

XENATM

WARRIOR PRINCESS

"LOOKING DEATH IN THE EYE"

by
Carl Ellsworth

**SEASON 5
EPISODE #19**

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XENA

WARRIOR PRINCESS

"Looking Death in the Eye"
production #V0920
episode 18

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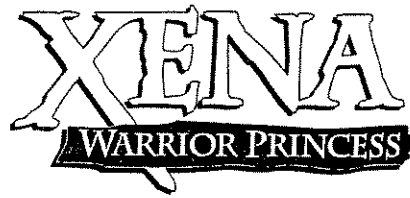
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Cast List

Xena
Gabrielle

Joxer/Old Joxer

Ares

Athena

Celesta

Hades

Hephaestus

Octavius

Theon

Kara

Clotho

Lachesis

Atropos

Ramius

Inebriated Patron

Patron #2

Bartender

Lead Archer

Woman's Voice (V.O.)

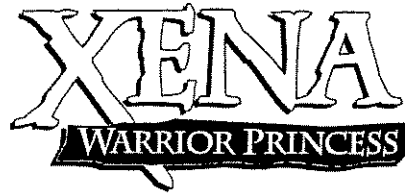
Eve (non-speaking)

Tavern Patrons (non-speaking)

Athena's Archers (non-speaking)

Gods (non-speaking)

Roman Soldiers (non-speaking)



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Set List

Interiors:

Tavern	1, 15, 16, 34
Old Joxer's Barn	4, 20, 26, 28, 31, 35, 38
Tent	7, 41
Temple of the Fates	8, 27
Temple of Athena	9, 13
Cavern of Hephaestus	10, 11
Ice Cavern	42, 44

Scenes:

Exteriors:

Hut	2
Old Joxer's Barn	3, 39
Forest	5, 6, 21 *
Forest Outside Hephaestus' Cavern	12
Forest - Xena's Campsite	14, 17, 30, 33
Forest Road	18 *, 36
Cliffside	19, 23
Opposite Side of Cliffside	22
Beach Below Cliffside	24, 25, 29, 32, 37
Mountaintop	40
Ice Cavern	43

Scenes:

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 INT. TAVERN - DAY

1

An older, rather robust man, around 60-65, enters this any-village pub and takes a seat at the bar. This man is none other than JOXER, 20 years older and several pounds heavier. Call him OLD JOXER.

BARTENDER

The usual, Joxer?

Old Joxer grunts in the affirmative.

RAMIUS (O.S.)

Sold! For thirty dinars.

Old Joxer peers over his shoulder to see a small-time and small-framed peddler, RAMIUS, having just auctioned off a worn-down, rusted sword.

INEBRIATED PATRON

Hey, Ramius, what's the next item up for bid?

Ramius reaches into a drawstring sack, pulls out an old scroll for all to see. We hear a few chuckles from the CROWD.

INEBRIATED PATRON

You can't be serious.

RAMIUS

Ah, but this isn't just any scroll. No, my friends, I hold in my hand the last known scroll transcribed by the Bard of Potedia herself...

OLD JOXER

suddenly interested, slams his mug down and spins in his seat to face Ramius, whose announcement has also quieted the rest of the tavern.

RAMIUS

It describes in breathtaking detail the final adventure of Xena, the legendary warrior princess who dared to defy the gods--

Old Joxer races over to Ramius, grabs the scroll, examines it under the murmurs of the curious crowd.

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED:

1

OLD JOXER

This is real!

Ramius holds up another, much smaller scroll.

RAMIUS

(eagerly)

Sure it is. Scroll of authenticity
right here.

OLD JOXER

I'd recognize Gabrielle's handwriting
anywhere!

(off their looks)

The Bard of Potedia! I knew her. I
was her friend. I was Xena's friend...

Ramius gives Joxer a "yeah right" pat on the shoulder:

RAMIUS

My friend -- we best cut you off.

(to patrons)

What say we start the bidding at--

INEBRIATED PATRON

Ten dinars!

Old Joxer spins in panic at the sudden interest. Then:

PATRON #2

Twenty!

OLD JOXER

(to Inebriated Patron)

Hey, cover your tab first.

Old Joxer listens to the AD-LIBBED BIDDING WAR now taking
place between the two patrons. Joxer frantically reaches down
his pant leg, takes out a small sack.

OLD JOXER

87 dinars! Sold!

Old Joxer slams the sack on Ramius' table. Some of the coins
spill out as Old Joxer nervously eyes the two bidding patrons.
They share glances, then shake their heads "no" to Ramius.
Old Joxer sighs with relief as Ramius scoops up his coins.

RAMIUS

Sold for 87--

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED: (2) 1

Ramius looks up. Old Joxer has vanished. So has the scroll.

CUT TO:

2 EXT. HUT - DAY - ESTABLISHING 2

We hear the voice of an upset WOMAN:

WOMAN (V.O.)

I don't understand this, Joxer! I mean, a relic from the past is one thing, but spending our savings to get it...

OLD JOXER (V.O.)

But this could finally tell me how Xena--

WOMAN (V.O.)

Joxer, I can't listen to this now. Please, just leave.

A dejected Old Joxer emerges from the front door. He walks across the street to:

3 EXT. OLD JOXER'S BARN - CONTINUOUS 3

Old Joxer walks inside, closes the door behind him. After another beat, two children, a boy, THEON, 12, and a girl, KARA, 8, sneak out the front hut door and race to the barn...

4 INT. OLD JOXER'S BARN - CONTINUOUS 4

Old Joxer sits in an easy chair. A nearby table and rotten old sofa give us the idea he spends a lot of time here. Old Joxer cranks up his lantern, gently unrolls his scroll. He studies it with watery eyes as we PULL BACK to reveal, sneaking up behind him, Theon and Kara.

KARA

Will you read us the princess' story, Daddy?

OLD JOXER

(startled; then:)

Oh...Of course I will, sweetie. It's just that -- well, I haven't even read this one, so I might stumble over the words a little.

Theon sits on the sofa. Old Joxer lifts Kara into his lap.

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED:

4

OLD JOXER

Come on up here, you.

Kara giggles as Old Joxer takes a breath, squints his aged eyes, then begins the narration:

OLD JOXER

The celebration of her victories at Amphipolis and Egypt were short, for Xena, the mighty warrior princess, fighting without pause both night and day to protect the life of her newborn child, continued to sing the rage of her Olympian foes...

SMASH CUT TO:

5 EXT. FOREST - DAY

5

A STREAM of BLUE-GREEN PLASMA ENERGY explodes into a tree, just missing XENA who carries EVE in her sling. Xena flips, tumbles and rolls away, but another ENERGY STREAM explodes on the ground next to her. Xena whips her head in all directions...but the source of the incoming fire is nowhere to be seen.

XENA

Gabrielle!

Xena whips her head to see GABRIELLE, sais drawn, having taken cover behind a tree.

GABRIELLE

I don't see anything, Xena!

XENA

Stay where you are, Gabrielle.

Gabrielle stays down. Xena turns, peering into the trees. Listening. Silence. Another beat. Then Eve gurgles.

XENA

(to Eve)

You hear him, too?

Xena closes her eyes, concentrating on the sounds of the forest. Then suddenly, she hears the slightest sound of RUSTLING LEAVES. That's all she needs. Accompanied by the signature WARCRY, Xena hurls the chakram away, then back flips onto a branch of the nearest tree as the chakram ricochets off a tree trunk, then spins free into a clearing where it IMPACTS SOMETHING in MID-AIR.

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED:

5

We hear someone GRUNT as we SWISH PAN OVER an area of empty airspace then TILT DOWN to solid ground to see the leaves and brush EXPLODE UPWARD from the IMPACT of a falling INVISIBLE BODY. The chakram returns to Xena. She draws her sword, peers down to see the HELMET OF INVISIBILITY rolling away from the now-becoming-visible, somewhat frazzled...

GABRIELLE

Hades.

HADES gets to his feet. Goes for the helmet. Xena leaps from her perch, flips down toward Hades, picks up the helmet with her sword tip just as Hades reaches for it.

XENA

(to Hades; re: helmet on
her sword tip)

Tell me you were just having a bad
hair day.

Xena uses the sword to toss the helmet far into the trees. Gabrielle approaches, but stops in her tracks at the sound of more MOVEMENT behind her. Gabrielle spins to see three of ATHENA'S ARCHERS about ten feet apart from one another. Their arrows are steadily trained on Eve. This as

ATHENA

suddenly MATERIALIZES behind Xena and Eve.

XENA

Athena.

(re: Hades)

You can call off your search, we found
him

ATHENA

Thanks, but I think you know who we're
really searching for, Xena.

Off Xena, Eve and Gabrielle surrounded, we:

FADE OUT:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

6 EXT. FOREST - DAY - CONTINUING

6

Come back on Xena and Gabrielle poised for battle, both still surrounded by Athena and Hades. Athena's archers continue to look on.

ATHENA

I've gotta give you credit, Xena. You three are hard ones to catch up to.

XENA

Take it up with my travel agent.

ATHENA

You know the drill.

(re: Eve)

Hand her over, and she won't feel a thing.

HADES

There's no escape this time, Xena.

XENA

Can I consult my team first?

Xena doesn't even look at Gabrielle or Eve.

XENA

Sorry, don't have the votes.

With that, Xena brings up both sword and chakram. She charges Athena, simultaneously hurls the chakram, taking out two of three archers.

Gabrielle performs a couple of spinning sai maneuvers to take out the other one, then turns to Hades.

ATHENA

brings her FIERY SWORD down hard on Xena, forcing her to retreat back.

HADES

raises his hand, FIRES an ENERGY STREAM at Gabrielle. She tumbles away, barely missing it. Hades turns back to face Xena and the

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED:

6

SWORD BRAWL

she and Athena are engaged in. Xena uses both her sword and a couple of hand-held chakram moves to deflect Athena's FIERY SWORD, but she is on the defensive. Athena finds an opening, brings the sword down and makes contact with Xena's arm. Xena yells in pain. Eve wails. Xena shoots her a worried look, regains enough of a stance to shove Athena back.

XENA

Eve...

GABRIELLE

Xena! I'm open, toss her to me!

XENA

(to Gabrielle)

No, Gabrielle!

Gabrielle reacts. Xena moves closer to Athena, gets in a couple more swings with her sword but Athena keeps the pressure on.

ATHENA

What's wrong, Xena? You no longer trust even your trusty sidekick to protect your child?

Athena presses forward as

GABRIELLE

charges Hades from behind. She's too quick for him to throw an energy stream. He's forced to use another weapon: a SAMURAI STAFF MATERIALIZES in his hand. The butterknife-esque CURVED BLADES on either end of its two-hand grip SIZZLE with a BLUE-HOT GLOW. Gabrielle reacts at the sight, but she's ready. She and Hades go at it with

ATHENA

still advancing toward Xena, delivering blow after devastating blow. Xena stumbles...

HADES AND GABRIELLE

fight it out with Hades quickly regaining the advantage. Hades forces Gabrielle back toward Xena.

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED: (2)

6

ATHENA

forces Xena back toward Gabrielle, and with two simultaneous blows, both Hades and Athena send Xena and Gabrielle tumbling into the trees. Xena rolls to one side so as to prevent Eve from being crushed under her weight. This isn't looking good for our heroes.

GABRIELLE
(winded; to Xena)

Any ideas?

Xena frantically looks around then suddenly spots the HELMET OF INVISIBILITY lying in the brush. Xena staggers for it, tosses it to Gabrielle.

XENA
Yeah. Let's give them their hat back.

Xena takes out the chakram, looks up to see

ATHENA AND HADES

moving closer, readying FIERY SWORD and ENERGY STAFF respectively.

XENA
Now, Gabrielle!

Gabrielle hurls the HELMET OF INVISIBILITY toward Athena and Hades. As it sails just above their heads, Xena unleashes the chakram. It spins upward and SLAMS into the airborne helmet, SHATTERING IT into a shower of SPARKS and SUPERNATURAL SHRAPNEL. The pieces scatter, striking both Athena and Hades in the eyes, causing both to lose control of BOTH FIERY SWORD and ENERGY STAFF. They crash to the ground beside our two gods, consuming them in A BLAZING INFERNO...

ATHENA AND HADES

roll out of the FLAMES and get to their feet. Athena glances in all directions. No sign of Xena, Eve or Gabrielle. Off Athena, we:

DISSOLVE TO:

7 INT. TENT

7

OCTAVIUS looks on as Xena tends to Gabrielle's wounds.

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED:

7

OLD JOXER (V.O.)

After narrowly escaping with our lives, we took up shelter for the night in the company of Octavius, the new leader of the Roman army and a new ally, unknown to the gods.

OCTAVIUS

Can I get you two anything else?

XENA

No, Octavius. Thank you.

OCTAVIUS

You never have to thank me, Xena. I owe my life to you and Gabrielle.

Octavius exits with a smile as Xena pours a drop of liquid from a small vial onto Gabrielle's wounded arm. Gabrielle winces.

GABRIELLE

Ow! What is that stuff?

XENA

Poison.

(off Gabrielle)

Only if you drink it. So a little drop wipes out any chance of infection.

GABRIELLE

Feels better already. Where'd you get it?

XENA

Swiped it from Mom's medicine cabinet.

GABRIELLE

(beat)

Xena -- what Athena said about you -- not trusting me to protect Eve...

XENA

Gabrielle, it'll never be a matter of trust where she's concerned. My instincts told me to give her to you, to buy her those few more seconds. But we both know they would've killed her, regardless of whose arms she was in. We got lucky.

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED: (2)

7

Xena stands, picks up Eve, the pain of this realization setting in:

XENA

(re: Eve)

I hear myself saying those words,
Gabrielle...and she's only a baby.

Xena leaves the tent. Off the concerned Gabrielle, we:

DISSOLVE TO:

8 INT. TEMPLE OF THE FATES

8

where we're re-introduced to the three Fates, CLOTHO, LACHESIS, and ATROPOS. They study the familiar stream of destiny's golden thread when the sound of a baby's gurgle turn them to face

XENA

The Fates trade astonished glances.

XENA

Hope you don't mind, we were in the neighborhood.

LACHESIS

The Fates always welcome you here, Xena. We're pleasantly -- surprised.

XENA

Well, having a kid topping the list of Olympus' most wanted can make a mom do some pretty surprising things. This is one of them.

The three Fates focus on Eve. They move closer.

CLOTHO

You wish us to speak of your child. -- Your child, Xena...

ATROPOS

...will bring forth the twilight and usher in a new beginning...

XENA

Yeah, so I've heard.

(uneasy)

And along those same lines, I was hoping you could humor me with a date.

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED:

8

CLOTHO

The twilight will occur -- in time.

XENA

That's not quite the specific I was hoping for.

LACHESIS

The time depends on you, Xena.

Beat as Xena interprets what was just said. Then:

XENA

Wait a minute. Are you saying that I determine when the twilight begins?

The Fates remain silent.

XENA

How?

ATROPOS

You must die, Xena.

Xena reacts.

CLOTHO

Only in the essence of death will the child find salvation and the twilight be set in motion. Until then, a storm without end lies on your path and hers.

Gabrielle suddenly emerges from the shadows.

GABRIELLE

So the sooner Xena dies, the faster Eve brings about the fall of the gods, right? I don't think so. Xena, let's go.

Gabrielle takes Xena's arm, but Xena doesn't move. Her eyes are fixated on the Fates.

GABRIELLE

Xena? Xena, what's going on? You're not really listening to them...

(off Xena's silence)

Xena, you've always taught me -- you've always believed that we determine our own fate, it's not already written for us.

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED: (2)

8

XENA
And I still believe that, Gabrielle.
(re: Fates)
They do, too.
(to Eve)
It's the only way.

GABRIELLE
What do you mean, Xena? What's the
only way?

Xena studies the Fates another beat, then turns to Gabrielle:

XENA
I'm have to die, Gabrielle.

We hold on Xena and Gabrielle for a beat, then:

ATHENA (V.O.)
Xena never dies...

CUT TO:

9 INT. TEMPLE OF ATHENA

9

A small conference-type room, white with gold trim. A couple of ATHENA'S ARCHERS along with Athena's new LEAD ARCHER stand guard at the door as a fuming Athena addresses what can only be termed as an emergency town meeting of her fellow Olympians. Various GODS, including Hades, and HEPHAESTUS, a young giant of a man with a scarred face, sit on individual, unique thrones set around the room.

ATHENA
...and why is that?

HEPHAESTUS
Just get her in my chains, Athena,
then we'll see how long she lives.

ATHENA
Thank you, Hephaestus. Your youthful
exuberance is greatly appreciated.

ARES
(MATERIALIZING)
If you ask me, sister, and you
haven't, I can think of no better
expert to pose your query to than
Death herself.

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED:

9

Athena glares at Ares for a beat, then acknowledging the idea, she approaches CELESTA, a slender, candle-toting, white gown-wearing, hovering brunette.

ATHENA

Celesta, we're doing everything we can to insure our survival, but we can't finish the job until you decide to pay a visit to Xena and her child.

Celesta speaks in a calm, very mild-mannered tone.

CELESTA

I'm sorry, Athena, Ares...

(to Hades)

My beloved brother...you know it is not in my nature -- death's nature -- to discriminate.

ATHENA

Not even when your own neck is on the line?

CELESTA

(re: candle)

As long as my flame continues to burn, death will remain a part of life for eternity, Athena.

ATHENA

Meaning you might somehow be immune to the prophecy?

(to others)

If I didn't know better, I'd say Death's getting a little cocky.

CELESTA

Prophecy or not, it is forbidden for any mortal to be taken before their rightful time.

ATHENA

Celesta, we know you can't help but care for the mortals you interact so personally with. But just remember, you can't deny them their rightful time either.

Off Celesta's wholly neutral expression, we:

CUT TO:

10 INT. CAVERN OF HEPHAESTUS

10

TRACKING THROUGH this natural though geologically unstable cavern that's highlighted with the red-orange hue of lava winding along either side of the floor. Intermittent bursts of STEAM VAPOR bathe the sparse decor of various, crudely shaped crafts hanging from the walls: dolls, animal figurines.

We PAN TO REVEAL, seated at a work table, Hephaestus, meticulously shaping the facial features of his latest masterpiece carved of molten rock: a two-foot figurine of a young female warrior. He holds up the statue in a better light, admires it with a wide-eyed smile.

XENA (O.S.)

So if you're the god of the arts and crafts, what do you do for a hobby?

Hephaestus stands and whirls around to face Xena. Eve isn't with her.

HEPHAESTUS

Help my family kill your child by first killing you, Xena.

XENA

Mmm, nope, Hephaestus, I think lately I'd consider that more of a trade than a hobby.

Hephaestus quickly exchanges the figurine for his signature weapons: a set of CHAINS and a massive SLEDGEHAMMER whose head crackles with SUPERNATURAL ENERGY. Hephaestus wastes no time in advancing toward Xena who raises her sword in a defensive posture. He brings the hammer down hard on her sword, driving her blade almost back into her own face! Heph capitalizes on this immediate momentum, hurls the chains from the side, catching Xena in the hip. She hits the floor hard.

Xena looks up, sees the sledgehammer coming for her head. She raises her sword again, but this time, gravity's not on her side.

The force of hammer on sword sends the sword's blade into Xena's shoulder. She yells and rolls away, manages to whip out the chakram. She hurls it point blank at Hephaestus. It slams into his chest, sends him back a few feet, then returns to Xena. But she's only bought milliseconds. Before she knows it, Heph is on her again delivering multiple chain and hammer attacks that completely overwhelm Xena. Xena retaliates with only minimal strength at this point.

(CONTINUED)

10 CONTINUED:

10

One final simultaneous chain-hammer combo from Hephaestus, followed by a firm kick to her mid-section, send Xena hurtling through the air a good 20 feet before she finally slams into the back wall of the cavern.

Xena drops to the rocky floor, half-conscious, lip dripping blood. She rolls her head, trying to focus--

XENA'S BLURRY POV - A FIGURE STANDS IN THE BACK OF THE CAVERN

But it's not Hephaestus. No, he's standing on the other side of Xena. He stops his advance, acknowledging what Xena's seeing: CELESTA.

HEPHAESTUS

How does it feel, Xena? How does it feel to finally be in the presence of Death herself?

Hephaestus advances closer to Xena, readying hammer and chains. Celesta hovers closer.

Xena turns her head, looking up at Celesta. A wry smile crosses her face, under:

XENA

(in pain to Celesta)

What took you so long?

Off an exhausted Xena, seemingly accepting the approach of death as Hephaestus stands over her, raising his hammer and chains to deliver the final death blow, we:

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

11 INT. CAVERN OF HEPHAESTUS - CONTINUING

11

From before. Hephaestus, his heavy chains now heaved high over his head as he stands over Xena, starts to bring them down when a WHIP SNAPS IN from out of frame, wraps around Heph's wrist. Reveal

GABRIELLE

as she tightens her grasp on XENA'S WHIP and yanks Hephaestus' chains clean out of his hand. Heph tries to bring up his hammer, but Gabrielle's on top of him.

GABRIELLE

Now, Xena! Get the chains!

Gabrielle catches the hammer's shaft with her sais, twists, turns and rips it right out of Heph's hands. During this:

XENA

struggles to her feet and scrambles for the loose chains. She looks up to see Celesta slowly backing her way out of the cavern.

XENA

(in pain; re: Celesta)

Sorry, Celesta, but I've -- gotta ask you to stay.

Xena takes out the chakram, quickly ties the end of one of the chains around it and throws. The chakram, trailing the chain behind it, hurtles toward

CELESTA

and spins around her, wrapping Celesta tight in Hephaestus' chain. Celesta's candle and holder drop from her hand, but the two don't separate, nor is the candle's flame in any way affected. Celesta's still standing, but completely immobilized as the chakram races back to Xena's waiting hand. Xena then turns her attention to

GABRIELLE AND HEPHAESTUS

Hephaestus has recovered his sledgehammer and is coming down hard on Gabrielle. With a last burst of strength

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED:

11

XENA

draws her sword and charges. Heph is momentarily overwhelmed by the tag team.

GABRIELLE AND XENA

bring sais and sword down on Heph who tries to parry with the hammer's shaft. But he loses his balance. Xena and Gabrielle land simultaneous kicks to his legs that send Hephaestus hurtling off a rocky ledge and into the deeps of the cavern. Xena winces in pain, doubles over slightly. Gabrielle steadies her.

XENA

I'm okay.

Xena and Gabrielle make their way back to the chain-bound Celesta.

CELESTA

(a soft, bewildered tone)

Xena...what are you doing?

Xena just stares into Celesta's eyes.

XENA

(to Gabrielle)

Her hands...

Gabrielle checks. Celesta's hands are completely obscured by the chain.

GABRIELLE

She can't touch us.

CELESTA

Your confrontation with Hephaestus.
You chose him for a reason.

Xena steps closer to Celesta, brings up a section of extra chain from around Celesta's waist:

XENA

I needed the limited edition set.
Nobody else had 'em in stock.

CELESTA

You also needed him to nearly kill
you. That's exactly how you wanted
it -- how you've lured me to you.

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED: (2)

11

Xena's still feeling the pain from the beating she just took:

XENA

Believe me, if there's a better way
for us to hook up, I'm all ears.

CELESTA

Why, Xena...?

XENA

Gabrielle, think you could--

With that, Gabrielle moves to Celesta and proceeds to hoist
her up and over her shoulder. Gabrielle heads for the cavern
entrance, under:

GABRIELLE

(to Xena)

Don't forget her candle.

It's a minor battle for Xena just to pick it up.

XENA

Yeah.

Xena brings the candle up, the flame's light dancing off her
uncertain face. Off this, we:

TIME CUT TO:

12 EXT. FOREST OUTSIDE HEPHAESTUS' CAVERN - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

12

Gabrielle carefully hoists Celesta off her shoulder and into
the back compartment of a two-horse wagon. We PULL BACK to
reveal Octavius, on horseback, and a small contingent of three
or four of his ROMAN SOLDIERS standing guard on all sides as.

XENA

places Celesta's candle on the driver's seat next to the
bundled up Eve who smiles wide as Mom lifts her into her arms.

XENA

Hey there, little girl.

Gabrielle makes her way back, hops in the seat next to Xena.

GABRIELLE

Celesta's secure.

XENA

Thanks for babysitting, Octavius.

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED:

12

With that, Xena takes up the reins and speeds the wagon away. Octavius and his men then ride off on their own separate course...

CUT TO:

13 INT. TEMPLE OF ATHENA - SUNSET

13

The room is empty save for Athena who stares into a setting sun. After a beat, Ares MATERIALIZES on Athena's throne. Athena doesn't even turn to face him.

ATHENA

First, there was Eli.

Ares rolls his eyes.

ATHENA

The masses adored him and the message he conveyed. You killed him...

ARES

He had to die, sis, how many times do I have to--

ATHENA

His death sparked the uprising against us that Xena capitalized on at Amphipolis. Where you chose to fight at her side, I might add.

(faces him for the first time)

What's left to come?

Hades and Hephaestus suddenly charge into the room.

HEPHAESTUS

Athena. Xena took Celesta.

ARES

Looks like you have your answer.

ATHENA

An intriguing, though desperately flawed strategy. Scour every area along every path they could've taken from Hephaestus' cavern.

HADES

That'll still take time, Athena. Time my sister may not have.

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED:

13

ATHENA
(considers)
Xena threatens a member of our family,
fine. We'll do the same for her.

HADES
But Gabrielle, the child...are with
Xena--

ATHENA
Have I mentioned a name?

Beat. Then:

HADES
Xena may anticipate it.

ATHENA
I should hope so.

CUT TO:

14 EXT. FOREST - XENA'S CAMPSITE - NIGHT

14

Xena sits in front of the CAMPFIRE. Celesta sits across from her with questioning eyes locked on Xena. Gabrielle, near the wagon, tends to Eve. After a beat, Celesta finally speaks:

CELESTA
Xena, you should know that my
brother...Athena...all of Olympus will
stop at nothing to find me.

Xena picks up Celesta's candle that's now burned a good
halfway down.

XENA
Well, they better find you quick,
hadn't they? Because if I'm not
mistaken, when this thing goes,
Celesta, you die. The death of Death
yourself. Translation: me and my kid
live forever.

CELESTA
This isn't like you, Xena. Or you,
Gabrielle. At one time, you both
fought to free me...

XENA
Just chalk up our sudden policy shift
to the miracle of childbirth.

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED:

14

CELESTA

Even bearing a child isn't enough to
sway one so grounded in her beliefs.

Xena moves over, actually sits next to Celesta, under:

XENA

Oh? Remind me of those again?

CELESTA

That by holding me, you're condemning
eternal suffering upon those who would
otherwise find their peace.

Gabrielle reacts, watching Xena. Gabrielle, holding Eve, sits
across from Xena.

XENA

I've got news for you, Celesta. Since
we last met, I've come to believe you
cause a lot more suffering than you
end.

This catches Celesta.

CELESTA

Death is nothing to fear, Xena, for I
only visit those whose rightful time--

XENA

Rightful time? You're bound by it,
but you've got nothing to do with it.

(beat)

Solan. My only son...His rightful
time was up when someone else thought
it should be. But still you showed
up, no questions asked. You didn't
end my little boy's suffering so much
as you...

(has to stop, then:)

...stole his life.

(beat; remembering)

Marcus...Lyceus...

CELESTA

Your brother...

GABRIELLE

Xena...

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED: (2)

14

XENA
(quietly)
Gabrielle--

Xena turns back to Celesta, her eyes welling.

CELESTA
Tell me...

XENA
Lyceus...not a day goes by I don't wish I could see the world through his eyes just once more. Some say our siblings are the one true link to our past, the ones who know us the best because they're with us for the longest time. That'll never be true for him, but he still knew me. He loved me for who I truly was. I can only hope he'd say the same for me...

GABRIELLE
Xena. Don't do this. She's an immortal. She'll never understand the pain of losing someone.

XENA
She will know, Gabrielle.
(turns to Celesta)
You have a brother, Celesta...

Celesta reflects, then:

CELESTA
Hades is my only family...and the first to accept me for who and for what I am. I may not agree with his recent action, Xena. But I believe he thinks he's doing the right thing. He's always been true to his convictions. His most noble quality. But it can also make him quite stubborn.

XENA
I know what you mean.

Celesta's eyes well with tears.

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED: (3)

14

CELESTA

But never when it comes to his love
for me. To lose him is --
unthinkable.

Beat.

XENA

And what would he say about you?

CELESTA

(watching her candle)

I may never know.

A TEAR suddenly drops from Celesta's eye. Xena places her
forefinger on Celesta's cheek, stopping the flowing tear.
Xena then does the same on Celesta's other cheek, under:

XENA

Sometimes death can be an end to
suffering, Celesta. But it only
begins for the loved ones left behind.

(re: Gabrielle)

And I can't allow it any longer. I
can't lose what's left of my family...

(re: Eve; hard)

I will not lose another child.

Xena picks up Eve and moves back toward the wagon, places Eve
in the back. Gabrielle remains silent for a beat, then moves
to join a tearful Xena.

GABRIELLE

Xena, she's right about one thing.

A still tearful Celesta turns, listening:

GABRIELLE

They're gonna be pulling out all the
stops. Holding Celesta prevents them
from killing anyone, but they can
still--

XENA

Inflict pain? Suffering...

(off Gabrielle)

Starting with the one most vulnerable
to it.

Off Gabrielle, a confirming nod to Xena...

CUT TO:

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED: (4)

14

JOXER slurps down the rest of his drink, slams down the mug along with a single dinar. We are:

15 INT. TAVERN

15

A single mini-belch and Joxer's on his way out. But no sooner has Joxer made it to the main door than he comes face to face with Athena's LEAD ARCHER. She's flanked by ARCHERS on either side.

LEAD ARCHER

Joxer, I presume? Athena thanks you for being Xena and Gabrielle's most high profile acquaintance.

JOXER

Athena?

The Archers grab him. Joxer struggles, but the Lead Archer steps forward, levels Joxer with a solid punch to the face.

GABRIELLE (O.S.)

Let him go!

JOXER

(slurred)

Gabrielle...I've got 'em right where I want 'em.

Gabrielle draws her sais, about to charge when

ATHENA

suddenly MATERIALIZES in her path. She brings her FIERY SWORD down on Gabrielle, knocking the sais completely out of her hands.

Off Gabrielle and Joxer, surrounded, captured, we...

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

16 INT. TAVERN - CONTINUING

16

As before. Gabrielle and Joxer stand surrounded by Athena and her archers.

ATHENA

So, looks like Xena couldn't leave
Death in your hands either.

Gabrielle spots the sais on the floor. She dives for them only to be stopped by the MATERIALIZING FOOT of Hades. He reaches down, lifts Gabrielle up and completely off her feet with a solid grip around her throat.

HADES

Where is my sister?

GABRIELLE

(struggling)

How can I tell you with a crushed
voice box?

Athena charges over, rips Hades arms away from Gabrielle.

ATHENA

Hades, Gabrielle is no use to us dead.

HADES

Athena, Celesta's still in Xena's
hands. That means...

ATHENA

...Gabrielle, her little friend,
everyone in this tavern is immortal.
Ain't that a hoot?

All the TERRIFIED BAR PATRONS exchange dumbfounded looks.

ATHENA

But delivering Gabrielle what will
later prove to be a mortal wound to
her windpipe would kill, pardon the
pun, any chance of a diplomatic
solution.

HADES

Diplomatic?

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED:

16

ATHENA

We can't kill the child until
Celesta's free, and given our time
constraint, diplomacy's the best way
of accomplishing that.

Athena touches Gabrielle's bruised throat. As her hand makes
contact, the bruise FADES AWAY.

ATHENA

Damaged goods get us nowhere. But
then again--

Athena tosses Hades her FIERY SWORD which he brings within an
inch of Joxer's terrified face.

JOXER

I'm sorry, Gabrielle...

GABRIELLE

Joxer...

ATHENA

(to Gabrielle)

Where is she?

JOXER

Gabrielle, don't tell them. Don't
worry about me.

With that, Hades barely touches the sword to Joxer's shoulder.
He yells in pain.

GABRIELLE

No, stop it! I'll tell you, Athena,
just call him off!

Athena gives the nod to Hades who backs off of Joxer. As
Athena approaches Gabrielle once again...

GABRIELLE

She's headed for the ocean.

ATHENA

Details to follow, I'm sure.

With that, Athena, Hades and Gabrielle DEMATERIALIZE.

Athena's Archers disperse from the tavern, completely ignoring
a helpless Joxer. Off Joxer, we:

DISSOLVE TO:

17 EXT. FOREST - XENA'S CAMPSITE - MORNING

17

ON THE WEAKENING CELESTA

once again secured in the back of the wagon. Boy is her candle really burning low now. Xena notices, then glances to Eve's bundle in the wagon. Xena jumps in the driver's seat, about to take up the reins when suddenly Athena MATERIALIZES.

XENA

We were just going to celebrate being immortal. Wanna tag along?
(off Athena's stare)
You're too late.

ATHENA

I hope that's not true, Xena. For Gabrielle's sake.

Xena reacts. She glances to Celesta's candle. Xena picks it up, hops off the wagon, steps closer to Athena where she demonstrates what little of the flame there is left.

XENA

Where is she?

Athena waves her hand. Her Archers emerge from the trees, holding Gabrielle in between them.

GABRIELLE

Xena...I'm sorry, Xena. I had no choice.

ATHENA

Gabrielle for Celesta, Xena. Cut and dry. That's it.

GABRIELLE

No, Xena. Let it burn...

ATHENA

Do that, Xena, and your little girl will still be hunted, but just for eternity. She may never know death, but she'll never know peace, I promise you that.

Xena absorbs this. Weighing her options. Then:

XENA

Gabrielle. It's all right. Get on.

GABRIELLE

Xena--

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED:

17

XENA

Do it!

Athena studies Xena, then nods to the Archers who release Gabrielle. Gabrielle makes her way to the wagon and jumps into the driver's seat. Gabrielle watches Xena's next move just as closely as Athena:

XENA

moves to the rear of the wagon, unlatches the gate. She sets the candle on the ground, then carefully reaches behind Celesta and loosens the chains. Celesta watches Xena with surprise as Xena pulls the chains away, then steps aside.

THE CANDLE'S FLAME

suddenly glows brighter as the candle itself ENLARGES back to its original size. The candle then LIFTS FROM THE GROUND and hovers into Celesta's waiting hand. The rejuvenated

CELESTA

hovers up and away from the wagon.

ATHENA

You might want to stick around, Celesta.

CELESTA

My presence has been known all too often of late, Athena.

CELESTA

gives a final glance to Xena, then VANISHES. Xena turns back to Athena:

XENA

(to Athena)

Give us a head start?

Ares MATERIALIZES in the driver's seat of the wagon next to Gabrielle.

ARES

(to Athena)

I don't think that's too much to ask, do you, sister?

The response:

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED: (2)

17

HADES AND HEPHAESTUS

MATERIALIZE on either side of the wagon, weapons ready.

ARES

Especially now.

Athena's FIERY SWORD appears in her hand. Just what Xena was waiting for.

XENA

Guess this is last stand time.

Accompanied by a familiar WARCRY, Xena, spinning Hephaestus' chain, flips up toward the driver's seat and releases the chain. It extends out toward Athena and wraps around her sword. Xena lands in the driver's seat, gives the chain a simultaneous yank. Athena's sword rips out of her hand and hurtles toward

HADES AND HEPHAESTUS

Hades ducks out of the way. The sword slams into Hephaestus. The impact throws him into the trees.

XENA

Hang on!

With that, Xena takes up the reins and speeds the wagon through the opening between Hades and Hephaestus.

ATHENA'S ARCHERS, HADES AND HEPHAESTUS

are about to pursue. But...

ATHENA

No. You know what to do. Let them clear the forest first.

(to Lead Archer)

Then drive them to us.

With that, Athena, Hades and Hephaestus DEMATERIALIZE, Athena's Archers race away, a strategy in motion, as we:

SMASH CUT TO:

18 OMITTED

18*

19 EXT. CLIFFSIDE - SECONDS LATER

19

The wagon, having been forced from the road, now nears a clearing bordered by a cliffside overlooking the ocean.

ATHENA

appears in front of the wagon. Xena pulls up on the reins as Gabrielle still scribbles on the scroll. At least until:

XENA

Gabrielle!

As Gabrielle abruptly stops writing, we:

SMASH CUT TO:

Silence. And we realize we're back in:

20 INT. OLD JOXER'S BARN - DAY

20

Old Joxer looks at the scroll. We TILT DOWN to reveal GABRIELLE'S VERY MESSY, BUMPY-WAGON-INDUCED HANDWRITING

come to an abrupt stop in the middle of the page -- lots of blank scroll still left. Theon and Kara look on with anticipating eyes:

KARA

What happened, Daddy?

THEON

Yeah, that can't be the end.

OLD JOXER

It's the end of the scroll, but not quite the end of the story.

(reflective beat)

Because I was there.

(CONTINUED)

20 CONTINUED: 20

As we PUSH INTO Old Joxer's eyes, we:

SMASH CUT TO:

21 OMITTED 21*

22 EXT. OPPOSITE SIDE OF CLIFFSIDE - MOMENTS LATER 22

Joxer emerges from the forest, some distance away, but still able to plainly see...

THE WAGON

veering from the road, under heavy fire from Athena's Archers.

JOXER

watches as the wagon parallels the cliffside only to come to an abrupt stop as Athena MATERIALIZES in its path. Joxer draws his sword.

JOXER

Xena? Gabrielle!

23 EXT. CLIFFSIDE - SAME TIME 23

And Xena on the wagon, as before.

XENA

Gabrielle!

Gabrielle stops writing, and trades the scroll for her sais. She hurls one directly at Athena's Lead Archer, taking her out.

XENA

yanks on the reins, spins the wagon back around, but

(CONTINUED)

23 CONTINUED:

23

HADES AND HEPHAESTUS

block any escape.

ATHENA

seizes the opportunity and hurls her FIERY SWORD at the wagon. It slams into the wagon's side, setting it ablaze, as

GABRIELLE'S SCROLL

tumbles out of the wagon.

JOXER

in the distance, watches in horror as he sees the

WAGON

now surrounded on all sides by Athena, Hades, Hephaestus and Archers. With one last effort,

XENA

hurls her chakram at the Archers and charges the wagon forward. The chakram spins into the Archers, clearing the path for the wagon. But the escape is short-lived.

ATHENA

(to Hades and Heph)

It ends now.

ATHENA, HADES, HEPHAESTUS

launch their weapons: FIERY SWORD, ENERGY STREAM, SLEDGEHAMMER AND CHAINS in one final BARRAGE OF SUPERNATURAL FIREPOWER that OBLITERATES THE WAGON, CONSUMING IT IN FLAME, SPLINTERING IT to pieces.

JOXER

No!

But he can only watch, helpless as the wagon separates from the horses and spins out of control, leaving a trail of FLAMING DEBRIS in its wake as it drops over the cliffside with our heroes still on board.

Off this horrific sight...

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

24 EXT. BEACH BELOW CLIFFSIDE - DAY

24

We come back hot, literally, on Xena who, having been thrown from the wagon, now struggles to her feet. She moves back to the wagon, frantically searching the FLAMING DEBRIS.

Gabrielle lies motionless a few feet away.

XENA

Eve...baby...

ATHENA, HADES, HEPHAESTUS

watch from the cliffside above.

JOXER

keeps his distance, still not believing what he saw. Also fearing for his life if he's discovered. This as

XENA

hurls pieces of debris from the BURNING WRECKAGE. But the heat is too intense.

XENA

Eve...Eve...?

Xena staggers backward, the realization setting in. She suddenly collapses to the sand next to Gabrielle.

ON ATHENA

ATHENA

The prophecy has been shattered.

ON XENA

frozen, just sitting there, staring into the FLAMES...

After this extended beat, Xena begins to hyperventilate, inhaling and exhaling with a sudden onslaught of overwhelming grief that hits her like a ton of bricks. She staggers to her feet once again, and this time, she brings up Gabrielle in her arms.

Xena screams in agony, hurling herself about the beach until she collapses. Gabrielle rolls away from Xena's arms.

(CONTINUED)

24 CONTINUED:

24

Xena pulls out her sword, puts it to her chest. She's about to fall on it when

ARES

swoops in and SWIPES IT from under her.

ARES

Xena...

XENA

No, Ares! You can't stop me!

Xena takes out the SMALL VIAL of poison. She takes out the cork, then turns to face the gods standing above her. She raises the vial to her lips and drinks.

XENA

(to Ares; re: gods)
Tell 'em it's a package deal.
(re: burning wreckage)
They get me, too.

ARES

No...Xena...

Xena drops to the sand next to Gabrielle.

ARES

Xena!

ATHENA, HEPHAESTUS, HADES

turn away from the sight and VANISH leaving

ARES

still standing on the beach over our heroes' fallen bodies.

JOXER

moves as close as he can to his fallen friends. But he doesn't get far before he collapses with grief...Off this, we:

DISSOLVE TO:

25 EXT. BEACH BELOW CLIFFSIDE - LATE DAY

25

Joxer still sits on the beach, his head in his hands when a SUDDEN FLASH OF LIGHT O.S. causes Joxer to look up to see

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED:

25

ARES

gently lifting Gabrielle's body into his arms. We notice that Xena's body is NO LONGER THERE.

Joxer stands, steps closer to Ares. Ares' eyes are filled with tears as he turns, catching sight of Joxer. Before Joxer can speak, Ares, along with Gabrielle's body, VANISHES yet again. Joxer wipes his own eyes then sees something else: the silhouette of

THREE SOLDIERS ON HORSEBACK

in rapid gallop, heading straight for him. Joxer puts his hand on his sword, then squints to get a better look at the men. As they ride closer, we recognize the leader: Octavius. Note: Octavius has something strapped to his shoulders but we don't see what it is.

Octavius and his men dismount, survey the SMOLDERING DEBRIS.

OCTAVIUS
(as if impressed)
Unbelievable.
(then)
Where are they?

Joxer watches Octavius and his men move about the scene, searching for something.

OCTAVIUS
They've gotta be here. Spread out.

Joxer approaches. Octavius finally sees him, greets Joxer with open arms.

OCTAVIUS
Joxer! Good to see you again!
Where's Xena and Gabrielle?

Joxer can only shake his head.

JOXER
Octavius, they're -- they're gone. I saw the whole thing, but I was too late...too far away...

Joxer breaks down, nearly collapses. Octavius supports him.

OCTAVIUS
Joxer. Joxer! --They're not dead.

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED: (2)

25

Octavius spins around to reveal

EVE

alive and well, strapped into Octavius' own Roman-issue BABY
BACKPACK. Joxer is dumbstruck.

JOXER

Eve? Eve...

Octavius and Joxer lock eyes as, we:

CUT TO:

26 INT. OLD JOXER'S BARN - DAY

26

THEON

Eve was alive? How?

Old Joxer picks up the scroll.

OLD JOXER

It all makes sense now.

*

*

CUT TO:

27 INT. TEMPLE OF THE FATES (FLASHBACK)

27

Clotho speaking to Xena as before...

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED:

27

CLOTHO

...only in the essence of death will
the child find salvation and the
twilight be set in motion...

CUT TO:

28 INT. OLD JOXER'S BARN - DAY

28

OLD JOXER

The essence of death...

CUT TO:

29 EXT. BEACH BELOW CLIFFSIDE - DAY

29

OCTAVIUS

The tears, Joxer...did you see her
drink the tears?

JOXER

She drank poison...

We hold on Joxer, under:

OCTAVIUS

But it wasn't
poison.

OLD JOXER (V.O.)

But it wasn't
poison.

CUT TO:

30 EXT. FOREST - XENA'S CAMPSITE - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

30

OLD JOXER (V.O.)

You see, Xena never intended to kill
Death at all. It was Celesta's tears
she really needed. The essence of
Death...

*

As before, Xena brushes the tears from Celesta's face.

OLD JOXER (V.O.)

She had to do something far more
challenging. She had to make her cry.

*

Xena then moves back toward the wagon as before. This we see
for the first time: Xena takes out the vial, empties the
poisonous liquid, then gently DROPS CELESTA'S TEARS inside.

*

(CONTINUED)

30 CONTINUED:

30

OLD JOXER (V.O.)
...the only thing, Xena realized, that
could simulate the appearance of their
deaths to the gods. But only after
convincing the gods that Eve had also
been killed...

CUT TO:

31 INT. OLD JOXER'S BARN - DAY

31

THEON
But Eve was in...

MATCH CUT TO:

32 EXT. BEACH BELOW CLIFFSIDE - DAY

32

JOXER
...was in the wagon, Octavius!

OCTAVIUS
(re: Eve in backpack)
Obviously not.

CUT TO:

33 EXT. FOREST - XENA'S CAMPSITE - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

33

As before, Xena places Eve in the back of the wagon. But this
we never saw: Xena moves away from the wagon to converse with
Gabrielle, but this time we MOVE IN ON

A TRAP DOOR

in the wagon's bed, just inches from Eve. It slides open as
A PAIR OF ARMS reach up and gently pull the bundled Eve toward
and down through the door. After a quick beat, we suddenly
see the face of

OCTAVIUS

He peers up through the door, then lifts an IDENTICAL BUNDLE
into the wagon, replacing Eve's.

ANGLE: THE FRONT OF THE WAGON - OCTAVIUS

cradling Eve, crawls out from under the wagon as we see

XENA AND GABRIELLE

(CONTINUED)

33 CONTINUED:

33

this time in the bg., behind the fleeing Octavius, conversing as before...

OLD JOXER (V.O.)

Eve was safe, the tears were collected. Next, release Celesta without it looking suspicious. How'd they do that?

SMASH CUT TO:

34 INT. TAVERN (FLASHBACK)

34

Gabrielle and Joxer are surrounded by Athena and Hades as before. Hades brings Athena's sword close to Joxer.

OLD JOXER (V.O.)

Gabrielle got captured -- on purpose. Evidently this is where I came in. Trying to rescue me made her capture look like it was unplanned. And I improvised rather convincingly, I think...

Joxer WINCES in very real, excruciating pain. Gabrielle yells to Athena:

GABRIELLE

I'll tell you, Athena, just call him off!

OLD JOXER (V.O.)

Gabrielle revealed Xena's location...

CUT TO:

35 INT. OLD JOXER'S BARN

35

OLD JOXER

...and the rest of the plan played out...

SMASH CUT TO:

36 EXT. FOREST ROAD - DAY (FLASHBACK)

36

The wagon thunders down the road.

OLD JOXER (V.O.)

The gods just assumed Xena and her child were inseparable.

(CONTINUED)

36 CONTINUED:

36

Xena glances to EVE'S BUNDLE in the back of the wagon. Instead of Eve, we recognize that it is indeed Hephaestus' FEMALE WARRIOR FIGURINE Xena has bundled up in Eve's place.

Xena converses with Ares as before, but this time we favor Gabrielle under:

OLD JOXER (V.O.)
My guess -- and my hope -- is that Gabrielle drank the tears first...

Sure enough, Gabrielle takes out the vial and drinks her portion, unseen by Ares. She hides the vial and takes up her scroll, starts scribbling as Ares VANISHES.

OLD JOXER (V.O.)
From that point, all they had to do was put on a convincing show...

FLASHBACK MONTAGE

a) The wagon is consumed in FLAME and goes over the cliff.

OLD JOXER (V.O.)
To the gods, Gabrielle was killed in the crash...

b) A REVERSE ANGLE we NEVER SAW BEFORE shows us Xena grabbing Gabrielle, pulling her out of the wagon into a CONTROLLED FLIP, TUMBLE AND ROLL to the beach below...

c) Xena searches the FLAMING DEBRIS.

OLD JOXER (V.O.)
And Eve was dead, consumed in the burning wreckage.

d) We see for the first time: the WARRIOR FIGURINE, wrapped in Eve's bundle, is CONSUMED IN FLAME.

e) Xena screams, picks up Gabrielle's body...

OLD JOXER (V.O.)
And even if they weren't completely convinced, what better way to solve that problem than by Xena taking her own life?

f) Xena drinks the contents of the vial, speaks her final words to Ares, then collapses.

DISSOLVE TO:

37 EXT. BEACH BELOW CLIFFSIDE - DAY

37

Joxer absorbs what Octavius has just explained...

OLD JOXER (V.O.)

The effect of the tears would soon wear off with Xena, Eve and Gabrielle presumed dead by all of Olympus. The perfect cover. The perfect advantage. But one thing happened they never could have predicted...

Joxer then tells Octavius:

JOXER

Ares took them away.
(off Octavius)
Just before you got here.

OCTAVIUS

(beat)
Oh, no.

Off this, we PULL BACK from the scene and slowly:

DISSOLVE TO:

38 INT. OLD JOXER'S BARN - DAY

38

Old Joxer stares ahead as a tear drops from his eye. He scoops it off his cheek, looks at it for a reflective beat, then stands from the chair.

THEON

But wait, Dad. Where'd Ares take them?

Old Joxer looks at his two kids. All he can do is grasp the scroll tighter -- and shrug his shoulders. He steps out of the barn, leaving Theon and Kara staring at each other...

39 EXT. OLD JOXER'S BARN - DAY - CONTINUOUS

39

As Old Joxer wanders into the street, we PULL BACK and:

FADE TO:

40 EXT. MOUNTAINTOP - DAY

40

A tearful Ares, carrying Gabrielle's body, trudges through a blistering SNOWSTORM, making his way to an entrance of a CAVERN OF ICE.

DISSOLVE TO:

37 EXT. BEACH BELOW CLIFFSIDE - DAY

37

Joxer absorbs what Octavius has just explained...

OLD JOXER (V.O.)

The effect of the tears would soon wear off with Xena, Eve and Gabrielle presumed dead by all of Olympus. The perfect cover. The perfect advantage. But one thing happened they never could have predicted...

Joxer then tells Octavius:

JOXER

Ares took them away.
(off Octavius)
Just before you got here.

OCTAVIUS

(beat)
Oh, no.

Off this, we PULL BACK from the scene and slowly:

DISSOLVE TO:

38 INT. OLD JOXER'S BARN - DAY

38

Old Joxer stares ahead as a tear drops from his eye.

*

39 OMITTED

39*

FADE TO:

40 EXT. MOUNTAINTOP - DAY

40

A tearful Ares, carrying Gabrielle's body, trudges through a blistering SNOWSTORM, making his way to an entrance of a CAVERN OF ICE.

DISSOLVE TO:

41 INT. TENT

41

Octavius enters and makes his way to a cot where Eve watches him with a wide-eyed smile. Octavius scoops her up, cradles her in his arms...

OCTAVIUS

Hey there, little Eve...your mom's not here, but she made sure those nasty gods aren't gonna be looking for you anymore. So what do you say? Want to stay with me a while?

Eve gurgles with glee. Octavius puts her on his shoulder, lovingly pats her back, under:

OCTAVIUS

After all, I owe it to her.

DISSOLVE TO:

42 INT. ICE CAVERN

42

Ares gently places Gabrielle inside a coffin of ice next to one we see already occupied by Xena. Ares steps over to Xena, whispers in her ear.

ARES

She's here with you now, Xena.

He steps back and reflects on Xena for a moment.

ARES

I handled you all wrong, I know that.
(nods towards Gabrielle)
She understood what you needed.
Unselfish love. Not my thing. But
there was a way I appreciated you that
she never could. I loved your rage,
your fury, your violence. Now those
were beautiful things. When you
sacrificed for others, you were hers.
But when you kicked ass, you were mine.

Ares then gives Xena a gentle, loving kiss.

DISSOLVE TO:

43 EXT. ICE CAVERN - DAY

43

Ares conceals the entrance with a RIVER OF ICE that flows from his outstretched hand. Satisfied, Ares DEMATERIALIZES. We then:

DISSOLVE TO:

44 INT. ICE CAVERN

44

WE MOVE IN ON the two coffins, favoring Xena's. We MOVE CLOSER toward the coffin's side, focusing on XENA'S HAND -- THEN CLOSER TO HER FINGER...that suddenly TWITCHES with the subtlest of movement. Off this, we:

FADE OUT.

TO BE CONTINUED...

THE END

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