face. Twice. Pull up as Xena, Amarice, and Yakut gather around her. Way up looking straight down at dead Gabby. They are trying to revive her. Panicked. Xena performs mouth-to-mouth.

INTERCUT

* *Sc 21. Int Yakut's hut. (1/8.0.10)*

21.

Same action happening inside Yakut's hut. Xena performs mouth to mouth on apparently dead Gabby. Panicked. Amarice in shock. Yakut doing anything to help. Xena relentlessly trying to start Gabby's heart.

* *Sc 22. Ext. Alt's Dreamscape. (2/8.0.20)*

22.

Back to high angle of Gabby head in grass. Camera suddenly drops at an alarming (6 frame) speed, straight into huge close-up of Gabby. She gasps for breath.

* *BACK TO YAKUT'S HUT Sc 23. Int Yak's hut.*

As Gabby gasps for breath. *goto page 15. Script.*

To Act 2.

18 INT. YAKUT'S HUT - CONTINUOUS NITE2. (0.15) 2/8.

19

Xena, holding the unconscious Gabrielle, sees ~~the knife in Gabrielle's hand DISAPPEAR~~. Very bad sign. Xena CRIES OUT:

XENA
Gabrielle, wake up!

But Gabrielle won't... or can't...

19 EXT. ALTI'S DREAMSCAPE WORLD - DAY (see SBS.)

19

Gabrielle tries to rise but Alti, with the turn of a wrist, sends her REELING BACK. Alti CACKLES:

ALTI
I'm impressed. To have come this far,
you must have done the hunting ritual
correctly.

(a Beat)
~~Let me show you how I do it.~~

Gabrielle swallows. This is it...

FADE OUT.

~~END OF ACT ONE~~

* ACT ONE will end in Sc 17
ALTI. "Welcome to The Doghouse!"

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

20 EXT. ALTI'S DREAMSCAPE WORLD - CONTINUOUS ^{new pages} ~~(storyboards)~~ 20

Alti's killer eyes trained on Gabrielle. Gabrielle assumes a defensive stance.

GABRIELLE

Your war's with Xena, not with her child. And we'll die before we let you hurt the baby.

ALTI

You've got me all wrong -- I don't want to hurt the child any more than you do. I need it to be born... unfortunately, I don't need you.

And she SWINGS -- Gabrielle ducks -- but Alti's nails rake her arm and -- nicks Gabs neck.

21 INT. YAKUT'S HUT - CONTINUOUS - ~~intercut~~ 1/8.0.10. 21

-- a SLASH leaking blood streaks Gabrielle's ^{NECK} ~~arm~~ in the material world. Xena lashes her hand out, SLAPPING Gabrielle across the face and SCREAMING: she starts mouth to mouth

XENA

Gabrielle! Gabrielle, WAKE UP!

22 EXT. ALTI'S DREAMSCAPE WORLD - CONTINUOUS - ~~intercut~~ ^{new pages} ~~(storyboards)~~ 22

Alti swings and Gabrielle BACKFLIPS -- lands crouched and ready to leap ~~for~~ ^{she} grabs a rock and as Alti charges, Gabrielle shoots out her fist -- the rock CONNECTS with Alti's skull and she SHRIEKS, tumbling back.

Now Gabrielle ^{lies still} ~~whispers~~, HEARING Xena's VOICE ECHOING through the dreamscape:

XENA (V.O.)

WAAAAAKE UP!

23 INT. YAKUT'S HUT - CONTINUOUS (3/8.0.20) 23

Gabrielle's eyes POP open and she's up like a shot, GASPING a HUGE intake of air -- PUUHHH! -- Xena pulls her back into an embrace and they stay there, rocking... just rocking...

(CONTINUE)

XENA
I've got you, Gabrielle... I've got
you...

DISSOLVE TO:

24 INT. YAKUT'S HUT - NEW R3 (pg. 100)

24

Yakut surveys as Xena rubs salve into Gabrielle's wound.
Amarice paces. Gabrielle is soft, quiet, not yet recovered.

GABRIELLE
I'm sorry, Xena. I failed.

XENA
You made it back in one piece, didn't
you? Besides, believe it or not, I
feel better.

Gabrielle raises fingers. Flexes. Remembering...

~~GABRIELLE~~
~~I wounded her.~~

YAKUT
(to Xena)
~~That's why your pain has subsided.~~
(to Gabrielle)
You've managed to buy us some time. ?nbc.

GABRIELLE
Something else... she said she didn't
want to hurt the baby... she said
she... needed it to be born.

That quiets the room. Xena and Yakut lock eyes. Amarice,
behind them, stops pacing. To Xena:

AMARICE
I really hate that look.

GABRIELLE
Xena, what is it?

XENA
Alti's trying to re-enter our world, by
taking away my baby's soul and
replacing it with her own.

GABRIELLE
Then I have to try again.

(CONTINUED)

XENA

I won't take that risk twice. You barely made it back in one piece.

(beat; to Yakut)

Do you remember the burial ritual you told me about, for restless souls?

YAKUT

That ritual has never worked, Xena.

XENA

Unless you've got a better idea, I don't think we have much choice.

Yakut wants to protest. But can't.

24A EXT. AMAZON CAMP - CONTINUOUS Day 3. (1st O.S.)

24A

As they walk:

AMARICE

Once again, I have no idea what you're talking about.

XENA

A river of amber flows through the Temple of Chi'ah. *The Amber drips from the Tree.*
~~Seherian Caverns.~~ If we can get some, we can use it to cover Alti's remains.

GABRIELLE

How will that stop her?

XENA

When the amber hardens, it'll trap her soul.

AMARICE

Sounds easy enough.

XENA

We'll split up: Yakut and I will dig up Alti's bones, you and Amarice get the amber.

YAKUT

A word of warning: the river is guarded by an Amazon mystic named Chi'ah. She has the power to see the truth in your heart. You may lie to yourself, but you can't lie to Chi'ah.

Gabrielle rises. Confident with:

(CONTINUED)

I'm ready.

GABRIELLE

(CONTINUED)

XENA

Then what are we waiting for?

And Xena heads out, followed by Gabrielle, Yakut. Amarice
hesitates a beat, then joins them.

25 EXT. *Barrun Whiteland* - DAY 3 (1.44.1.45)

25pt1

Xena and Yakut, on horseback, travel through Northern
Territory. Yakut seems troubled.

XENA

~~You know, I haven't seen you in a
while, but I can still tell when you've
got something on your mind.~~

There's
Yakut deflects with:

YAKUT

I'm fine, Xena, it's you I'm worried
about.

(off Xena's look)

Although there aren't many women in the
world who can carry both a child and a
weapon with equal grace, I sense your
heart has not yet fully committed to
motherhood.

Xena takes a good, long beat thinking about that.

XENA

Part of me wants this baby so badly.
I'm counting the days until I have it.
And another part of me wonders if
bringing a child into this world is the
right thing to do.

(a beat)

My baby isn't even born yet, and it's
already suffering.

Said like an apology. Which prompts Yakut:

YAKUT

And you blame yourself.

XENA

Of course.

(gestures)

My child, my responsibility.

(CONTINUED)

YAKUT

You're right. And that's why motherhood can bring about the greatest joy, or the greatest sorrow. No matter how hard you try, you may not be able to protect your child from the world.

XENA

That's not easy to hear, and even harder to accept.

Xena's eyes, rock steady, glaze into the path ahead. Yakut sees the haunted look. And offers:

YAKUT

Do you remember the story of the World Tree?

XENA

(a beat)

Of course. The shaman elders believe that at the golden navel of the earth stands a tree with more branches than even the gods can count. On these branches, perch the souls of unborn children.

YAKUT

The part I didn't tell you, is that when a mother finally accepts what she's about to become, her child sends her a message in the form of a dove.

Xena blinks. Digesting that. And wondering:

XENA

What's it supposed to mean?

YAKUT

'Thank you.'

Despite herself, Xena can't help but offer up a slow smile at that.

XENA

You've really come a long way since we first met.

Yakut doesn't answer that. In fact, it seems to somehow bother her.

Yakut
to add dialog... Hb.
abt living up to expectations

Stopped along the pass. Gabrielle changing her bandage. Amarice's attention has spanned. Eyes flicker over the road ahead.

GABRIELLE

Still think we're imagining things?

Said tossing the bloody bandage aside. Amarice turns.

AMARICE

You were drugged, you were convulsing, and -- oh, by the way -- you were holding a sharp knife. I think it's more than likely, you cut yourself.

GABRIELLE

Out of curiosity, are you looking for things to rebel against?

AMARICE

At least have the guts to tell me what you really mean.

GABRIELLE

There's a difference between disagreeing with someone's beliefs, and having contempt for them for no good reason.

AMARICE

Hey, if you don't want to hear my opinion, don't ask.

Turns away again. Gabrielle finishes bandaging herself. Walks up to Amarice. In her face:

GABRIELLE

You know, you're not like any Amazon I've ever met. We may not always believe what the rest of the world does, but at least we believe in each other.

And keeps sharp eyes boring into Amarice for punctuation. The moves off, to let Amarice think about that.

Fog billows through ancient graveyard. Pile of dirt beside open grave as Xena uncovers Alti's skeleton. Brow furrows to find:

(CONTINUE)

XENA

The skull's missing.

(a beat)

Who'd come out ~~this far to rob a grave?~~

Yakut draws a breath. Eyes drop. Then reaches into her knapsack and removes a SKULL. Looks up at Xena, who shakes head glaring back confusion:

XENA

I don't understand...

This is all my fault.

YAKUT

I thought I could harness Alti's power, and use it for good. I needed her skull for my ritual... but all I did was awaken her soul.

(a beat; wrenched)

↑ This is all my fault, Xena, and now you
and your child are paying the price.

Beat. Flicker of anger across Xena's face.

XENA

~~How could you keep that from me?~~

YAKUT

I was ashamed. I didn't want to disappoint you.

XENA

~~Maybe I was wrong. You've still got a lot of growing up to do. Gabrielle almost died today.~~

YAKUT

I know. And all I can do now, is finish what you two started. Let me face Alti myself.

XENA

No. We're not about to compound one mistake with another. We stick to the plan.

Her eyes drift to the sky. The waning light. Xena moves off.

dark to

XENA

It's too far to travel back to camp tonight. We'll wait until dawn.

{CONTINUE

YAKUT

Xena...

(Xena stops; turns)
...I hope you'll forgive me.

~~Beat. Then a light nod from Xena.~~

(CONTINUE)

~~XENA~~
~~Let's get some sleep.~~

DISSOLVE TO:

28 EXT. ALT'S BURNT OUT STRONGHOLD (0.35 4/8) - NIGHT 3.

28

Flickering firelight on Xena's face as she stirs from sleep, hearing Yakut's labored BREATH O.S. Sits up to see:

ANGLE - YAKUT (XENA'S POV)

lying a few feet away -- ~~dead deer sacrificed nearby with blood pooling by open stomach wound --~~ and Yakut's hand, sliced wide open -- she's thrown herself into the opiate trance --

BACK TO SCENE

Xena darts up. Shaking Yakut:

XENA

Yakut!

Head spins, sees boiling BLOOD over low flame fire pit -- Xena grabs the pot --

XENA

Hold on!

-- and DRINKS.

XENA'S TRIP - MONTAGE:

29 EXT./INT. XENA'S TRIP - CONTINUOUS (0.35 2/2) Int. 3a. 29f

Images FLASH across screen at lightning pace -- Xena writhing INTERCUT with surreal MEDICAL FOOTAGE -- blood racing in bubbles through bloodstream -- colony of ANTS tearing through dirt --

-- And now Xena's feet begin to SINK into the ground -- like she's being pulled under -- finally chin, nose and forehead disappear beneath the earth and we:

WHITEWASH TO:

30 INT. ALT'S Sp. Chamber (1.30/12/2) - INT 3a.

30f

Xena opens eyes. She sits up. Animal skins stretched across walls. Hanging animal carcass. Bloody bones. On the floor across from Xena: Yakut. MOANING. Xena grabs hold of her:

(CONTINUED)

XENA

Yakut...

(Yakut's eyes open)

Why'd you have to be so stubborn?

Yakut smiles. A SOFT:

YAKUT

I wanted your forgiveness. I thought I
could defeat Alti myself.

XENA

I thought I told you to stick to the
plan.

(looking around)

Where is she?

YAKUT

I don't know...

XENA

Think you can get up?

(Yakut nods)

Let's get you out of here, before she
comes back.

Xena and Yakut rise. Xena turns to doorway, to see:

ANGLE - OVER DOORWAY (XENA'S POV) TBC.

The real YAKUT hangs bound and gagged over doorway tangled in a
BONE MOSAIC. Eyes wide. CRYING OUT in vain.

REVERSE ANGLE -

XENA

~~"Yakut" MORPHS into ALTI and rockets arm out THROUGH XENA'S STOMACH
BACK -- her hand bursts THROUGH XENA'S STERNUM --~~

XENA *TBC - dialog may go here first.

cries OUT in pain and falls -- as she does, Alti retracts her
hand and in it, holds a GLOWING ORB.

VFX

Off Xena, we:

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

31 INT. ALTI'S SPIRIT CHAMBER E. NITE 3a (120 1/8)

31a

Alti hunches behind horrific bone mosaic entangling Yakut, as Xena circles like a tiger:

ALTI

Such a pleasure to see you again,
Xena... or should I call you, 'Mom'?

31a1
CXB

XENA

There aren't many guarantees in the world, Alti, but there's one thing you can count on: if you do anything to my baby, I won't kill you... because I'll spend the rest of my life making sure you're screaming in pain.

ALTI

Well, at least we'd be together again. I've so missed these intimate little moments.

XENA

I'd kill myself before I let your soul replace my child's.

That seems to tickle Alti. Because she grins back a playful:

ALTI

Tempting, but I love you too much. So here's a way we can both win: I'll give your child's soul back --
(gestures to Yakut)
-- but you must bring me back into the physical world.

Xena stares, assimilating this.

XENA

I can't do that.

ALTI

Not by yourself. But if you convince the rest of the tribe to put their minds to it, anything's possible. You have until sundown to make your decision.

And bounces the glowing arm between palms with glee:

Xena + Yakut disappear.

ends

(CONTINUED)

~~ALTI~~

~~In the meantime, I'll hold onto this
for safekeeping.~~

WHITEWASH TO:

32 EXT. ALTI'S BURNOUT STRONGHOLD. NITE 3. (0.30. 3/8) 32

Xena and Yakut open eyes. Silence. Sitting up. Deepest regret in Yakut's look.

YAKUT

I'm sorry... I've only made things worse.

True. Xena exhales. But knows:

XENA

What's done is done.
(a beat, softening a
little)
You were trying to help.

YAKUT

Did you mean what you said to Alti?
About forgiving me?

Xena keeps her look distant, but nods anyway. A tentative 'Yes.' Rises with:

XENA

Let's get back to the camp.

33 EXT. CHI'ANS TEMPLE - DAY 4. (0.10. 1/8) (MATT. 24) 33

To establish...

34 INT. CHI'ANS TEMPLE CAVE. (1.45. 1.4/3) 34

DRIP... DRIP... ECHOING through hollow cavern as Gabrielle and Amarice make their way along.

AMARICE

Sure this is the right cave?

GABRIELLE

Xena said, look for the entrance shaped
like an eagle's claw.

AMARICE

Let's get that amber and get out of
here.

*NOTE: pre-record Chi'ah?

(CONTINUE)

GABRIELLE
? What about Chi'ah?

*NO. We must see Chi'ah."

(CONTINUE)

AMARICE

The mystic who can 'See right through you'? Oooh, scary.

CHI'AH (V.O.)

No need for me to appear frightening, my child --

Gabrielle and Amarice whirl, see no one.

CHI'AH (V.O.)

-- facing one's self can be crippling, even to the most hardened warrior.

The tone is low and halting. Amarice draws back a little.

GABRIELLE

We've come for --

CHI'AH (V.O.)

-- the amber.

GABRIELLE

Will you --

CHI'AH (V.O.)

-- help us?

GABRIELLE

Yes.

CHI'AH (*appears*)

As the Amazon protector of the sacred amber, I can only release it to a fellow Amazon --

(to Amarice)

-- and one of you is not an Amazon.

Amarice's eyes light with surprise. Caught.

[*I see the truth Amarice. CHI'AH*
~~Your whole life has been a lie,~~
And now ~~you~~ come here hiding
behind an identity, you ~~did~~ not earn^{have}.

Stunned silence from Gabrielle. Then:

GABRIELLE •

Is that true? You're not really an Amazon?

(CONTINUED)

Humiliated, Amarice turns and runs out. Gabrielle watches. Silently debates pursuit. Chi'ah gestures, into the open cavern behind her:

CHI'AH
You, on the other hand, may pass.

34A INT. Chi'ah's Amber World

34Apr

Gabrielle ~~enters~~ ^{turns}: Looking out over a wide ABYSS. No way across. And on the other side, the AMBER TREE. Next to the tree: CHI'AH.

CHI'AH ^{add insight}
I can welcome you, but I can do no more than that.

GABRIELLE
How am I supposed to get across?

CHI'AH
You already are.

A beat.

GABRIELLE
I don't understand.

Chi'ah, staring back. The sphinx. Gabrielle looks around. Sees:

ANGLE - ACROSS THE CAVERN (GABRIELLE'S POV)

A single FLOWER stands next to the amber tree...

GABRIELLE'S EYES

slit studying the flower. And over this, the ECHO of Xena's instruction:

XENA (V.O.)
Wherever you look, you're looking at yourself...

CLOSE ON - THE FLOWER

as a hand reaches INTO FRAME and plucks the flower from the ground. PULL BACK to reveal:

GABRIELLE

who bring the flower to her eyes and studies it. Then looks up to see she's standing AT THE BASE OF THE AMBER TREE.

(CONTINUED)

She double-takes, turning around to see the landing she was standing on seconds ago is BEHIND HER. She's made it across the cavern.

CHI'AH

gestures to the tree, bows her head, and VANISHES.

Off Gabrielle...

35 EXT. VALLEY. DAY 4. (035/1pg) 35

Gabrielle exits. Stops a measured distance from Amarice, who's turned her face away so Gabrielle won't see the hint of tears there. A quiet:

GABRIELLE

Hey.

Amarice sniffles. Nervous LAUGH:

AMARICE

Well, I guess you and Xena were right: what you see isn't always what you get.

(a beat)

I thought if I denied that enough times, I'd make it true.

Gabrielle nods a little. Understanding that.

AMARICE

You know, I've never met anyone who was related to me. Growing up in an orphanage, surrounded by strangers who never met their relatives either... easy to get lost. I guess I just needed to feel like a part of something.

] rewrite.

GABRIELLE

I spent a lot of time walking in Xena's shadow, trying to be just like her.

(a beat)

But she helped me realize... it can be a lot warmer, standing in the sun.

Amarice is embarrassed by this open hearted offering. Swallows.

AMARICE

Yeah, well, you'd better get going. She's waiting for you.

(CONTINUED)

GABRIELLE

She's waiting for us.

An invitation offered genuinely. A beat, then they head off.

36 EXT. *Amazon camp. (Yak's hut) (020) 3/8 pg. Day 4.* 36

Gabrielle and Amarice enter camp. Intersect with Yakut outside her hut.

(CONTINUED)

GABRIELLE
We've got the amber. Where's Xena?

YAKUT
She's inside.

Gabrielle surveys the attitude. Yakut's made no attempt to mask the pain in her eyes.

GABRIELLE
What's wrong?

37 INT. YAKUT'S HUT - LATER DAY 14.

37

Gabrielle's been filled in. Hand holding Xena's, she says with concern:

GABRIELLE
I'm so sorry.

*moment
to play.*

Xena pulls away. Gently. But evidences hard determination:

it ain't over.
XENA
Don't be sorry till it's over.

GABRIELLE
What are we going to do?

YAKUT
We can't use the amber until we know the baby's soul is safe, or we risk trapping them both forever.

Xena's eyes are burning. See the wheels spinning in her look. Reasoning it out:

XENA
In Alti's world, the strongest mind wins... we're going to have to beat her at her own game.

GABRIELLE
What are you thinking?

XENA
If she wants us to bring her back, we may have to do exactly that.

Darting looks between Gabrielle, Amarice, Yakut: what's she talking about?

38 INT. CEREMONIAL CAVE - NIGHT 4A.

38pt1

DRUMS. Amazons lock hands, dance slowly around Xena who kneels in a CIRCLE OF FIRE. Arranging Alti's bones. Yakut leads ceremonial CHANTING; to her sisters:

YAKUT

Our focus is our unity... our mind, the creator of worlds...

Ceremony.

Gabrielle and Yakut standing at the back of the cave. Xena locks eyes with Gabrielle. Trade of soft smiles. The CHANTING is more intense now... dancing faster... Xena lifts ceremonial chalice to her lips and drinks... blood spills down her chin... ...the Amazons begin to SHRIEK and abruptly stop dancing... drop to their knees... palms up and freeze there in meditation pose... 59p3
Cere

XENA (TRIP SEQ. 2)

writhing, writhing -- drags hands through the circle of fire around her -- doesn't seem to register pain --- 59p2
Xena

HER EYES

open and her pupils are COMPLETELY GONE -- only EMPTY ORBS VFX staring back at us and as we TRACK INTO HER EYE filling frame with white --

WHITENASH TO:

39 INT. ALTI'S *Spirit Chamber* (030.5/8p) Nite 4A.

39

Xena, on the floor, wakes to find herself staring up at ALTI who HISSES:

ALTI

Time's up, Xena. What's it going to be?

XENA

Give me my baby, and I'll bring you back to my world.

ALTI

~~Save your breath from useless requests.~~
First you bring me back, then you get your child.

XENA

All right. ~~You win.~~ The ritual's started. All you have to do, is take my hand.

(CONTINUED)

And extends it to Alti. ~~Who cocks head~~ with a colorful grin.

ALTI

I knew you'd see things my way.

Alti takes Xena's hand and we:

WHITEWASH BACK TO:

40 INT. CEREMONIAL CAVE - NIGHT 4a. (0.30. ³/₈.) 40pt

Xena opens eyes and sits up in the circle of fire. As she does, the flames DISAPPEAR. Quiet. The Amazons are GONE. A RATTLING behind Xena. Who pivots to see:

ALTI'S BONES

pick themselves up. Skull adjusts itself on neck. Jaws CLACK and GNASH testing their flexibility. The skeleton GRINS and says:

SKELETON ALTI

Now the real fun starts.

Off Xena, we:

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FACE IN:

41 INT. CEREMONIAL CAVE - *ALTE HA* - (2100) *5/8*

41

From before...

XENA

It's your turn. Give me back my child's soul.

(a beat)

Please.

SKELETON ALTI

Motherhood has made you weak. The Xena I knew would never have given in so easily.

XENA

What can I say? I guess I've turned into a big softie. Now, a deal's a deal.

Skeleton ALTI

Is it?

The glowing ORB appears in Alti's hand. Xena looks up, draws *VFA* her sword.

SKELETON ALTI

~~Don't embarrass yourself, Xena.~~ Even in this world, I have more power than you could ever dream of.

XENA

You'd be surprised at what I can do in my dreams.

~~She takes hold of the flesh on her right hand, lifts and PULLS IT BACK like a glove - exposing the BONE beneath. Alti draws back in shock --~~

WHITEWASH TO:

*I've always wanted to have a baby.
- You inside me

This scene will cut in much later during Xena/Alti fight.

42pt1 Ext. Amazon Camp. Day. 4. (0.20) 3/8.

42pt1

Real.
Xena, in the circle, writhing. And Alti's bones beside her, RATTLING slightly. The Amazons are THERE. Palms upturned in meditative stance. Eyes closed. Gabrielle pulls a bottle of liquid AMBER from her satchel.

43r
1/2

AMARICE

You think we fooled her?

GABRIELLE

Come on, Xena, give me the signal...

WHITEWASH BACK TO:

43 INT. CEREMONIAL CAVE - DREAMSCAPE WORLD - NG 49. (1.45 9/8)

43pt1

SKELETON ALTI

What have you done?

+SB's to come)

XENA

Once you thought you were stepping into the real world, you let your guard down. We took you from one dream world, right into another.

Now Xena takes hold of her face and PEELS BACK THE FLESH like a cloak -- steps out of her skin suit to become a full blown skeleton.

SKELETON XENA

Like you said: if you put your mind to it, anything's possible.

Xena skeleton gestures, as their surroundings
are struck by lightning.

SKELETON XENA

Imagine what several minds can do.

The Alti skeleton SCREAMS, grabs a scythe and SWINGS at Xena skeleton who leaps and kicks Alti skeleton in the face.

ALTI'S SKULL

as it flies through the air.

ALTI'S HEADLESS SKELETON

runs after the head as

(CONTINUED

XENA SKELETON

drags her sword across bony palm and --

44 Ext. Amazon Camp - CONTINUOUS Day 4 (0:15/2/8) 44

-- A STREAK OF BLOOD appears on Xena's palm. (TBC.)

AMARICE

That's it!

Gabrielle uncorks the bottle and DOUSES Alti's bones with the
amber --

45 Int. Ceremonial Cave - DREAMSCAPE WORLD - NT 49 (2:00 4/8) 45

Back to the fight. Alti finally catches up to her head. Puts
it back on. Then turns back to Xena and attacks.

XENA AND ALTI SKELETONS

Xena flips -- lands behind Alti -- swings her sword and Alti
parries -- finally, Xena BREAKS THE FOREARM BONES CLEAN OFF
Alti, who draws back and now FREEZES like the Tin Woodsman
needing oil -- can't seem to move forward and CRIES OUT --

SKELETON ALTI

What's happening to me?!

Xena uses Alti's bones as chobos and batters away -- chipped
and broken bones fly from the Alti skeleton and she nearly
crumbles before:

SKELETON XENA

By the way, I lied: I am going to kill
you.

Xena swings her sword and CLEAVES THE SKELETON from top to
bottom, straight through the skull and down the spine. The
bones EXPLODE and we:

WHITWASH BACK TO:

46 Ext. Amazon Camp - CONTINUOUS Day 4 (0:30 4/8) 46

In the circle, Alti's bones EXPLODE in a whirlwind and the
v Amazons rouse from their meditation -- eyes pop open -- Xena
sits up GASPING FOR BREATH as Gabrielle takes hold of her and
offers a quiet:

GABRIELLE

You're all right...

(CONTINUE)

Xena takes a beat to repossess herself. Smiles back:

XENA
You're not so bad yourself.

Yakut approaches...

YAKUT
Welcome back.

DISSOLVE TO:

47 EXT. AMAZON CAMP - DAY 5 (1.45/1.5/2)

47pt

Amarice readies her bag to split. Looking somber. Gabrielle approaches:

AMARICE
Xena must think I'm a joke.

~~RTBC~~
Amarice to stay.

GABRIELLE
I didn't tell her what Chi'ah said.

AMARICE
(surprised)
Why not?

Reaches into her pocket and hands Amarice a NECKLACE. Circle, indented with small jade stones.

GABRIELLE
Because it's not true anymore. This an Amazon necklace from my tribe. One stone for each of my sisters.
(beat)
I just added another one.

Amarice looks up. Moved by that. Completely.

GABRIELLE
Welcome.

Despite herself, Amarice smiles a wide, infectious grin.

WITH XENA AND YAKUT

As they walk together toward the edge of camp.

YAKUT
I don't know what to say.
Easy shrug from Xena. Forgiving with:

(CONTINUED)

XENA

What would you say to any other friend
who was leaving for awhile?

(CONTINUE)

YAKUT

You're not like any other friend.
(a beat)
I'll miss you, Xena.

And reaches out to hug Xena. They stay there, holding each other a beat.

YAKUT

Be careful. It doesn't take a vision
to know the child of Xena will be
someone to behold. You'll be a target
again, and so will your baby.

XENA

I know. That's why we're going east.
It's time I picked up a few new tricks.

Xena and Gabrielle mount up.

YAKUT

Your child is lucky to have you.

Xena sees, over Yakut's shoulder:

A DOVE

perched on a branch overhead...

47p2
Dove

XENA

overcome. Small nod of private affirmation.

XENA

I'm the lucky one.

Xena's eyes scan the horizon. A contented smile.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FOUR