

Xena: Warrior Princess - Subtext Virtual Season 10



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TEASER

FADE IN:

EXT. OVERCAST MEADOW - MIDAFTERNOON

Two young girls about ten years of age are running through the meadow chasing butterflies. The area is large and open with a flowing river nearby. To one side, under a large olive tree, sits a middle-aged woman keeping one eye on them while doing a bit of embroidery.

SISTER #1

Carena! We're never
gonna catch one.

The first sister flops on the ground in disgust. Carena laughs.

CARENA

C'mon, Serena! It's the chase
that's fun... live a little!

Serena groans as Carena laughs and runs off again until she is out of sight. Overcast skies suddenly become violent, bringing rolling thunder and flashes of lightning.

NANNY

(running)

Serena! Carena!

She gathers Serena close to her.

SERENA

(frantically pushing)

Rhea, let me go!

The woman holds tighter.

RHEA

(anxiously)

Serena, be still!

Carena! CARENA!!

Carena appears from down slope running as fast as she can. A burst of lightning hits the ground at precisely that moment and Carena disappears from view. Serena collapses into unconsciousness.

RHEA

(cont'd)

CARENA!!!!

CUT TO:

EXT. SMALL TOWN - EARLY EVENING

Xena and Gabrielle enter the town. They look around, and finally spot a tiny inn. It has been a long road to get here, and from their disheveled appearance, it has been a fairly rough one as well.

GABRIELLE

(relieved)

Thank the gods!



They walk towards the inn.

GABRIELLE

(cont'd, resignedly)

It's not just my
imagination, is it?

Xena glances around, noting the nervous looks they are receiving when anyone will actually look at them. The numerous guards stationed along the street eye them with suspicion.

XENA

(sighing)

Nope, and I'm really not in
the mood for dealing with
idiots tonight. You wanna...?

Gabrielle nods.

GABRIELLE

We passed that clearing
just outside of town.

XENA

Perfect. Let's go.

FADE TO:

EXT. CLEARING - NIGHT

The clearing is the same one we saw earlier with the two sisters. Xena and Gabrielle are reclined beside a fire in a neatly laid camp. Wet hair is the only indication of their recent swim. They are relaxed and apparently in a much better frame of mind than they were in the town.

GABRIELLE

Wonder what their
issue with us was?

XENA

(shrugging)
We were strangers.
They don't like outsiders.

Gabrielle cocks an eyebrow in question. Xena smiles affectionately at her.

XENA

(cont'd)
It's not that unusual, Gabrielle.
But I heard the whispers.

Gabrielle gently cups Xena's ear and chuckles.

GABRIELLE

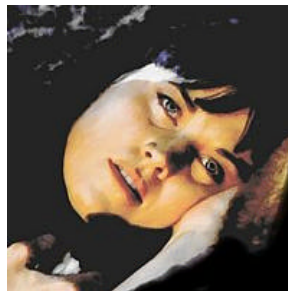
Figures. You don't miss
much. C'mon. I'm beat.

Xena banks the fire and they curl up together to sleep.

FADE TO:

EXT. CLEARING - SHORT TIME LATER

Xena and Gabrielle are tangled together, sound asleep. A light rustle of grass causes Xena's eyes to open to slits. A light squeeze lets her know that Gabrielle is also aware of the intruder.



Another rustle brings them to their feet, sword drawn and sais in hand. There is nothing but mist to be seen.

Xena and Gabrielle stand back to back surveying the area around the campsite. When their attention returns to the fire, a young woman is sitting calmly by the fire.

They move as one towards her, and she looks at them with pleading eyes.

YOUNG WOMAN

My name is Carena, and I need
your help to save the Queen.

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. CASTLE - NIGHT

A man is pacing in what appears to be a royally appointed room. He is dressed in fine silk robes of pale yellow and deep green and embossed in gold trim. He stops in front of his writing table and picks up a parchment, breaking the wax seal to expose the contents. He examines the words intently as he strokes his beard. A gust of wind blows through the open window and a shadow is exposed behind the large tapestry hanging near the window but the man does not see the presence watching him.

MAN

Soon I'll have the last piece
in place for my rise to King.

He takes the parchment and walks to the fireplace. He tosses the parchment on the fire, staring at it as it burns.

MAN

(cont'd)

No longer will I have to suffer
taking orders from a woman!



Cyrus laughs heartily and walks to his bed. He removes the green robe, tossing it on the stool beside the bed then slides beneath the silk covers. He continues to laugh as the scene fades to black and the shadow runs unseen from his room.

FADE TO:

EXT. CLEARING - NIGHT

Xena and Gabrielle are seated together on logs opposite the young woman who has appeared, asking for their help. Gabrielle shivers and rubs her arms as a cold night breeze blows across the campsite. Without taking her eyes off the visitor, Xena reaches back and grabs a cloak, covering Gabrielle against the night air.

GABRIELLE

Thanks.

Xena just nods and keeps her arm around Gabrielle, noting that their guest is unaffected by the cold breeze. Xena stares intently at their visitor.

GABRIELLE

(cont'd)

Carena?

Carena nods.

GABRIELLE

(cont'd)

Why do you think the
Queen is in trouble?

CARENA

I don't think the Queen is in trouble.
I *know* the Queen is in trouble.

GABRIELLE

How do you know?

Carena stares at the fire. She lifts her head and looks pleadingly at them.

CARENA

I have heard Cyrus
make his plans.

XENA

Who is Cyrus?

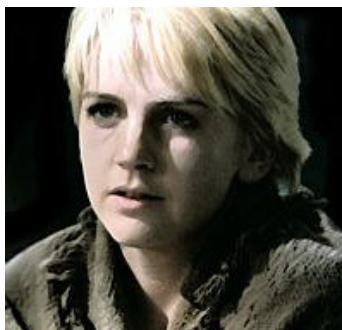
CARENA

He's the Queens advisor...
and he is a very evil man.

Gabrielle and Xena look at one another startled by the bitterness in Carena's voice.

GABRIELLE

Okay, tell us what's happening.



CARENA

My...Queen is a wonderful ruler. She is kind and generous and truly cares for the people of this land. Cyrus is an evil, greedy man and cares for only one person...himself! He has convinced my ... Queen to sign a document that would make him the King should anything happen to the Queen. He convinced her that this would keep her land and her people safe from being attacked by warlords wanting to take over.

GABRIELLE

Is the Queen without heirs?

Lowering her head, Carena nods.

CARENA

Yes, she has no one.

XENA

That sounds logical if there is no heir to the throne.



GABRIELLE

That does make sense, Carena. Unless you know something else?

CARENA

Cyrus is planning on having the Queen assassinated sometime just after the end of the new moon. That is when this document becomes law.

She looks hopefully at them.

CARENA

(cont'd)

Will you help...my Queen?

XENA AND GABRIELLE

Yes.

Xena and Gabrielle stand extending their arms toward Carena. As they reach out to extend their arms in agreement, another stronger breeze blows across the span between them. The gust stirs up the fire sending sparks and ash into the air. Xena and Gabrielle embrace, sheltering their eyes from the sparks and ash. When the breeze dies down, Carena is nowhere to be seen.

GABRIELLE

Where did she go?

Xena unsheathes her boot dagger and moves quickly and cautiously around the campsite, eyes narrowing as they pierce the blackness of the night.

GABRIELLE

(cont'd)

What do you think Xena? Do you think she's telling the truth?

XENA

I think she's hiding something.

GABRIELLE

But, is she genuinely concerned for the safety of the Queen?

XENA

Yes.

CUT TO:

EXT. SMALL TOWN - MID MORNING

Xena and Gabrielle return to the town and head directly to the castle. The townsfolk watch quietly as they walk past the market place and Inn but begin to mumble as they pass the common areas and head to the main gate.

GABRIELLE

Not much of a change in attitude from yesterday.



XENA

Nope. Still seem to be a wary bunch.

GABRIELLE

Wonder if that has
to do with Cyrus.

Xena shrugs her shoulders as she leads Argo up the path to the main gate where they are stopped by two burly guards. The guards cross their spears, barring them from entering.

FIRST GUARD

Halt!

GABRIELLE

We're here to seek an
audience with the Queen.

FIRST GUARD

Do you have an invitation
from the Queen?

GABRIELLE

No.

FIRST GUARD

Then you cannot enter.

GABRIELLE

Is there any way we can see the
Queen without an invitation?

The guards look at each other obviously not knowing the answer to the question.

Xena sighs. She looks down at Gabrielle and raises an eyebrow in question.

Deciding to take a different tact, Gabrielle walks over to the second guard and smiles.

GABRIELLE

(cont'd)

My name is Gabrielle and
this is my partner Xena.

At the mention of Xena's name, the guard swallows hard.

GABRIELLE

(cont'd)

Do you think your Queen
would be happy to know you
turned away visiting royalty?

SECOND GUARD

(stuttering)

Uh... well....

GABRIELLE

I'm an Amazon Queen and we
are here to visit your Queen.

The first guard looks Gabrielle up and down.

FIRST GUARD

You don't look like royalty.

XENA

(growling)

Enough of this. Move.



The guards look at Xena, then at Gabrielle. The guards wisely step aside.

GABRIELLE

Thank you.

CUT TO:

INT. CASTLE HALLWAY - DAY

Xena and Gabrielle walk down a long, wide hallway filled with various tapestries hanging on the walls. They seem to be in historical order showing battle scenes, festivals, an intricate labyrinth and many of two children with their mother. Most are filled with happiness, peace and prosperity. Halfway down the hall, the tapestries end abruptly.

GABRIELLE

I wonder what happened here.

She points to the last tapestry that has a scene of a river, a dark cloud with a lightening bolt coming from it, and a child weeping by the river. Xena studies the scene and shrugs.

GABRIELLE

(cont'd)

Looks like a sad story.



An old woman is standing at the end of the hall. She watches as they stop and view the last tapestry before continuing down the hall.

OLD WOMAN

Greetings. My name is
Rhea. May I help you?

Glad to finally see a friendly face, Gabrielle gives the old woman a warm, disarming smile and extends an arm in friendship.

GABRIELLE

Hi, Rhea. I'm Queen Gabrielle of the
Amazons and this is Xena. We're here
to seek an audience with the Queen.

The old woman raises her chin as she looks them over, hesitant to comply with their request.

RHEA

An Amazon Queen, ya say?
Didn't know there were any
Amazons left in these parts.

GABRIELLE

Yes I am, and no, there aren't
any Amazons left in these parts.
We are just passing through
and want to pay our respects.

RHEA

They used to live up in the hills
on the other side of the river.

GABRIELLE

Yes, I understand most of them
died from old age. They were
excellent hunters and traders.

RHEA

Yes, they were well respected in
these parts. I... we miss them.
The Queen is in her private
study. Follow me, please.

Rhea nods and indicates that they should follow her. She leads them through several twists and turns finally ending at a large wooden door. She knocks and waits for the response to enter. Gabrielle looks back over her shoulder.

GABRIELLE

(whispering)

Maybe we should have left a trail of bread crumbs to find our way out.



XENA

(whispering)

Nah, two lefts, one right, another left, down the stairs, left, up the stairs, two more lefts, then a right and we're out of here.

Gabrielle shakes her head and laughs as she takes hold of Xena's upper arm.

GABRIELLE

(softly)

Oh, you're good.

XENA

Well, I do have....

Gabrielle holds up a hand.

GABRIELLE

Don't say it.

Xena just grins.

MUFFLED VOICE

Come in.

RHEA

Your majesty, Queen Gabrielle of the Amazons and Xena are here to see you.

The Queen nods but remains standing with her back to the group.

QUEEN SERENA

Thank you, Rhea.

That will be all.

Rhea backs away toward the door but does not leave. She remains unseen behind a set of curtains by the door.

QUEEN SERENA

(cont'd)

I've heard of the two of you.
What brings you to my realm?

She turns to face them and the light from the window highlights a sad countenance. Surprised, Xena and Gabrielle look at each other as they recognize the Queen to be their visitor from the previous night. Strangely, the Queen doesn't appear to recognize them.

GABRIELLE

We're here to
offer our services.



The Queen raises both eyebrows in surprise.

GABRIELLE

(cont'd, smiling)

We heard you may be in danger
and thought we could help.

The Queen paces across the room to the window. She stares momentarily out into the courtyard, then turns back to her visitors.

QUEEN SERENA

In danger? Where
did you hear that?

The Queen moves nervously away from the window and sits in a large ornate chair by her writing table. Xena and Gabrielle move in front of the table. Xena remains quiet, watching the Queen's actions. Before Gabrielle speaks, Xena clears her throat and attracts Gabrielle's attention, making a subtle motion with her head toward the door.

GABRIELLE

Forgive us, Queen Carena.
We've obviously made an err....

Her words are cut off as the Queen stands abruptly, anger and sadness sending a mixed message to the observant Xena.

QUEEN SERENA

Is this some sort of sick joke?
Get out! Get out now before
I call for my guards!

GABRIELLE

But....

Xena takes Gabrielle's hand and pulls her back towards the door.

XENA

Let's go.

The Queen turns and exits the room quickly, tears streaking down her face. Rhea steps out from behind the curtain and beckons them to follow. With a shrug of their shoulders, they follow the old woman.

FADE TO:

INT. ABANDONED CHILDREN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Gabrielle looks around the room that was obviously once a bedroom for two small children. Xena observes Gabrielle looking intently at two matching dolls. Xena walks over and picks up the dolls, wiping the dust off the faces exposing faded smiles.

RHEA

I was the nanny to the children
that lived in this room. You have
just met one of them. I'm afraid
she's a bit...fragile. I have been
very worried about her lately.

GABRIELLE

She seems so sad.

RHEA

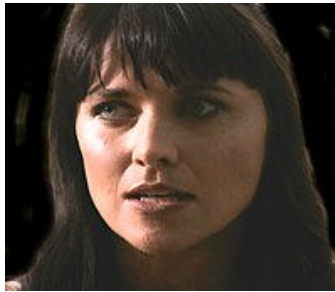
Aye, she is and has been for a very
long time. Queen Serena has taken
to wandering the castle late at
night on many occasions.

GABRIELLE

Queen Serena? I thought
her name was Carena.

Rhea inhales sharply, now sure she heard them call the Queen by her sister's name.

Xena looks over at Gabrielle who is about to speak, but refrains when she sees Xena's expression. Xena glances back down at the dolls, replacing them on the small desk.



GABRIELLE

(cont'd)

Rhea, please apologize to the Queen.
We've obviously upset her.

XENA

We'll be going.

Xena takes Gabrielle by the hand and leads her to the door. Gabrielle begins to speak as they walk down the hall, but Xena puts a finger to her lips.

XENA

(cont'd, whispering)

Later.

CUT TO:

EXT. OPEN ROAD LEADING FROM THE CASTLE - DAY

Xena steals a look over her shoulder as they walk toward the town and notices the Queen in one of the windows. As she turns back toward the town, she catches a glimpse of another person who is also watching them leave.

GABRIELLE

Okay, what's up?

XENA

Remember the last tapestry?

GABRIELLE

The one with the crying child?

XENA

(nodding)

I think it may be Queen
Serena's story.

GABRIELLE

Oh...how sad. No wonder she
wanders the castle at night.

XENA

That's not Serena
doing the wandering.



Gabrielle looks at Xena and frowns then sees what Xena has already recognized.

GABRIELLE

Carena...

XENA

Our friendly campfire
visitor is a ghost.

She steals another look over her shoulder.

XENA

(cont'd)

We're being watched.
C'mon.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

EXT. CASTLE GATE - DAY

Once safely in the town square, Gabrielle finally speaks

GABRIELLE

So, Carena is the one
wandering the castle halls.

XENA

Right.



GABRIELLE

Why doesn't she appear to her
sister and tell her she's in danger?

XENA

Like Rhea said, she's fragile.

GABRIELLE

Yes, she certainly lost it when
we mentioned Carena's name.

Gabrielle turns and looks at Xena.

GABRIELLE

(cont'd, sighing)

I can understand how the
death of a loved one can
affect you so strongly.

Xena stops and takes Gabrielle's face into her hands.

XENA

Yeah. We both understand
that, don't we?

Gabrielle smiles and turns her head to kiss the palm of Xena's right hand.



GABRIELLE

Yes, we do. So, do we
leave or do we stay?

XENA

We stay.

Xena releases Gabrielle and looks around the town.

XENA

(cont'd)

C'mon, let's see what
we can find out.

FADE TO:

INT. CASTLE - DAY

Cyrus is standing by the window watching Xena and Gabrielle leave, a cautious look on his face. A knock on the door diverts his attention.

CYRUS

Come in.

The two gate guards enter and bow.

BOTH GUARDS

M'lord.

CYRUS

I gave orders that no one was
to be allowed into the castle!

FIRST GUARD

But, M'lord... the small
one is a visiting Queen.

Quickly the second guard speaks up.

SECOND GUARD

Yes, M'lord. She's an Amazon
Queen and she wanted to speak
to Queen Serena. Visiting royalty
is always permitted entrance.

CYRUS

Does this Amazon Queen
have a name?

SECOND GUARD

Oh, yes, M'lord. It's Gabrielle.

FIRST GUARD

And her bodyguard is Xena!

CYRUS

(surprised)
Xena, eh?

SECOND GUARD

Yes, M'lord.

CYRUS

Have Rhea come to see me.

He waves a hand at them in dismissal. After they exit he looks out the window, watching Xena and Gabrielle walk down the road.

CYRUS

(cont'd)
Well, well. Now why are you
two here? No matter. I'll
make sure you don't interfere.

Another knock on the door begs his attention.

CYRUS

(cont'd)
Enter.

Rhea enters the room with her head bowed low, but a look of distrust can be seen in her eyes.

RHEA

You asked to see me, M'lord?

CYRUS

What did those women
want with the Queen?

Head still bowed, Rhea shakes her head.

RHEA

I wouldn't know, M'lord. I just
escorted them to the Queen's
chambers as they requested.

CYRUS

Oh, come now Rhea. You
mean to say you left strangers
in the room with the Queen?

RHEA

Yes, M'lord. The
Queen dismissed me.

CYRUS

And you didn't overhear
their conversation?

RHEA

No, M'lord.

CYRUS

Have Captain Bigos
report to me.

RHEA

Yes, M'lord.

Rhea backs toward the door, head still bowed.

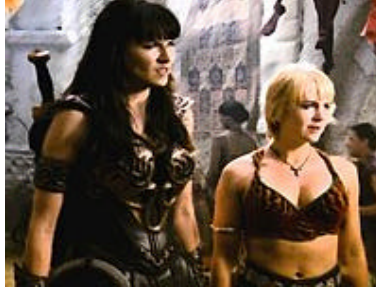
CUT TO:

EXT. TOWN MARKET PLACE - DAY

Gabrielle and Xena decide that the best place to get information is at the town market. Gabrielle moves from stall to stall, inspecting goods while Xena inspects the townsfolk.

XENA

These people aren't hostile.
They're scared.



Gabrielle looks around at the vendors and town folk.

GABRIELLE

You're right.

XENA

Let's go over there.

Xena points to a stall selling dried fruits.

GABRIELLE

Sure. We can replenish our supply
and maybe get a little information.

Arriving at the stall, Gabrielle looks over the fruit and selects several pieces while questioning the shopkeeper.

GABRIELLE

Nice town.

SHOPKEEPER

Mpf.

GABRIELLE

Not very friendly though.

SHOPKEEPER

We just mind our own business.

GABRIELLE

Doesn't seem like a good
way to make money.

SHOPKEEPER

There's no one to
sell to but townsfolk.

XENA

Why?

The shopkeeper just shrugs his shoulders and wraps Gabrielle's purchases, refusing to say anything else. They walk away, ignoring the stare of the shopkeeper.

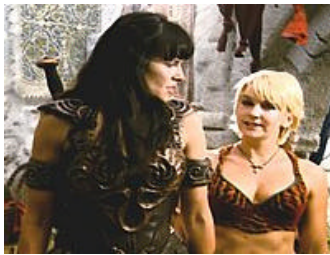
GABRIELLE

You may have to put the
pinch on someone to get a
straight answer around here.

XENA

(growling)

Don't tempt me.



Gabrielle's stomach rumbles loudly. Xena and Gabrielle both laugh and look around the market place. Xena points to the inn and they head toward it.

CUT TO:

INT. INN - MIDDAY

Xena and Gabrielle find a seat in the back near a window facing the alley. They look around the interior of the room, and Gabrielle points to an Amazon ceremonial mask on the wall.

GABRIELLE

Hey, look at that.

XENA

Not something you'd expect
to see in a place like this.

A smiling young innkeeper approaches their table and takes their order. She returns with two mugs of cold cider and a plate of bread, cheese, and assorted fruit.

GABRIELLE

(pointing)

Where did the
mask come from?

YOUNG INNKEEPER

Ah, that would be my grandmother's
mask. She was an Amazon.

GABRIELLE

Really?



YOUNG INNKEEPER

I would have loved to know more about the Amazons but my grandmother died before I was born.

Seeing an opportunity to gather more information, Gabrielle smiles graciously.

GABRIELLE

Maybe I can answer a few of your questions. I'm an Amazon Queen.

YOUNG INNKEEPER

(smiling)

No kidding? I thought they were all gone! You really are?

XENA

Yep, she's the real deal all right.

GABRIELLE

Why don't you sit down with us for a while?

The young innkeeper looks around the room.

YOUNG INNKEEPER

Might as well. Business isn't exactly overflowing.

GABRIELLE

Have you lived here all your life?

YOUNG INNKEEPER

Nah. I've only been here about a year. This place belongs to my grandfather. I came to help out when he fell off the roof fixing a leak.

GABRIELLE

Have the town folk always
been so unfriendly?



YOUNG INNKEEPER

Only with strangers. They don't
talk much around visitors. I asked
my grandpa Arius about it and he
said things used to be different.

XENA

How so?

YOUNG INNKEEPER

The Princess, that would be Queen
Serena now, used to come down into
the market herself. Even came in here
to eat. But then her parents died
suddenly and she became Queen.

GABRIELLE

So, she had to stay in the castle?

YOUNG INNKEEPER

Oh, no. At first, she would still come
down, but then her advisor, Cyrus,
told her it wasn't wise to mix with the
people. It's a shame too. Queen
Serena was always well liked and fair.
I used to see her occasionally when
I first came here, but now I never do.

GABRIELLE

So why do you think
she stays in the castle?

YOUNG INNKEEPER

My gramps says that she was never
the strong one and that she lets
Cyrus make most of the decisions.

XENA

Never the strong one?

YOUNG INNKEEPER

Yeah, I guess she had a twin sister that died or disappeared or something. Gramps said she was the stronger of the two. He said things would be different if they had ruled together. There would be more trade with other towns and we wouldn't be so alone. Business isn't that good as you can see.

GABRIELLE

Really? Why would he think that?

YOUNG INNKEEPER

Gramps feels that Carena would have ruled with her head and Serena with her heart. They would have been a good balance for each other and would have helped them to create better relations with surrounding villages.

XENA

So, tell us about Cyrus....

FADE TO:

EXT. RIVER CAMPSITE - EVENING

Gabrielle finishes eating and stands up to clean their plates. As she cleans, Xena pokes at the fire with a stick.

XENA

Well, it certainly sounds like Cyrus has an agenda.



GABRIELLE

What a set up. Keep the town isolated, and then when he takes over, open up the borders to trade. The people will be overjoyed with him and forget all about poor Queen Serena.

XENA

Exactly.

GABRIELLE

Yes, but how does he expect
to eliminate the Queen without
arousing suspicion?

Xena ticks off the points on her fingers.

XENA

One, get her to commit suicide.
Two, use her grief over Carena
to drive her nuts. Three,
have her assassinated.

GABRIELLE

Well, my bet's on the number
three, but would he try to
assassinate the Queen himself?

XENA

I don't think so. He doesn't sound
like the type that would want to get
his hands dirty. We need proof
that he's up to something.

A gust of wind stirs the ashes forcing Xena and Gabrielle to turn away from the swirling ash. When it stops and they look back at each other they see Carena standing by the fire.

CARENA

Please, you must go back
and help the Queen!

GABRIELLE

What's wrong?

CARENA

Cyrus....

Their conversation is interrupted by a noise in the bush as Cyrus's guards enter the campsite. Xena and Gabrielle reach for their weapons and turn towards their attackers. Xena glances over her shoulder to see that Carena has disappeared once more.

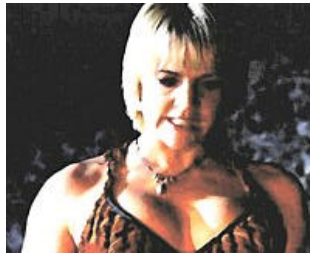
Three guards rush them from the right and three more from the left. Xena and Gabrielle turn to face them as they slide into battle mode.

XENA

I'll get these guys.

GABRIELLE

And I'll get these!



Gabrielle raises and crosses her sais as the first guard tries to send his sword toward her head. Deflecting it easily, she kicks out with her right leg and hits the man squarely in his crotch sending him immediately to the dirt. The other two guards rush her at the same time and she catches each sword with a sai and turns and twists their swords out of their hands. She then flips the sais over and punches both in the head with the butt ends. The guards' heads snap back and they slump to the ground. Gabrielle walks over to her the first attacker and knocks him over the head with the grip of the sai. He falls forward, still clutching his crotch.

Xena's attackers rush her at once, each with their swords poised to hack at her head. She flips her sword sideways and catches their downward thrusting swords. With a great heave she pushes their weapons back into the air and out of their hands, then jumps up and kicks the two outermost guards in the face with her boots sending them unconscious to the ground. The center guard continues toward her as she remains in the air after completing the kick. Xena allows him to come forward and immediately wraps her legs around his head, her weight and the force of her momentum drags him backward to the ground. Sitting on his chest, Xena reaches forward and gives him the pinch.

XENA

You know who I am?

The guard nods as he begins to choke.

XENA

(cont'd)

Then you know the drill.

The guard nods again.

XENA

(cont'd)

Who sent you?



GUARD

Cy...Cyrrruuss

Gabrielle has now joined Xena and is kneeling next to the gasping guard.

GABRIELLE

Why?

GUARD

He...he said you were here
to assassinate the Queen.

Xena and Gabrielle exchange glances.

GABRIELLE

Really? If we wanted to assassinate
the Queen, wouldn't we have done
that when we were at the castle today?

The guard obviously is not the brightest candle in the box and he shakes his head.

GUARD

Don't kkknnnoww.

Xena releases the pinch and punches the guard into unconsciousness. She gives her hand a little shake.

XENA

Ooww. Not too bright, but
he sure has a hard head.

Gabrielle reaches over and takes Xena's fist, placing a gentle kiss on the knuckles.

GABRIELLE

(grinning)

All better?

CUT TO:

EXT. RIVER CAMPSITE - NIGHT

Xena and Gabrielle are inspecting the knots on the rope tying the six guards to a large tree. The men are still unconscious.

GABRIELLE

Think they'll be able to
find their clothes?

Xena grins evilly as she reaches down and grabs their packed gear.

XENA

C'mon. Let's get back to the castle before daybreak. We need to find something that will prove to the Queen that her life is truly in danger and that Cyrus is behind it all.

GABRIELLE

Sure wish Carena would reappear. I think she could help us get the proof we need.



FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

EXT. CASTLE WALL- NEAR DAWN

Xena and Gabrielle are standing in deep shadows on the far side of the castle wall. A guard comes around the corner, and the two of them go very still. He walks right by them.

GABRIELLE

(whispering)

There weren't this
many guards yesterday.

Xena somersaults to the top of the castle wall.

XENA

Nope.

She reaches a hand down to Gabrielle who takes a running leap towards the wall before accepting the hand. Xena pulls Gabrielle to stand beside her.

GABRIELLE

Thanks. You think
they're looking for us?

They jump down to the other side, looking around again to see if they've been spotted.

XENA

Good bet, yeah.



They move into the shadows.

A pair of guards walk over and stand inches from them. The guards look the area over carefully.

FIRST GUARD

I'm telling you I saw something.

SECOND GUARD

Well, there's nothing here now.
Let's get back to our posts before
Cyrus gives us stock duty.

Both wince and turn to go. Two shadows follow them back to the castle unseen.

Xena and Gabrielle lose the guards when they enter the castle.

GABRIELLE

Okay, now what?

XENA

Now we find Rhea
in this maze.

Xena begins retracing their steps from the previous day. She hears two voices approaching them. She and Gabrielle slip into an alcove.

Rhea and what appears to be a chambermaid walk by. Xena reaches out and taps Rhea on the shoulder.

Rhea stops walking, looking around carefully and peering into the darkness before finally spotting them.

RHEA

Go ahead, Miriam.
You have work to do.

The chambermaid nods her head and withdraws.

When she is out of hearing range, Rhea moves to the alcove.

RHEA

(whispering)

What are you doing
back here?

GABRIELLE

We need to find out exactly
what Cyrus is up to.

XENA

When did he add
the guard patrols?

RHEA

Last night. He knows you
were here yesterday.

XENA

Yeah, we had
company last night.

She looks around thoughtfully.

XENA

(cont'd)

We need a way to blend in.



CUT TO:

INT. CASTLE - LATE AFTERNOON

Rhea is leading a now disguised Xena and Gabrielle along the corridor. She hands Gabrielle a cloth and opens a door, motioning her in.

RHEA

Cyrus' room.

Gabrielle nods and steps into the room, closing the door firmly behind her.

Rhea looks to Xena and beckons her with a nod.

RHEA

(cont'd)

C'mon. I think they need more help in the kitchen.

Xena's eyes widen in horror. She motions back towards the room where Gabrielle is.

XENA

Kitchen!? Um, no.
Gabrielle should take
the kitchen, and I'll....



Rhea takes her arm with a chuckle

RHEA

You don't have to cook... well, not much at any rate. You just have to listen. Trust me; it's the best place for gossip in the whole castle. Gabrielle said you had the perfect ears for it.

Xena's eyes narrow, and she casts a final glance towards Cyrus' room before motioning to Rhea.

XENA

Well, lead on, then.

CUT TO:

INT. CYRUS' ROOM - SHORT WHILE LATER

Gabrielle is wandering through the room, not really sure what she is looking for. The large desk on one side draws her attention.

She sees a small stack of fine parchment sitting on one corner of the desk.

GABRIELLE

Wow! That's nice parchment.
Must have cost a fortune.

She looks around the room.

GABRIELLE

(cont'd)

Not like he can't
afford it though.

Gabrielle runs a hand across the soft texture, her brow furrowing at the surprising lack of smoothness. Her eyes widen when she realizes there is a firm imprint on the sheet. Taking a chance, she folds the page and carefully stuffs it in her bodice.

She shifts uncomfortably.

GABRIELLE

(cont'd)

Ouch. Pokey parchment.



The door swings open.

FADE TO:

INT. KITCHEN - SAME TIME

Xena is in an alcove. Her back is to the room, but she can still hear plainly all the conversation in it. She is busy stirring the pot and the look on her face shows she is not thrilled to be here.

A nearby conversation catches her attention.

WOMAN

It's not right, Bellus. Serena is a good Queen. Or she was until Cyrus started running things.

BELLUS

Hush, Myra! Do you wanna get us all into trouble?

MYRA

No! But Bellus, you know the staff would rather take orders from the Queen. She should have given those strangers a chance. They were willing to help.

BELLUS

And... don't forget the castle guards. Most of them hate Cyrus and only follow orders from him because the Queen said to. Besides, Cyrus has managed to cut off all outside trade and get himself named as heir. It's only a matter of time before....

A guard strides into the room, coming to a stop at the bottom of the stairway next to Xena's alcove.

He turns to her, grabbing her by the arm. He jerks her around to face him.

GUARD

Where is...? Hey, you're X...!

Xena throws a punch right from the shoulder laying the guard out flat. Heads turn at the commotion as Xena steps nonchalantly into the main kitchen area.

XENA

Bet he doesn't put his hands there again.



Xena walks out the door without a backward glance. She hears the conversation behind her.

MYRA

Wasn't that...?

BELLUS

Yeah. Things are
suddenly looking up.

Xena makes a beeline for the stairs... and Gabrielle.

CUT TO:

INT. CYRUS' ROOM - CONCURRENT

Gabrielle hears a noise in the hallway and begins dusting the desk when the door swings open and slams against the wall. Cyrus notices a body but not a face, and begins demanding petulantly.

CYRUS

Girl, I need fresh sheets... and towels.
And clean up the mess in the bathing
room too. Oh, and I need a flagon
of wine and two more pillows.

Gabrielle is fuming, but keeps her head down. She nods.

Cyrus doesn't acknowledge her again, but picks up several parchments from the table near the door and slams the door shut behind him.

GABRIELLE

Of all the chauvinistic,
pig-hearted, cow-brained....

Her fuming is stopped by the reopening of the door.

XENA

C'mon. We've got trouble.

GABRIELLE

(drolly)

There's something new.



CUT TO:

INT. CASTLE STAIRS - SAME TIME

Cyrus passes Xena and Gabrielle without giving them a second glance. He stops at the door to the audience chamber. They slide off into the shadows.

The guard Xena hit comes staggering out of the kitchen holding his face. He sees Cyrus walking down the corridor and shouts.

GUARD

Thir! Theentha's
in na cassle.

CYRUS

Idiot! What??

He snatches the man's hands from his face and sees the man's nose has been broken.

CYRUS

(cont'd)

What in Tartarus
happened to your face?

GUARD

Theentha... Theentha's
in na cassle.

Cyrus stands perplexed processing the man's nasally words for a moment. When light dawns, he gets a panicked look on his face.

CYRUS

(bellowing)
GUARDS!!!!

FADE TO:

INT. CASTLE - EARLY EVENING

Xena is standing in the middle of the hall frowning, hands on hips muttering to herself. Gabrielle is peering around a conveniently placed tapestry that affords her a view around the corner without putting her in plain sight.

GABRIELLE

(mumbling)
It's never easy.

XENA

Two lefts, one right, another left,
down the stairs, left, up the stairs,
two more lefts, then a right. I know
that's how we got there before.

GABRIELLE

Well, we've got bigger problems right now.

XENA

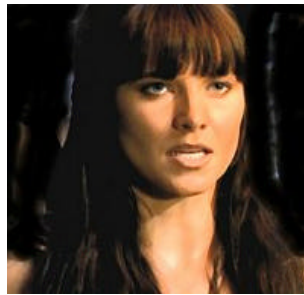
Such as...?

GABRIELLE

Guards are headed this way, and by the look on their faces, it's not for a friendly chat. I think we've been made.

XENA

We don't have time for this.



Three guards step into the hallway where Xena and Gabrielle are. Xena doesn't hesitate. A head butt to the first man causes him to fall into the two behind him, and they tumble down the two short stairs in a pile.

Xena takes Gabrielle's hand.

XENA

(cont'd)

C'mon....

Before they can choose a direction, running footsteps are heard coming from two different directions.

They choose the only direction they've got left... forward.

The guard leader spots them.

GUARD LEADER

AFTER THEM!!

CUT TO:

INT. DARK ROOM - EVENING

Xena and Gabrielle rush into a darkened room, surprised by several whoosh sounds and the lack of footsteps behind them.

GABRIELLE

Ouch! Something cut me!

They keep moving, around several high walls until the guard's voice can barely be heard.

GUARD LEADER

(muffled)

Pull back. That's the labyrinth.
If they're in there, they're
history. Let's move.

Xena and Gabrielle wait patiently until the footsteps fade.

XENA

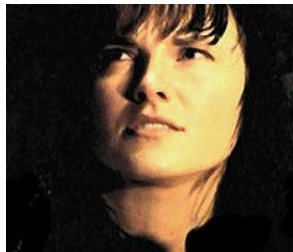
Gabrielle?

GABRIELLE

Yeah?

XENA

Ya ever have a day that
goes from bad to worse?



GABRIELLE

Why do I get the feeling the answer
to that question is gonna be yes?

XENA

Because you're smarter than
the average battling bard.

She draws a deep breath and tries to see in the dark.

XENA

(cont'd)

Unless we find a torch, we're
gonna have to figure a way out
of this labyrinth in the dark.

GABRIELLE

Wonderful.... Well, at least I won't
be able to see myself bleeding.

FADE TO:

INT. LABYRINTH - EVENING

They walk slowly in the pitch darkness, feeling their way along the high wall. They reach an opening in the wall, stumbling slightly.

GABRIELLE

What was that?

Xena feels around on the floor. A strike is heard, then a spark is seen.

XENA

Bones.

GABRIELLE

Someone died trying
to get outta here?



XENA

Looks like it. C'mon.

Xena takes Gabrielle's hand and holds the torch high with the other. They step between the high walls and stare across the flat expanse of space.

GABRIELLE

It can't be that easy.

Xena examines the floor nearest them.

XENA

It's not. Look at the floor.

The floor is covered with odd markings and glyphs.

XENA

(cont'd)

There has to be a key to
unlocking the pattern.

GABRIELLE

Yeah, but what?
And where?

They study the floor.

GABRIELLE

(cont'd)

You think it might be something
in those tapestries we saw?

Xena shrugs.

XENA

I dunno, but it doesn't do us
a lot of good in here if it is.

GABRIELLE

Good point.

Xena takes a tentative first step. Successful, she turns to Gabrielle.

XENA

Make sure you step
exactly where I do.



GABRIELLE

No problem there.

Xena's takes a second step and is nearly skewered by the blade that springs up from the ground.

GABRIELLE

(cont'd)

You all right?

XENA

Yeah. Bad choice.

She steps safely again. Then she takes another, and this time the ground begins crumble out from under her, revealing a very long drop.

Her next step drops a blade from the ceiling and she twists out of the way.

XENA

Okay, this isn't working.

GABRIELLE

You want me to try?

XENA

NO! I have an idea.
C'mere.

Gabrielle steps tentatively to share the marked stone Xena is standing on.

XENA

(cont'd)

Whaddya think about
making a run for it?

GABRIELLE

I'm thinking someone really
doesn't want anyone in here.

She looks at the ceiling, then at the blade that narrowly missed Xena.

GABRIELLE

(cont'd)

Wonder what other lovely
surprises are hidden in here.

VOICE

Perhaps I can help?

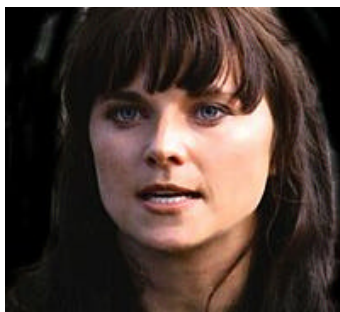
Out of the darkness, Carena seemingly floats into their circle of light.

GABRIELLE

How did you...?

XENA

It doesn't matter. Can
you get us out of here?



CARENA

Yes. The entire castle was built with secret passages and tunnels, and a labyrinth surrounds the royal quarters. The only way in or out is through the front, or knowing the secret.

(beat)

My great-grandfather was...
shall we say, eccentric?

GABRIELLE

So what's the key?

CARENA

You were right... the answer is in the tapestry. It shows exactly what steps to take, but you have to be taught to read it correctly. It is how we learned the way.

XENA

(impatiently)

Can we discuss this later?
We need to get to the Queen.

CARENA

Certainly. Follow my
footsteps exactly.

Carena lifts her gown to her knees, and suddenly her feet are apparent. Xena follows directly behind Carena with the torch in one hand and holding Gabrielle's hand with her other as they make slow progress through the floor puzzle.

Left, forward, skip two, forward; right, right, forward, skip.... and so forth.

CARENA

(cont'd)

Once we reach the other side, I'll take you through the other maze. Then you'll go through the door and it will take you to the audience chamber. You should be able to find Serena there or in her private rooms just off it.

GABRIELLE

Thank you, Carena. I'm not sure
we could do it without you.

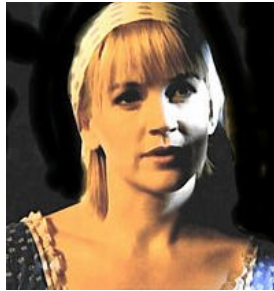
Carena casts a glance at Xena.

CARENA

You and Xena would have found a way I'm sure, but I was glad to help. Serena is my sister, and I love her.

GABRIELLE

You must, to have stuck around here all this time. Why didn't you go to the afterlife?



Carena shrugs.

CARENA

I couldn't... I couldn't leave Serena alone. I tried to appear to her shortly after my death to comfort her and say goodbye, but it sent her into a terrible depression so I've stayed around to protect her. When I found out about Cyrus' plan I knew I would need help.

They reach the other side of the puzzle, and step back into the maze.

CARENA

(cont'd)

Careful. It gets a little tricky here.

GABRIELLE

At least we have light this time.

Finally, they reach the end of the labyrinth and arrive at a door.

CARENA

Now you must go, quickly. We don't know how much time we have left.

Gabrielle removes the paper she'd stuffed in her bodice earlier.

GABRIELLE

We might be able
to find out though.

She hands the paper to Xena, who unfolds it carefully.

CARENA

It's blank.

XENA

Not for long.

She looks at Carena.

XENA

(cont'd)

How do we get the door open?



CARENA

Sorry. Push the stones.
Top, left, left, right, bottom.

Xena follows her directions and the door silently swings open. Xena douses the torch. The trio steps through to an empty room. Xena goes directly to the fireplace.

Carena glances at Xena, who has placed the parchment on the stones and is carefully shoveling warm ash to one side of the fireplace.

CARENA

(cont'd)

What is she doing?

GABRIELLE

Finding some answers.

Xena spreads the warm ash on the parchment and waits a moment. Then she removes the parchment from the stones and gently shakes the ash off.

Gabrielle and Carena make their way to her side. Xena hands the paper to Gabrielle.

GABRIELLE

(cont'd)

Oh boy.

The sound of a door opening draws their attention and Serena steps into the room

SERENA

What are you two doing
here? Better yet, HOW
did you get in here??

Xena and Gabrielle look at one another, realizing the Carena has once again disappeared and they are alone with an unhappy Queen.

SERENA

(cont'd)

GUARDS!!!

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN

INT. AUDIENCE CHAMBER - EVENING

Xena and Gabrielle are surprised by the Queen's shouting and rush to stop her. Xena puts her hand over the Queen's mouth and Gabrielle runs to close the door.

XENA

We can explain.



GABRIELLE

Queen Serena, please allow us
the chance to show you proof
that your life is in danger.

Rhea enters the room in a rush, fearful that something has happened to her Queen. She is surprised at the sight of Xena holding her hand over the Queen's mouth and turns to call for the guards again.

Gabrielle stops Rhea at the door.

GABRIELLE

(cont'd)

Rhea, we've found proof that Cyrus
intends to kill the Queen. Please...
go out and tell the guards that the
Queen just saw a rat and that
you've already killed it.

Rhea looks at Xena, then back to Gabrielle and decides that they are not intending to harm the Queen after all.

RHEA

I'll be right back.

Gabrielle stands before the Queen and holds out the parchment.

GABRIELLE

This will show you that Cyrus is behind this threat. Xena will release you if you promise to wait until you have heard us out before you call for the guards?



The Queen slowly nods her head and turns to face Xena when she is released, obviously upset by Xena's actions. Gabrielle steps forward and hands the parchment to her.

GABRIELLE

(cont'd)

I found this parchment in Cyrus' quarters. I could feel the impression of words on this sheet that were made from the pressure of writing on the previous sheet. Xena put ash on this to make the words stand out.

Gabrielle hands the parchment to the Queen.

GABRIELLE

(cont'd)

Many of the words are unreadable, but you can get the general idea of the letter by what is left. Someone has been hired to assassinate you after the end of the new moon cycle when the document you signed giving power to Cyrus becomes effective.

XENA

That's tomorrow, your Majesty.

The Queen reads the parchment several times. As she reads Rhea re-enters the room and nods at Gabrielle.

QUEEN SERENA

I am aware of this threat of assassination.

GABRIELLE

You are? Then you know your life is in danger and that we are here to help.

XENA

How did you find out?

Queen Serena turns to face Xena.

QUEEN SERENA

Cyrus came to me early this morning. He said he had information that you and Gabrielle were the assassins and that you had killed six of my guards when they came to arrest you at your camp.

GABRIELLE

If anyone killed the guards, it was Cyrus. They were alive and tied to a tree when we left.

QUEEN SERENA

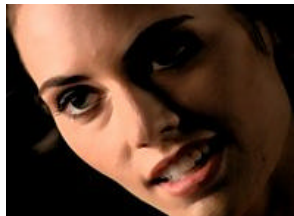
How did you get back into the castle?

RHEA

I helped them, my Queen.

QUEEN SERENA

So, you are in with these two?



RHEA

My Queen, you've known me for a very long time. I would never do you harm; nor would your staff or castle guards. They only answer to Cyrus because it is your wish. Please... Xena and Gabrielle are truly here to help you, not harm you.

The Queen absorbs her servant's words and paces across the room. She stops and looks out the window noticing a flurry of activity in the courtyard. She turns to face the three women waiting for her answer.

QUEEN SERENA

Why should I trust you?

GABRIELLE

Queen Serena, what would we gain by assassinating you?

QUEEN SERENA

Why you could take my lands, rule my people, take my treasury. Cyrus says that Xena has returned to being a warlord and she is forming a new army.

GABRIELLE

Queen Serena, Cyrus is lying. He also stands to gain the same if you die after tomorrow. There is only one way for us to find the truth.



QUEEN SERENA

What would you have me do?

XENA

Summon Cyrus. Once he's....

Xena's words are cut off as Cyrus and a dozen guards burst into the room.

The Queen and Rhea move to a corner of the chamber and out of harm's way as the guards attack.

Gabrielle and Xena move back-to-back to face the onslaught of the guards coming from both directions and reach for their weapons.

Two guards rush Xena at once and she parries their swords with her right hand as her left hand punches the guard on the left, knocking him backwards. She follows through with her left hand, setting it on the shoulder of the second guard and twists into the air, kicking out at the next two guards as they rush into the fray.

Another two guards rush Gabrielle and she ducks below the swinging blade of the guard to her right, flipping her sais so the butt end is forward. Using the momentum of her duck and turn, she punches the guard that was to her left, and jabs the gut of the guard she's just passed. Both guards are now bent over and Gabrielle dispatches them with blows to their heads with the butts of her sais.

Landing back on the ground, Xena grabs the tunic of the guard she used for a lift and spins him into the next two guards. She looks back over her shoulder to see Gabrielle is now surrounded by four guards. Xena reaches down for her chakram and sends it careening off the wall and into the helmets of the two closest guards, knocking them unconscious then grabs the returning chakram and replaces it at her waist.

Gabrielle now focuses on her two remaining guards. She flips her sai points forward and rushes them, catching their swords in the curved hilts. Using their efforts to raise their swords, she flips between them, neatly disarming them and landing behind them. Two quick blows with the butts of the sais send them to the floor beside their mates.

Xena turns to face the three guards regaining their balance and grins as she exchanges sword blows with each, backing them into a corner.

XENA

(taunting)

C'mon Cyrus. This all ya got?



As Cyrus watches the action he realizes that the guards are losing the fight.

CYRUS

(under his breath)

No, this can't be happening...
I'll lose everything.

In desperation he decides to push the action closer to the Queen and Rhea so that they can be killed in the fighting. Without them to back up Xena and Gabrielle, he knows he can convince the rest of the guard that Xena and Gabrielle killed them.

Cyrus moves behind the Queen and Rhea, drawing his dagger. As he raises the weapon and prepares to stab the Queen a bright point of light appears between him and the Queen causing him to gasp and back away as it develops into Carena.

Xena's attention is drawn to the light and she sees Cyrus with his dagger at the ready. She grabs her chakram from her belt and releases it. It bounces once off the corner wall then hits Cyrus' wrist disarming him. Rhea turns and sees Cyrus holding his injured wrist and moves the Queen away from him, but exposes her to the sight of her sister's ghostly apparition in the process.

QUEEN SERENA

No... it can't be....

CARENA

Yes, Serena, I am here. Xena and Gabrielle are right. Cyrus is the one who meant to do you harm.

QUEEN SERENA

Carena? Carena, is it really you?

Cyrus makes a move to flee, but Rhea grabs a marble sculpture from the table in the corner. She brings it down violently on Cyrus' head and sends him crashing unconscious to the floor. Carena rushes to her sister, holding her in a tight embrace.

XENA

Nice move, Rhea.

Rhea shrugs and drops the statue. Then she walks to where Xena and Gabrielle are standing as they watch the two sisters.

CARENA

Yes, my sister, it's me.

QUEEN SERENA

But... you're....

CARENA

Dead? Yes, but I have been watching out for you.

The two sisters embrace once more. Another flash of light appears between Xena and Gabrielle and takes the shape of Aphrodite, who puts her arms around them.

APHRODITE

Aww, sisterly love, it so rocks!



The three guards stare at Aphrodite with dropped jaws. She winks. They faint.

APHRODITE

(cont'd)

Nice to see I still totally have what it takes!

GABRIELLE

What are you doing here?

APHRODITE

I thought I'd like, you know,
pop in and see if I could help.

XENA

Help?

APHRODITE

Sure thing, warrior babe.
I still have a few radical
tricks up my sleeves.

Aphrodite reaches for her gossamer garment and pulls, then shrugs.

APHRODITE

(cont'd)

Well, you know what I mean. Anyway, I
can bring Carena back to life. It's that
whole power and purity of sibling love thing,
and since they're like, twins it's that much
easier. When love is this strong, I can do
wonders... if Carena wants to that is.
But it has to be totally her decision.

QUEEN SERENA

You can bring my
sister back to me?

APHRODITE

Only if she wants to.
It's her decision.

Aphrodite looks at Carena who is weighing the choice seriously.

CARENA

I don't think I can.

Carena throws up her hand as Serena starts to protest.

CARENA

(cont'd)

No, Serena, you are the Queen. You're a
fair and kind ruler and the people love you.
What would they say if I were to return to life?
You know how superstitious they are. It
wouldn't be wise and things would not go well.

QUEEN SERENA

But....

APHRODITE

How about a compromise?



Carena and Serena look at the goddess. Aphrodite addresses Carena.

APHRODITE

(cont'd)

I could put your... soul... into Serena's mind and body. You could both exist, you know, together. Your strength and wisdom would radically balance Serena's kindness and fairness.

CARENA

Would we be conscious
of the other?

APHRODITE

Absolutely! It would be just like you were standing here side by side. No one would see Carena, but you would feel her in your heart.

CARENA

Serena?

Serena smiles and nods.

SERENA

I have hurt too long to be separated from you again. Please Carena... let Aphrodite do this.

CARENA

Thank you Aphrodite.
I accept.

Aphrodite moves to raise her hand.

CARENA

(cont'd)

Wait! First let me
thank my friends.

Carena walks to Xena and Gabrielle and embraces each of them.

CARENA

(cont'd)

Thank you for saving my sister.
We are in your debt.

Carena then embraces Rhea.

CARENA

(cont'd)

Rhea, you've been a faithful
servant for many years.
Thank you for caring for Serena.

RHEA

I shall miss you, my Princess, but
I will be delighted to see joy on
Serena's face once more.

Carena hugs the old woman once more then moves back to her sister.

CARENA

Are you ready Serena?

When Serena nods, Aphrodite raises her arm sending a flash of light toward Carena causing the apparition to glow and move over Serena where she is slowly absorbed into her body.

Xena pulls Gabrielle to her in an embrace as they watch Serena's eyes close, then open, her face exhibiting a brilliant smile that has been missing for fifteen years.

GABRIELLE

Ah, now that's what I
call a happy ending.

APHRODITE

Well, gotta go...lots of
love to spread around!

Aphrodite winks at Gabrielle and disappears in a flash of sparkling lights.

Queen Serena notices that Cyrus and most of the guards are starting to come to.

QUEEN SERENA

Guards, take Cyrus to the dungeon
where he can contemplate what will
happen to him for his crimes against me.

The guards stand sluggishly and pick up their weapons. They grab Cyrus and exit the room.

QUEEN SERENA

(cont'd)

I hope you will accept the hospitality
of staying with us for the night before
you return to your journeys?

GABRIELLE

Thank you. A nice soft bed
and a bath would be welcome.

CUT TO:

INT. TAPESTRY LINED HALLWAY - NIGHT

Gabrielle is standing before the tapestry that depicts an extensive labyrinth. Xena rounds the corner and sees Gabrielle.

XENA

Well, there you are. I was
beginning to think you couldn't
find the way back to our room.



GABRIELLE

Nah, two lefts, down two stairs, left,
right, another right, up three stairs, then
left and it's the second door on the right.

XENA

Yep, that's it. What's up?

GABRIELLE

I'm just fascinated by this tapestry.
It doesn't look anything like the
room we were in. There are
walls in this one... see?

Xena traces the path they had taken with Carena as their guide.

XENA

Yep, we went here,
here, then over....

GABRIELLE

But... the walls.

XENA

Right, that's what makes it so difficult.
All the walls weren't put into the actual
room so that it would confuse anyone
who may have tried to use the tapestry as
a key. That's why it's a puzzle labyrinth.

GABRIELLE

Well, their great-grandfather
sure liked to confuse folks.



XENA

Just like he did with this castle... all the
twists and turns in the corridors and stairs.
It's just another series of safe guards he
put in place. Only those that live here have
a good knowledge of where everything is.

Xena puts her arm around Gabrielle and turns her toward the end of the hallway.

XENA

(cont'd)

C'mon, let's get
back to the room.

GABRIELLE

Great idea... I think I hear
a hot bath and a soft
bed calling our names.

XENA

(smirking)

Not necessarily in that order!

They both head down the corridor laughing.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FOUR

TAG

FADE IN:

EXT. VILLAGE - MORNING

Xena and Gabrielle are at one end of the village, noting the difference between what it had been and what it now is.

Gone are the guards in every doorway. Instead, a merchant train has come in and the traders are doing a brisk business with the local merchants, both in the buying and selling of goods.

GABRIELLE

Looks like Carena had a conversation with Serena.

XENA

I think you're right. Look!

Xena points to where a group of people are clustered together. Gabrielle stretches and strains but can't see anything but the melee of people.

GABRIELLE

What? I don't see anything
but a mob of people.

A pair of hands on her hips pulls a startled squawk from her lips.



GABRIELLE

(cont'd)

XENA!?! Wha... oh.

That's great!

In the midst of the crowd stands Queen Serena, greeting people and looking happier than anyone remembers her ever being.

She sees Gabrielle head and shoulders above the crowd and mouths 'Thank you'. Gabrielle smiles and nods in return before Xena lowers her to the ground.

They start out of town unnoticed.

GABRIELLE

(cont'd)

We did good.

XENA

Yeah, we did.

She wraps an arm around Gabrielle's shoulders.

XENA

(cont'd)

However, we need to
have a little talk about
my ears pulling
kitchen duty for me.

GABRIELLE

They're cute ears.

XENA

Gabrielle!

GABRIELLE

They heard some
important stuff.
They didn't mind.

XENA

GABRIELLE!!!

Gabrielle slips out of Xena's grasp and takes off at a run laughing. Xena stands still for a moment to make the chase more interesting. With a smirk, she turns to Argo.

XENA

(cont'd)

C'mon girl. We've got
us a bard to catch.



FADE OUT.

DISCLAIMER

Neither the sensitivity of Xena's ears nor her questionable cooking skills were lost in the labyrinth of this motion picture.