

Xena: Warrior Princess - Subtext Virtual Season 10



Production #V1006 – Life in Paradise

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WRITTEN BY
Trish Kocialski

PRODUCED BY
Carol Stephens

DIRECTED BY
Denise Byrd

SCREENGRABS
Judi Mair

ARTWORK
Lucia

TITLE GRAPHIC
Linda (Calli)

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TEASER

FADE IN:

EXT. CAMPSITE - NIGHT

Xena and Gabrielle are lying side by side on their bed roll, staring up at a night sky filled with brilliant stars. A meteor streaks across the sky.

GABRIELLE

Thirty-one. That one must
have come from Artemis' bow.

Two more streak by in tandem.

XENA

Thirty-two and three. And
those were from Athena's.

Another meteor crosses the sky but is the biggest and brightest one yet.

GABRIELLE

By the gods... that
one was... was....

Xena rolls over and faces Gabrielle.

XENA

Thirty-four. And
probably from Ares.



Gabrielle turns her head to face Xena and gives her a brilliant smile.

GABRIELLE

If you were up in the night sky,
yours would be the best!

XENA

Ah, now that smile, my
bard, outshines all the
stars in the heavens.

Even in the pale glow of the campfire, Xena sees Gabrielle blush. Xena moves closer toward Gabrielle's lips while Gabrielle begins to reach up with her hands toward Xena's face.

XENA

(cont'd, whispering)
Ready?

Gabrielle's nod is barely perceptible. In skillful fluid motions, both women reach for their weapons and spring to their feet, sais and sword at the ready.

GABRIELLE

You better come out now....

A bush at the far end of the campsite begins to shake violently.

GABRIELLE

(cont'd)
... before you get hurt.

The leaves of the bush begin to part and a young teen steps out with fear on his face as he holds out a shaking hand holding a scroll. He speaks in a quivering voice.

YOUNG TEEN

Please... I'm just bringing a
message from my mother.
My name is Ersep.

Gabrielle and Xena relax their stances as the youngster steps into the firelight. Gabrielle replaces her sais into their boot sheaths and steps forward indicating to the youngster to come closer.

GABRIELLE

Who is your mother?

ERSEP

Tara. She said you
would remember her.

Gabrielle's eyebrows hike up in surprise and she looks back at Xena who is shaking her head as she replaces her sword by their bed roll. Ersep watches Xena closely and takes a step backward in a move crossed between fear and shyness.

XENA

Well c'mon and sit down.

Ersep takes a long minute to decide, then slowly moves toward the campfire and the log Xena is indicating for him to sit on. Xena is now sitting on the bed roll back propped up on another log with her legs stretched out and crossed. Her hands folded across her chest as she stares at the youngster.

ERSEP

My mother... we live in the next town
to the north. She heard you were
near and sent me to find you
and give you this message.

He hands Gabrielle the scroll as she steps toward him. While Gabrielle reads the message, Xena observes the youngster who seems too timid and shy to be the child of the Tara they know.

Watching as Xena gives him the once over, Ersep unconsciously slides down the log, further away from Xena.

GABRIELLE

Xena, Tara would like us to come
see her. She says she needs our
help in a family matter. Seems
there is trouble in paradise.



Xena rolls her eyes and shakes her head.

XENA

(muttering under her breath)
I don't do marriage counseling.

ERSEP

It's only a half day journey. I know
she would be honored for you to visit.

Gabrielle looks hopefully at Xena who gives in, knowing that Gabrielle would pester her until she agreed, so she nods approval to Gabrielle.

GABRIELLE

We'll come. Now, are you hungry?
We have some fish left.

ERSEP

No, thank you. I must
go... home... now.

He stands and backs away again with that mixture of fear and timidity. He looks over his shoulder at them.

ERSEP

(cont'd)

I'll just head home now, and
tell mother you will be coming.

He turns and begins to trot away.

Gabrielle calls after the fleeting youngster.

GABRIELLE

You're welcome to
spend the night with us.

Ersep's voice fades as he runs back into the brush.

ERSEP

No... thanks....

GABRIELLE

Hmm, he certainly
doesn't take after Tara.

XENA

Nope.



Xena slides down off the log, resuming her previous position. She pats the bed roll and winks at Gabrielle.

XENA

(cont'd)

Now... where were we?

Gabrielle walks toward the bed roll, drops the scroll to the side, then kneels down and gives Xena a mischievous grin as we....

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. CAMPSITE - LATE MORNING

Gabrielle is tying her bed roll to the back of the saddle. Xena is patiently waiting as she sits upon Argo II, one leg wrapped nonchalantly around the saddle horn.

GABRIELLE

Tara's son is nothing like
I would expect him to be.

XENA

Probably takes
after his father.

GABRIELLE

I wonder what kind of
trouble Tara is in now?

XENA

No telling. Tara being Tara,
it could be anything.

GABRIELLE

Even after all these years?
You'd think she'd have
settled down by now.

Xena gives Gabrielle a wry grin.

XENA

Oh, you mean like how
we've settled down?



Putting her hands on her hips, Gabrielle sticks her tongue out at Xena. A mischievous glint appears in Xena's eyes.

XENA

(cont'd)

You shouldn't stick that out
unless you intend to use it.

GABRIELLE

Xena!

Xena laughs heartily as a blushing Gabrielle mounts her sporadically appearing horse. The horses snicker and shake their heads, causing Xena to laugh even harder. Soon, the contagious laughter pulls in Gabrielle and both riders and horses appear to be bouncing through the brush as they head back to the main road.

FADE TO:

EXT. MAIN ROAD RUNNING THROUGH THE WOODS - MID DAY

Dappled sunshine is filtering through the trees as Xena and Gabrielle walk beside their horses. There is no one else in sight on the road.

GABRIELLE

What a great day. I'm in a
really good mood, Xena.

XENA

Well, you should be. I let you
sleep longer than usual.

GABRIELLE

Yeah, thanks. I think
I needed that.

XENA

Besides, it's a short trip to
Tara's town. But I'm warning
you, Gabrielle, I'm not doing
any marital counseling. You can
do the sensitive chat routine and
settle the trouble in paradise.

GABRIELLE

I wonder why she
wants us to settle
their marital troubles.

Xena shrugs as they walk along the road, kicking a stray rock or two out of the way.

GABRIELLE

(cont'd)

It sure has been a long time
since we saw Tara last. I
wonder if she's still dancing.



Gabrielle smiles at the memory. She turns toward Xena and laughs.

GABRIELLE

(cont'd)

Remember those boots I had to
wear until mine were repaired?

XENA

Remember? I can still hear
them clanking on every hard
surface you stepped on.
What a racket you made.



They walk down the road in silence for a bit, enjoying the warm breeze that had picked up.

GABRIELLE

Have you ever been to
this town before?

XENA

Once. It's a nice quiet
town by the sea.

GABRIELLE

Does it have a
sandy beach?

XENA

Um hm.

GABRIELLE

So, what are
we waiting for?

Gabrielle mounts her horse and spurs him into a trot then a full out run. Xena shakes her head and whispers in Argo II's ear, then pulls herself up into the saddle.

XENA

Whaddya think, girl?
Want to have some fun?

Argo II whinnies and takes off, easily catching up. Xena and Argo race along side for a few paces, then Xena lets out a yell, verbally spurring Argo II on as they surpass Gabrielle. The race continues through the woods, across a meadow, over a ridge and down to a beach. They race in the surf, kicking up sand and water as the horses run. Seeing the town in the distance, Xena slows Argo II to a trot then a walk, followed by Gabrielle.

GABRIELLE

That was fun!

XENA

Yeah, Argo likes to run.

Gabrielle looks down the beach toward the town of Paendis.

GABRIELLE

So, want to swim
now or later?

XENA

Later. Let's find Tara
and get this over with.

CUT TO:

EXT. PAENDIS MARKETPLACE - MID AFTERNOON

Xena and Gabrielle follow the directions in the scroll to an Inn with an attached stable. Xena nods appreciatively at the neatness of the stable and the stacks of hay, feed sacks, and clear, clean water in the trough for the horses.

Ersep steps out of the stable and stops abruptly as he sees Xena and Gabrielle dismount. He walks over tentatively.

ERSEP

I'll take care of your horses.
Mother is in the inn, first room
past the kitchen. She's been waiting
for you. I'll bring in your things
when I've finished with the horses.

Xena watches as the horses quickly take to the gentle care of Ersep as he coos and talks softly to them. He picks up a brush and leads them to the watering trough where he takes off the saddles and gear and begins brushing them down. Xena notices the nicely laid rock floor by the hay stacks.

XENA

Nice idea. Keeps the
muddiness down
and the hay dry.

Gabrielle takes Xena's hand and leads her toward the inn.

GABRIELLE

C'mon, it looks like
they're in good hands.

XENA

(nodding)

Ersep just went up a
few notches in my book.

CUT TO:

INT. INN - MID AFTERNOON

They enter the inn and find an older, grayer Tara in the room indicated. It's a large bedroom and Tara is lying in the bed, both legs bound with stiff reeds and cloth to keep them from bending.

GABRIELLE

Tara! What happened to you?

TARA

I took a fall off the barn roof. You'd think
I could have fallen on the hay stack, or at
least the manure pile, but no...I had to
fall on the new rock floor Ersep put in
for the hay stacks! Broke both legs.

GABRIELLE

Ouch, bet that really hurt.

Tara nods her head and looks up at Xena.

TARA

Thanks for coming. As you can see, I'm not able to get around too well or I'd go over to Paradise myself.

GABRIELLE

Paradise is a place?

TARA

Yes. It's where my daughter lives. It's just a day's ride from here.

GABRIELLE

You have a daughter too?

Tara nods her head solemnly.

TARA

Yes. Her name is Tessa and she's just like me. Pig headed, opinionated, and totally her own person... and... I believe she's in trouble.

Xena tries to stifle a laugh.

XENA

Like mother,
like daughter, eh?

GABRIELLE

Xena, be nice.



TARA

No, Gabrielle, Xena's right. She is just like me, only worse! It's my fault that she's left. I just forgot how I was at her age. Maybe if I had had more patience....

GABRIELLE

So, why do you think
she's in trouble?

TARA

We argued before she left.

GABRIELLE

Why were you arguing?

TARA

She told me she got married.

GABRIELLE

And that made you angry?

TARA

Furious! Tessa knew how I
felt about Vicus, but she didn't
want to listen. No, she was
already in his wagon and leaving.

Tara turns her head toward the window, a single tear slides down her cheek. She quickly
wipes it away and returns her focus to Gabrielle and Xena.

TARA

(cont'd)

I was so angry. I wanted to
stop her from making a
mistake. Gods know, I've
made my share of them!

XENA

It was too late to
stop her, Tara.

TARA

I know, I know. I was just so furious
that she got married behind my back.
I lost my husband last winter and I was
hoping she'd stay here and eventually
take over the inn. She's really not ready
for marriage. She's just a child!

GABRIELLE

A child? How old is she?

TARA

Eighteen... but she's not...
well, she's just too....

XENA

Independent?



TARA

No, I think I'd say wild. She's been a real handful. Not like Ersep. He's like a rock for me. He takes after his father. Tessa is....

GABRIELLE

More like you used to be?

TARA

Exactly! She can barely cook and she hates to clean, but Vicus just turned her head with his words.

GABRIELLE

So, what makes you think she's in trouble? You finally settled down.

Xena coughs and Gabrielle gives her a tap across the stomach with her hand.

GABRIELLE

(cont'd)

Is this Vicus a bad sort?

TARA

No. He said he's quite wealthy and seems very nice... on the surface. But there's just something about him that makes me squirm. He's **too** nice. He's like a used wagon merchant... his words are just lamp oil slick. I just don't trust him at all.

(beat)

Anyway, I ran after the wagon as it pulled out, and she yelled that she would write.

GABRIELLE

So, she's been writing, right?

TARA

That's just it. She did write for two moons then stopped. I haven't heard from her in four moons now. I was going to travel to Paradise to see her and this happened.

Tara slapped her legs then winced with the pain.

XENA

How long have they been broken?



TARA

Since the last full moon. The healer said they were broken in several places and he doubted I would be able to walk again.

Tara grinned and winked at Xena and Gabrielle.

TARA

(cont'd)

Guess he just doesn't know how stubborn I can be. I'm able to get around a little bit with these wooden braces Ersep made for me and I plan to be walking on my own again in another moon.

Xena looks at the crude crutches leaning next to the bed and nods, her opinion of Ersep going up a few more notches.

GABRIELLE

And Paradise is only a day's ride away?



TARA

Yes, that's right. I was going to send Ersep to check on her, but then I heard you two were near so I sent him to find you. You two helped me... several times. Can you help me again? I just know she's in some sort of trouble.

Gabrielle looks at Xena who signals agreement with a slow blink of her eyes.

GABRIELLE

Yes, we will.

TARA

(sighing audibly)

Thank you. Please, stay here tonight and get a good night's rest. I have a good staff that will take care of your meals and room needs. You can leave for Paradise in the morning.

XENA

First things first. Let me take a look at those legs....

FADE TO:

INT. GUEST ROOM IN THE INN - NIGHT

Gabrielle and Xena are snuggled in bed. Gabrielle is barely keeping her eyes open while Xena watches the flames leap in the fireplace.

XENA

There's just something refreshing about swimming in the sea.

GABRIELLE

Um hmm.

XENA

Those waves just took it all out of you didn't they?

GABRIELLE

Um hmm.

XENA

Sleep well, my bard. Tomorrow may prove to be interesting.

Xena reaches down to pull the covers over them.

GABRIELLE

Xena?

XENA

Hmm?

GABRIELLE

Tara was pretty brave tonight
when you re-broke her legs.

XENA

Yeah, she's still tough all right. The
healer here should be hung. Worst
job I've ever seen. But now, she
definitely will be able to walk on her
own again and without a limp.

GABRIELLE

Maybe even dance?

XENA

Definitely dance!

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

EXT. STABLE - MORNING

Xena and Gabrielle are at the stable, preparing for the journey to Paradise. Ersep stands in the shadows watching as Xena inspects each horse as she saddles them up.

XENA

The horses look good.

The animals whinny and nod in unison. Gabrielle chuckles softly as she watches them prance proudly in place.

GABRIELLE

How did you get their coats
to shine so nicely, Ersep?

Ersep steps out from the shadows and holds out the brush he used on them and a jar of cream.

ERSEP

Vicus gave me this to
use on his team of horses.
I didn't give it back.

Xena takes the jar and sniffs cautiously and then hands it back to Ersep. Her curiosity is aroused.

XENA

Did he say what is in it?



ERSEP

No, he said he made it
himself. He just told me
to use it on his horses only.

XENA

Well, maybe he'll
share his secret.

Xena looks over at Gabrielle who is already in her saddle.

XENA

(cont'd)

Ersep, make sure your
mother does those exercises
I showed her, okay?

Ersep nods eagerly.

ERSEP

She's going to be able to
walk again, isn't she?

GABRIELLE

... and dance too!

Xena mounts Argo II and they wave goodbye to Ersep.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROAD TO PARADISE - MID MORNING

Xena and Gabrielle are half way to Paradise. There is a large wagon train of people with wagons full of household goods, children, old people, and an assortment of farm animals.

GABRIELLE

It looks like a whole
town is moving.

Gabrielle trots over to the last wagon in the group and focuses on the young man driving the wagon. As she approaches she notices that the man's wife doesn't look all that happy.

GABRIELLE

(cont'd)

Hi. Nice day.

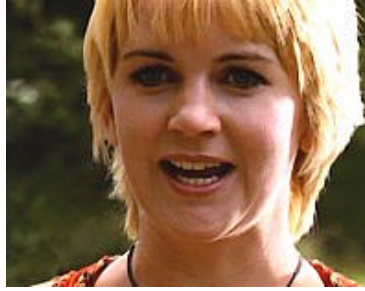
YOUNG MAN

Yes, it is and it will be better
when we get to Paradise,
won't it, Sela?

Sela begins to speak, but changes her mind when she sees her husband's stern expression.

GABRIELLE

Oh? Are you camping there tonight?



YOUNG MAN

No, we're going to be settling there. We all are.

GABRIELLE

Wow. That's a lot of people to be setting up homes for. Is Paradise able to handle all of you?

YOUNG MAN

Yes. Already got our land selected and paid for.

GABRIELLE

Oh, so you've been there before?

YOUNG MAN

Well, no. But, it looks like a really good spot from the map.

Xena rides up in time to overhear the map reference and looks at Gabrielle.

GABRIELLE

You bought land you've never seen?

YOUNG MAN

Sure. We all did. We couldn't pass up such a good deal.

XENA

Who sold you the land?

YOUNG MAN

It was the town founder; a man by the name of Vicus.

Xena catches Gabrielle's eye again and motions for them move ahead of the wagon train. They clear the front wagons, and Xena picks up the pace until they are a good distance ahead of the train.

XENA

Anything smell a
little rotten to you?

GABRIELLE

Smell? Xena, it reeks!
Who would buy
land they never saw?



XENA

Evidently a lot of people.

Xena looks back over her shoulder at the wagon train now barely visible.

XENA

(cont'd)

C'mon, let's get to Paradise.

FADE TO:

EXT. CREST OF ROAD OVERLOOKING A TOWN - LATE AFTERNOON

Gabrielle and Xena are sitting on their horses on the crest of a hill. Below is a picturesque valley, lush with green grazing fields for live stock, tilled fields ready for planting, and wild flowers bordering the road leading to a small but bustling town.

GABRIELLE

Well, it certainly
looks prosperous.

XENA

If it looks too
good to be true....

GABRIELLE

... it usually is too
good to be true.

They ride into town. The homes are neat and friendly faces greet them. The homes are a bit too close together but they're all in neat rows with clean yards and rows of flowers bordering paths to the doors. The fences are perfectly straight and the animals even looked scrubbed and clean. Gabrielle is smiling as she takes in the town, but Xena's face exhibits a stoic caution. They enter the main market place and Gabrielle's smile widens.

GABRIELLE

(cont'd)

Xena, look at the
goods these merchants
have for sale!

Gabrielle notices bolts of cloth that are exquisite in design and color. They slowly ride through the marketplace taking in the excellent quality of the goods in the stalls. They approach the center of the square, and Gabrielle picks up her head as the smell of cooking food wafts out of a kitchen window from the local Inn.

GABRIELLE

(cont'd)

Mmmm... and what's
that wonderful smell?

Xena hears Gabrielle's stomach growl loudly as the smell of comes from the open window of the Inn.

XENA

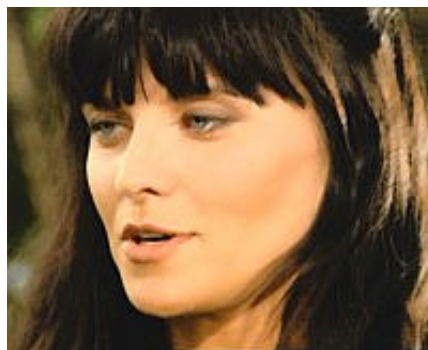
Roast lamb.

Gabrielle looks at Xena in anticipation.

XENA

(cont'd)

Well, we do have to stay
somewhere tonight.
Guess this will do, huh?



Gabrielle eagerly reins her horse toward the Inn, sliding off the saddle when he stops in front of the door. A smiling young boy rushes out of the Inn as Xena stops next to Gabrielle and dismounts.

YOUNG BOY

Welcome to Paradise ladies.
May I take care of your horses?

Raising an eyebrow at the 'ladies' remark, Xena pins the young man with a glare.

XENA

I'd like to talk to the smithy
myself. Gabrielle....

GABRIELLE

I'll get us a room and
order some dinner.

YOUNG BOY

Follow me, miss....

He notices Xena's scowl again and swallows hard.

YOUNG BOY

(cont'd)

... uh... follow me, please.

Gabrielle pokes Xena in the side before she leaves.

GABRIELLE

Xena, what's wrong? This
place really looks like Paradise.



XENA

That's the problem, Gabrielle.
It **looks** like Paradise.

CUT TO:

EXT. MARKETPLACE - EARLY EVENING

Xena and Gabrielle are walking through the still bustling marketplace even though the sun has just set.

GABRIELLE

That meal was great!

Xena just nods as she observes the neat stalls and smiling vendors.

XENA

Gabrielle, take a look
around and tell me what
you think is odd about
this marketplace.

Gabrielle takes a moment to scan the area.

GABRIELLE

Everyone is smiling and,
well, the merchandise
all looks first class.

XENA

Right. But listen to them.

Gabrielle and Xena walk through the market listening to the conversations.

FRUIT VENDOR

Good day to you sir. How
may I be of assistance?

MAN

These apples are
perfect. How much for
a basket of apples?

FRUIT VENDOR

For you, my friend,
five dinars.

MAN

Very good. I thank you.

BLACKSMITH

I can have him shod
for you by morning.

YOUNG MAN

I can wait at your
convenience, sir.

CLOTH MERCHANT

Only the finest I assure
you, ma'am.

WOMAN

And such a bargain
at twenty-five dinars.

GABRIELLE

They're just giving the vendor
what is asked. No one is even
trying to haggle over the price.



XENA

Exactly. And there are
no disagreements.
Everyone is too polite!

GABRIELLE

How was the smithy
when you talked to him?

XENA

Perfect. He had all the right answers
to my questions, and he had the
neatest shop I've ever seen.

GABRIELLE

So?

XENA

Let's just say this place makes
me wary. Gabrielle, even the
horses were jumpy. And that
makes me even more suspicious.

GABRIELLE

But look around you, Xena.
Everyone seems very happy and
the town is obviously prosperous.

Xena notices the wagon train has finally arrived and is temporarily camping by a large community building. A tall man dressed in elegant clothes steps out of a bakers shop followed by a young woman.

TALL MAN

Welcome to Paradise, friends.
My name is Vicus and this is
my wife. As you can see,
Paradise is... well, Paradise.

The newcomers laugh and seem to relax with the friendly nature of Vicus and his smiling wife.

VICUS

Now, I know you
all are tired.

SEVERAL NEWCOMERS

Aye!

VICUS

And probably hungry too!

YOUNGSTER IN THE GROUP

I sure am!

There's more laughter from the group.

VICUS

Well, we've got some fresh bread and
mead for you as a bit of a welcome
present. If the men will come with me
to the community building, we'll get
things settled while the rest of you go
over to the baker's shop with my wife.

WIFE

Hi everyone and welcome!
Come with me and I'll give
you some fresh bread.

AN ELDERLY MAN

And don't forget the mead!

The group laughs again.

WIFE

Yes, and the mead!

GABRIELLE

Well, that's a nice welcome, Xena.
I'll bet they haven't had fresh
bread on the road.

XENA

Yeah, too nice.



GABRIELLE

Hey, that's got to be Tessa!
She looks just like her mom did
at this age. Shouldn't we go and....

XENA

Later. First I want to find out
what's going on with the men.

GABRIELLE

Okay, I'll go see what I can
find out from the women.

FADE TO:

EXT. COMMUNITY BUILDING - NIGHT

The lighting inside is low, but the figures of the men can easily be seen as they sit on benches arranged in a semi-circle. Each of the men has a jug in his hands. Vicus is standing at the front of the room.

VICUS

... tiring trip. I'm sure after a nice meal
and a good night's rest you'll be ready
to start your new life here in Paradise.

TWO MEN IN THE BACK

Aye

SEVERAL MEN IN THE FRONT ROW

Thank you.

VICUS

Well, that's settled then! As soon as you finish your morning meal, meet me back here and we'll sign the papers on your new land. And enjoy the welcome gift of fresh baked bread and mead!

The men stand to leave, smiling, but obviously tired from their long journey. Vicus moves to the door way and shakes each man's hand as they leave. The last man is the one Gabrielle talked to on the road. He stops in front of Vicus and starts to talk.

YOUNG MAN

Vicus, I've been thinking
and I would really like
to see my land tonight.

VICUS

But, it is dark already
and you wouldn't be
able to see much now.

YOUNG MAN

Yes, but at least I would feel
it under my feet. I... we've all
trusted your word and gave you our
dinars for land we've never seen.

VICUS

Now, Theos, don't
you trust me?

THEOS

Yes, I trust you... I was just
thinking that I would sleep
better after finally seeing my
land and the shop you promised.

VICUS

You're tired, Theos. Go find your woman,
have a good meal, and enjoy the mead.
Get a good night's sleep and tomorrow
you will see. Everything I promised
will be revealed in the morning.

Theos seems satisfied and nods in agreement then leaves. Vicus looks around the room and focuses on the window at the back of the building. He can not see anyone, but seems to know someone is out there. He extinguishes all the torches and leaves, one last glance back to the window before closing the door.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAMPSITE - NIGHT

Gabrielle moves about the newcomers, smiling as they wave a greeting her way. Most of the people seem content, but a few of the women appear to be more somber than the others and especially the wife of the young man she talked to on the road.

GABRIELLE

Hi! I see you folks made
it here safe and sound.



YOUNG MAN'S WIFE

(Solemnly)

Yes. It has been a long journey.

GABRIELLE

My name is Gabrielle.

WOMAN

I'm Sela.

GABRIELLE

There certainly are a lot
of people moving here.
Where are you from?

SELA

We're from Plyos. My
husband is an artisan.

GABRIELLE

Really? What does he make?

SELA

He is a potter. He is well
known in Plyos and his
works are sought by many.

GABRIELLE

Is his name Theos?

SELA

Yes, you have heard of him?

GABRIELLE

Of course! His work is very well known. Why are you moving here?

SELA

(frowning)

Vicus... said he would be able to make more dinars for his work here in Paradise.

Gabrielle notes Sela's hesitance and prods further.

GABRIELLE

And you're not sure it was a wise move?



SELA

I don't think that it was a necessary move. We were doing well in Plyos. People would travel great distances to buy his wares. I'm not happy to be so far away from my family... and there was no need to move anywhere.

GABRIELLE

But...?

SELA

But, Vicus is an eloquent speaker and he convinced Theos to move.

GABRIELLE

I see, but surely you can look around and see that Paradise is a truly beautiful spot?

SELA

Yes, it appears to be....

Gabrielle pauses as she hears another *but* coming.

SELA

(cont'd)

But, I don't trust Vicus.

GABRIELLE

Anything in particular make
you feel that way?

SELA

No, just a feeling I have.
And a few of the other
women agree with me too.

GABRIELLE

Really?

SELA

Yes, their husbands are also
famous artisans who were
swayed by Vicus' words.

Sela hears the sound of the men returning to the campsite and returns to her meal preparation, ending further conversation.

GABRIELLE

Well, I hope the move
proves worthwhile.

Gabrielle moves away from the campsite and watches as the men return to their families.

GABRIELLE

(cont'd, to herself)

Xena's probably right. If it looks
too good to be true, it probably is.

FADE TO:

EXT. COMMUNITY BUILDING - NIGHT

Xena is in a sheltered spot by the rear window of the community building. She watches as Vicus extinguishes the torches and takes a last look around stopping to glance at the rear window. Xena moves deeper into the shadows to evade his view.

XENA

(softly to herself)

Well, Vicus... you certainly are
a generous lot. Let's see if
you keep your promises too.



FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. INN - MORNING

Xena and Gabrielle come down the stairs from their room into the main room of the Inn. They are greeted by the smiling eager faces of the servers, inn keeper and stable boy.

INN KEEPER

Good morning to you!
I hope you two slept well?

Xena glares at them, already becoming irritated by the happy nature of the townspeople, but they just continue to smile.



GABRIELLE

Yes, just fine thank you.
I wonder if you could provide
directions to Vicus' home?

INN KEEPER

I'll do better than that!
I'll draw you a map!

The inn keeper pulls out a piece of parchment and draws an elaborate map full of curly cue's and fancy embellishments that direct them to the home of Vicus.

XENA

(growling)
This place is getting
on my nerves.

Xena is standing behind Gabrielle, growing impatient with each stroke. Gabrielle waits patiently as the inn keeper finishes his masterpiece and hands it to her smiling and patting Xena's arm.

GABRIELLE

Ah, Xena, you need to
develop a little patience.

XENA
Gabriiiielle....

Xena reaches for the map and looks at it frowning as she notes that Vicus' home is just one street down and one street over from the Inn.

XENA
(cont'd)
All this for two turns?

INN KEEPER
Of course! I wouldn't
want you to get lost.

Gabrielle takes the map and looks at the neat little footprints showing the way to Vicus' home.

GABRIELLE
Well, at least it's
easy to follow.

Xena stuffs the map in Gabrielle's hand and heads toward the door.

XENA
C'mon. Let's get
this over with.

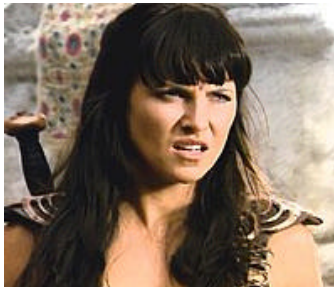
CUT TO:

EXT. STREET IN TOWN - MORNING

Xena and Gabrielle walk down the street to the first turn they are to make. The street is full of townsfolk, all smiling and greeting one another cordially. Xena shakes her head in irritation.

GABRIELLE
Xena, isn't it nice to see everyone
being so polite to one another?

XENA
No! It's not natural.



GABRIELLE

Well, natural or not, it sure is nice not to be treated rudely. And the free food at the inn is unusual too. That basket of bread outside our door this morning was nice. Too bad we didn't have time to taste it.

Gabrielle pokes Xena softly in the ribs as she munches on an apple and gets a repentant look from Xena.

XENA

Sorry, I just want to get this visit over with.

They make the turn and head to Vicus' home. It's the largest on the street and obviously the home of a very rich man.

XENA

(cont'd)

I see Vicus is a cautious man.
Look at the bars on his windows.

GABRIELLE

And it's placement in town is perfect. Located on that little knoll he has a view in every direction.

XENA

And I see he's thrown in a few guards here and there too.

They continue to the front door unopposed and Xena knocks loudly. They wait a moment and the door opens revealing a woman who looks exactly as Tara did many years ago.

TESSA

(smiling)

May I help you?

GABRIELLE

Hi. I'm Gabrielle and this is Xena. Your mother asked us to stop by and see how you were.

TESSA

(still smiling broadly)

My mother?

GABRIELLE

Yes, we're old friends and when she heard we were headed this way, she asked us to stop by.

TESSA

(still smiling)

Xena and Gabrielle? I seem to remember her talking about you. Won't you please come in?



Gabrielle enters first, followed by a still frowning Xena. Tessa leads them to a very large room furnished with benches lined with plush pillows and cushions.

They take a seat indicated by Tessa as she calmly sits in a chair opposite them.

TESSA

(cont'd)

Can I get you something to drink or eat?

XENA

No, thanks.

GABRIELLE

This is a very nice home, Tessa.

TESSA

Yes, my husband takes good care of me... and the town. He's highly regarded here. He's an herbalist... very gifted. Everyone loves him. He's made the town quite prosperous.

GABRIELLE

Yes, we can see that. Everyone sure seems happy here.

Tessa smiles even broader if possible. Xena starts fidgeting and Gabrielle puts a calming hand on her leg. The sound of footsteps has the occupants turn their heads toward the sound. Vicus enters the room, surprised to see visitors.

VICUS

Tessa, who are our guests?

TESSA

They are friends of my mothers. She asked them to stop by and check on me.

Vicus seems to hesitate a moment, his smile turns to concern and then just as quickly returns to a broad smile. Xena notices the quick changes and narrows her eyes as she watches the conversation unfold.

VICUS

Welcome. I hope Tara is doing well?

GABRIELLE

Well, actually, she's recuperating from serious injury.

Xena watches Tessa and Vicus as this news is released. Tessa seems unconcerned that her mother is injured and continues to smile while Vicus moves quickly to her side.

TESSA

(smiling broadly)
Oh, that's ni....

VICUS

(concerned voice)
...not good news.
Is she all right?

Tessa looks blankly at Vicus as he wraps her in his arms turning her face away from Xena and Gabrielle. He whispers in her ear and she nods then stands and leaves the room.

VICUS

(cont'd)
Please, give Tessa a moment. Hearing this news has shaken her some.

Gabrielle catches Xena's eyes and raises an eyebrow at the unusual exchange.



GABRIELLE

Yes, of course. Maybe we
should come back later.

Xena and Gabrielle stand to leave. Vicus stands and walks toward the entrance as they follow him.

VICUS

Tara will recover?

XENA

Yes, she'll be fine. She's been
very concerned that she hasn't
heard from Tessa in a while.

VICUS

Ah, that's understandable.
Tessa has been very busy
lately helping me in my shop.

XENA

Shop? Is she learning your trade?

VICUS

Oh, no. I mean she's taken over
for the baker. He's been ill
and she's helping him out.
She's quite the little baker.

GABRIELLE

Oh, I thought....

XENA

... she liked to cook
more than bake.

VICUS

Oh, she's very good
in that area too.

Vicus winks as he opens the door, essentially ending the conversation.

VICUS

(cont'd)

Thank you for coming by. I'm afraid
I need to be leaving now. I need to
meet with the newcomers, but
perhaps you could come by later?

GABRIELLE

Yes, thank you.

Xena takes Gabrielle by the elbow and the two walk slowly toward the street and the bustle of the marketplace. As they make the turn, Vicus nods toward one of men sweeping the street near his home. The man places his broom against the fence and discretely follows them.

XENA

(whispering)

We're being followed. Let's go sit by that olive tree.

They walk to the bench by the tree and sit, waiting for their follower to pass them by.

GABRIELLE

Okay, now that was really weird.

XENA

My thoughts exactly.



GABRIELLE

Tessa's reaction to her mother's injury was not what I expected. She just kept smiling.

XENA

And Vicus sure rushed to get her out of the room.

GABRIELLE

Any ideas on what's going on?

XENA

Let's see what we can find out. You do a little investigating with the townsfolk and I'm going to see what's going on with Vicus and the newcomers. Something smells rotten in Paradise.

GABRIELLE

Okay. Meet you back
in our room?

XENA

Right!

CUT TO:

EXT. MARKETPLACE - MID DAY

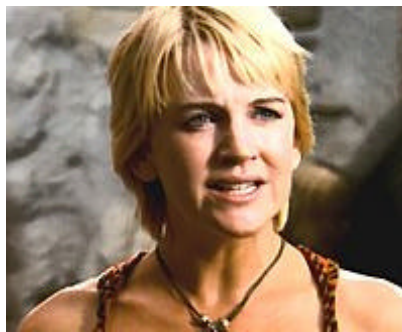
Gabrielle leaves a weaver's stall with a smile on her face. As she turns away, she loses the smile and frowns then heads to the leather stall.

GABRIELLE

How much for this saddle bag?

LEATHER VENDOR

Twenty dinars.



GABRIELLE

Twenty dinars?

She hefts the item and opens each side bag, inspecting the workmanship.

GABRIELLE

(cont'd)

That's a high price.

LEATHER VENDOR

(smiling)

The quality is the best.

GABRIELLE

I'll give you ten dinars.

LEATHER VENDOR

(still smiling)

My price is twenty dinars.

GABRIELLE

Okay, how about
fifteen dinars.

LEATHER VENDOR

(still smiling)

Twenty dinars.

GABRIELLE

You don't haggle
over price, do you?



LEATHER VENDOR

(grinning broadly)

Haggle? No. I've never
had anyone ask before.

GABRIELLE

(muttering softly)

Well, that's probably why
the vendors are all smiling.

LEATHER VENDOR

Excuse me?

GABRIELLE

Nothing. I was just thinking
about why everyone
is always smiling.

LEATHER VENDOR

We are?

He looks around at the other vendors and notes that they are all wearing smiles including the patrons.

LEATHER VENDOR

(cont'd)

I guess we are.

GABRIELLE

Tell me... have you ever seen
anyone sad around here?
Any fights or disagreements?

The leather vendor stopped to think about the question then shakes his head in the negative.

LEATHER VENDOR

Not that I recall.
Why do you ask?

GABRIELLE

No reason. Thank you.

LEATHER VENDOR

(grinning)
Do you want the saddle bag?

GABRIELLE

Maybe later, thanks.

Gabrielle walks away lost in thought as she passes groups of smiling, laughing townsfolk. At the temporary campsite for the newcomers, she sees Sela sitting on the back of their wagon, swinging her feet and smiling at the others in their troupe as they wait for the men to return.

GABRIELLE

(cont'd)
Hi, Sela. You look happy today.
I guess things are working
out better than you expected.



SELA

Hello, Gabrielle. I'm sorry, I
don't know what you mean?

GABRIELLE

Last night you weren't too
happy about being here,
but you look happy now.

SELA

Really? I don't remember
being unhappy.

GABRIELLE

How about your other friends?
Are they happy now too?

SELA

(smiling)

Everyone's glad to be here,
Gabrielle. I don't know where
you got the idea we weren't.

GABRIELLE

My mistake... sorry
if I bothered you.

SELA

(grinning)

No bother, Gabrielle.
Have a nice day!

Gabrielle stands and walks away as a group of women join Sela and start laughing.

GABRIELLE

(muttering under her breath)

Yep... definitely not
normal around here.

CUT TO:

EXT. COMMUNITY BUILDING, REAR WINDOW - MID MORNING

Xena is hidden in the bushes by the same window she watched through the night before only today the shutters are closed. She can still hear the conversations and focuses on them.



VICUS

... and the fee payments will
be due on each new moon.

My colleagues will be by
your stalls to collect the fees.

MENS VOICES IN UNISON

(eager sounding voices)

Yes, Vicus.

VICUS

And, don't forget the daily
pick-up at the bakery.

MENS VOICES IN UNISON

Thank you, Vicus.

VICUS

Now, my colleagues
here will....

A slight rustle of leaves brings Xena's focus to her immediate surroundings allowing her to duck as a club swings viciously past the spot where her head was. As she stands upright, she turns to the right and delivers a left fist to the bridge of the nose of the man wielding the club. He stumbles back, dropping the club as he grabs his face.

Xena follows through with a forceful kick to the man's abdomen, dropping him to his knees. She bends forward and is about to put the pinch on the man when several of the newcomers accompanied by Vicus and some of his guards turn the corner. Xena quickly springs for a branch on a nearby tree, hiding in the thick foliage. The newcomers pass by not seeing the man in the bushes, but Vicus notices immediately.

VICUS

(cont'd, smiling)

Minas, please take our new
citizens on to their homes.

I have something
I need to take care of.



Minas looks in the direction Vicus indicates and nods, quickly herding the men away from the area.

Vicus frowns as he bends over the disabled guard.

VICUS

(cont'd)

Grotus, what happened?

GROTUS

(Groaning as he rolls over)

I... she....

VICUS

Fool! Get up and get
some men... find them!

FADE IN:

EXT. MARKETPLACE - LATE MORNING

Gabrielle is heading back toward the Inn through the marketplace. As she turned the corner into the market, she sees Vicus enter an herbalist's shop. She looks around for Xena but when she does not see her, she decides to follow Vicus into the building.

CUT TO:

INT. HERBALIST SHOP - LATE MORNING

Gabrielle enters the shop and starts looking around at all the vials of potions and herbs. She hears a rustle of a curtain and sees Vicus enter the room. His expression is somewhat surprised.

VICUS

Hello, Gabrielle. I didn't hear
anyone enter. Is there
something you need?

GABRIELLE

Um, yes, actually. I need
to replenish some of
our healing herbs.

She looks around the shop seeing several vials she recognizes. She's very aware of his eyes following her every move.

GABRIELLE

(cont'd)

Ah, here they are.

Gabrielle picks up a couple of vials and walks over to Vicus.

VICUS

Ah, lavender and
purple coneflower.
How much of each?

GABRIELLE

A small pouch
of each will do.

Vicus moves to a table and takes two cloth pouches, filling each with the herbs. He makes a mark on each pouch to identify the ingredients and hands them to Gabrielle.

VICUS

(smiling)
Anything else?

GABRIELLE

No, this will do. How
much do I owe you?



VICUS

Please, take them as a gift.
Friends of Tessa's mother
are always welcome here.

GABRIELLE

Thank you, Vicus.

Gabrielle turns to leave.

VICUS

Gabrielle?

Gabrielle turns back to face him.

GABRIELLE

Yes?

VICUS

Come next door with me to the bakery. I have a surprise for you and Xena I think you'll both enjoy.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. ROOM AT THE INN - LATE AFTERNOON

Gabrielle is sitting on a chair looking contemplatively out the window. There are a few packages on the table next to Gabrielle. The door opens and Xena steps in, quickly closing the door behind her. She walks over to the bed and notes the packages before walking over to Gabrielle

XENA

I see you picked up some
herbs... and lunch?

Gabrielle turns in her chair and smiles. As Xena approaches she stands and moves forward to meet her.

GABRIELLE

I wouldn't try the nut
bread... or the mead.

Xena raises an eyebrow in question.

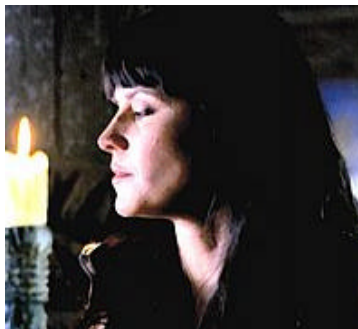
GABRIELLE

(cont'd)

Unless of course you want
to wind up like the rest
of these smiling fools.

XENA

Vicus mixing a little
henbane into his gifts?



GABRIELLE

I'm not sure. It doesn't seem
to wear off like henbane.

Xena spies the nut bread and flask and steps to the table.

XENA

What led you to suspect these?

GABRIELLE

I went to see Sela again this morning. She was a completely changed woman. Happy as a lark and didn't remember that she wasn't excited about the move to Paradise. Her like minded friends were also now glad to be in Paradise.

XENA

Maybe they saw the property they were promised?

GABRIELLE

I thought that at first, but when she didn't even remember about her previous concerns, I started to look around at the rest of them. Xena, there's no way one night would result in that much of a change for everyone.

XENA

Mm hm. So, what turned you on to the bread and mead?

GABRIELLE

It's the one thing they all had in common. Or most, anyway. I figured Vicus used two ways to drug these folks in case someone didn't like mead or nut bread.

Xena produces a brilliant smile.

XENA

That's my bard!

GABRIELLE

Oh, you haven't heard the best part.

XENA

Oh?

GABRIELLE

I went to Vicus' shop...
to get some supplies.

XENA

And do a little investigating?



GABRIELLE

Yep, after all I had...
have a good teacher.

Gabrielle winks at Xena.

GABRIELLE

(cont'd)

As I was leaving, Vicus took me
over to the baker's shop and sent
me home with this little present
he thought you and I would enjoy.

XENA

Okay, let's see if we
can figure out what he's
using on these folks.

They sit down at the table and break open the bread, each examining and smelling it.

GABRIELLE

Smells great,
but really sweet.

XENA

Yeah... I think I've smelled
this stuff before in Chin.

GABRIELLE

Ah, that's probably why
I don't recognize it.

XENA

There was this little old man in the market that sold all sorts of herbs for healing use. Dao was a real master at mixing up remedies... or poisons.

Xena takes out her dagger and separates out some seeds from the nut bread.

XENA

(cont'd)

See these? They come from a flower... a poppy if I remember right. Makes a very powerful drug for pain, but unfortunately very addicting. And this....

She picks out some remnants of dried mushroom.

XENA

(cont'd)

This stuff is from a very special mushroom. A few bites of this and you'll be very happy.

GABRIELLE

Mushrooms?



XENA

Mmm hmm. And this sweet smell is from Da Zao; it helps calm the spirit and harmonize the harsh characteristics of the other ones.

Xena picks through the bread some more.

XENA

(cont'd)

There's some other stuff in here I don't recognize, but I'll bet it's all from Chin.

Gabrielle picks up the flask and uncorks it.

GABRIELLE

What about this stuff?

XENA

Let me smell it.

(Pause)

Yeah, I'll bet he's used the same mixture in here too.

GABRIELLE

So, what's the plan?

FADE TO:

INT. ROOM AT THE INN - NIGHT

Xena banks the fire in the fireplace then looks out the window.

XENA

It's time to go.

Xena extinguishes the candle on the table and looks out the window, checks the shadows for movement and spots several of Vicus' men watching the Inn.

XENA

(cont'd)

Grab the nut bread and flask
and let's slip out the window.
We've got company out there.



GABRIELLE

Do you want to lose them?

XENA

No, I'd rather know where
they are so let them follow us.

They quietly slip out the window and head across the roof of the Inn, flipping down into the haystack by the barn.

XENA

(cont'd)

Pitch that stuff into the manure pile, Gabrielle.

GABRIELLE

Perfect!

XENA

Now, let's see what Vicus is up to with the newcomers.

CUT TO:

INT. HERB SHOP - NIGHT

Xena and Gabrielle enter through a back window.

XENA

(cont'd, whispering)

So much for security bars on the window.

They move quietly through the shop, examining the contents of the various jars and vials on the shelves, recognizing the usual items that are staples in such shops.

GABRIELLE

Nothing unusual here.

Xena moves to Vicus' desk and picks up a stack of parchments and quickly scans them.

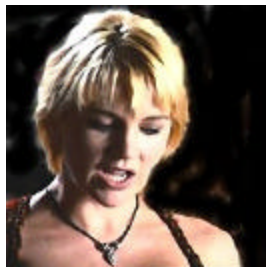
XENA

Now, we're getting somewhere.

Xena hands the stack to Gabrielle.

GABRIELLE

Oh, this guy is really slick.



XENA

Yeah, he's got a real sweet deal going here.

GABRIELLE

He brings them in with a low price for land and shops, then squeezes them dry every month. They never know they've been had because he drugs them daily with mead and breads.

XENA

Let's see what else we can find.

They continue to explore the shop.

GABRIELLE

Xena, over here.
There's a locked cabinet.

Xena walks over to the cabinet and pops open the lock with her dagger.

XENA

Pitiful.

Gabrielle opens the door and they see a shelf lined with jars marked in symbols from Chin.

GABRIELLE

Wow. There's enough stuff in here to keep these folks drugged forever.

Xena spins and catches a crossbow bolt before it hits Gabrielle. Then she releases her chakram bouncing it off a cauldron heating over a small fire pit in the middle of the room, then banking off a torch holder. It then rebounds back to a fireplace andiron before sailing into the crossbow, splitting it into pieces before returning to her hand as she stands to face Vicus.



Vicus drops what remains of the crossbow in his hand.

XENA

Vicus! Nice of
you to show up.

Vicus unsheathes his sword, pointing it toward Xena and Gabrielle.

XENA

(cont'd)

Be careful where you point that
thing unless you intend to use it.



VICUS

Oh, I intend to use it.

XENA

Okay, well, don't say I didn't
warn you. By the way, nice
gig you've got going here.

VICUS

Thanks.

XENA

So what really happened
to the baker?

VICUS

He caught me adding my special
ingredients to his flour one night.

XENA

And he tried to stop you?

VICUS

Well, he wasn't in the best
of shape to try to stop me.
He was a little on the large size
from tasting all his goodies.

GABRIELLE

Well, someone needs to stop you, so it might as well be us.



VICUS

Oh, I don't intend to let either of you stop me.

XENA

Really? All by yourself?

VICUS

No, I'm no fool, Xena.
We've been waiting for you.

A connecting door to the bakery opens and three of Vicus' guards charge into the room with swords drawn. At the same time, three more guards enter from the back door, swinging their swords wildly.

XENA

Aw, Vicus, I'm disappointed in you. I thought you'd at least come at us in a fair fight!

VICUS

This is fair, Xena...
my kind of fair.

XENA

Tsk, tsk... no, Vicus, you'll need a lot more men than this to make it a fair fight! Aiyiyiyiyiyiyiiiii!

Xena produces her blood curdling war cry and flips into the middle of the room to face Vicus and the other three guards. As she flips, she unsheathes her sword and takes on the men who entered from the back door neatly deflecting their swords. As they scramble to return the attack, Gabrielle steps up, pulls out her sais and engages them, connecting her sais with the swords of the outer two guards and kicking forcefully at the center guard who loses his balance and falls backward through the bakery door. He slams into a shelf containing barrels of flour which topple over onto his head, knocking him cold and covering him from head to toe with flour.

VICUS

Get them!

Vicus moves to attack with the other guards. Xena flips into the air once more, grabbing a cross beam with her free hand while her sword connects with two of the guard's sword arms. They drop to the floor grabbing the injured appendages.

Vicus and the remaining guard watch as Xena flips gracefully from the cross beam back to the floor by the fire pit and caldron. The guard approaches cautiously from her right and Vicus from her left.

XENA

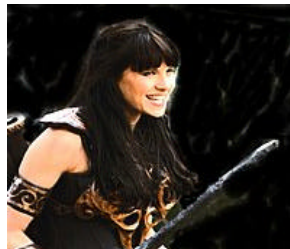
So, Vicus, what happens
when these folks don't
get their daily drugs?

VICUS

That won't happen, Xena.

XENA

I wouldn't be too sure about that.
And, they're not going to be too
happy with you while they go
through their withdrawal. I've
seen that kind of thing in Chin
and it's... nasty... very nasty.



VICUS

Well, I guess I'll just have to
keep them supplied then.

The two men attack in unison and Xena effortlessly trades blows with their weapons. All the while Xena is grinning and laughing and leading them on and conversing with Vicus.

Gabrielle easily disarms her two adversaries, finalizing her effort with simultaneous blows to their heads with the hilts of her sais. Their knees wobble for a beat before they crumble in a heap on the floor.

XENA

So, who's the genius behind
the drug combination?

VICUS

I wish I could take credit for it, but a little man in Chin showed me the correct measurements. He used it to help people who were depressed.

XENA

Ah, that would be Dao Chang.

Vicus picks up a flask of oil and throws it at Xena. She deflects it with her sword sending it into the face of the guard causing him to reel backward.

XENA

(cont'd)

And you figured out a better use for it.

VICUS

I'm just trying to keep everyone happy in Paradise.

XENA

And make a few dinars in the process?

VICUS

Well, I am a businessman after all.

Xena jumps into the air as Vicus and the guard rush toward her at the same time. Vicus' sword punctures the shoulder of his guard and causes him to stagger back toward the fire pit. The guard catches himself on the caldron to stop himself from falling into the fire. In the process, some of the toxic contents spill on him and he runs screaming into the bakery as his skin blisters up.

XENA

Nasty brew, Vicus.

VICUS

Just a little experiment.

The cauldron hanging over the fire continues to sway and drip its toxic brew. Xena moves out of its path just as Vicus swings his sword toward her. Instead of making contact with Xena, his sturdy sword slices through one of the chains holding the cauldron, severing it and sending the toxic liquid over him. Xena backs away as he screams out his final breath.

Gabrielle joins Xena as they watch his body disintegrate before them.



XENA

I told him not to point
that sword at me.



FADE TO:

EXT. HERB SHOP - MORNING - TWO DAYS LATER

Xena and Gabrielle greet the townsfolk as they come to the shop for their daily portion of herbs. Xena prepared a remedy from the stock of herbs in Vicus' shop to help them through their withdrawal. Tessa comes out of the herb shop with another arm load of pouches.

TESSA

How long will they have
to take this remedy?

XENA

Depends on how long
they were taking the drugs.

GABRIELLE

How are you doing Tessa?



TESSA

Okay, I guess. I've got a really bad headache still, but I can deal with it.

GABRIELLE

Do you plan on staying here or going back home?

TESSA

I'll probably head home for a bit and see how Mom's doing, but then I think I'll try traveling around like she did at my age.

Xena and Gabrielle wince at the thought of Tessa on the road.

XENA

Well, just try to stay out of trouble, okay?

Tessa nods and grins at her.

TESSA

Getting too old to bail me out like you did mom?

XENA

Don't even go there.

GABRIELLE

What about the townsfolk, Xena? Do you think they'll get back to normal?

XENA

It may take a few days, but I'm sure things will return to normal without much of a problem.

Just then, they hear loud voices coming from the leather vendor's stall.

LEATHER VENDOR

Twenty dinars!

CUSTOMER

It's only worth ten.

LEATHER VENDOR

(irritably)

Ten! Why, you won't find a better saddle bag in all of Greece!

CUSTOMER

(angrily)

Then sell your bag to Greece!

Gabrielle looks over at Xena then begins chuckling. Soon Tessa and Xena join her as they watch the two haggle continue to haggle over the price of the saddle bag.

XENA

Now, that's what
I call normal.

GABRIELLE

Well, so much for
life in Paradise!



FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FOUR

TAG

FADE IN:

EXT. CREST OF HILL OVERLOOKING PARADISE - MID MORNING

Xena and Gabrielle are riding away from Paradise on their way back to see Tara.

GABRIELLE

You know, Vicus did
have a good idea.

Xena raises an eyebrow in question.

XENA

And that was...?

GABRIELLE

To bring all the top artisans to one spot.
Just think of all the creative talent that
could collaborate and produce who
knows what new masterpieces.

Xena nods in agreement.

GABRIELLE

(cont'd)

The town could have really become
a paradise of sorts where people
could come for one-stop shopping.

XENA

Yeah, but that would kill the trade
elsewhere negatively affecting
a lot of people who rely on their
markets to bring in dinars.



GABRIELLE

Oh, I almost forgot!

Gabrielle reaches into her new leather saddle bag and takes out a cloth wrapped package handing it to Xena.

XENA

What's this?

GABRIELLE

While you were making all the herb remedies, I experimented with my nut bread recipe. And you were right, as usual. Sometimes things can be just too good to be true.

Xena bites into the nut bread, chews, then moans softly. She swallows and licks the crumbs off her fingers, winking at Gabrielle.

XENA

And sometimes...
they're better!

FADE OUT.

DISCLAIMER

None of the townsfolk were permanently addicted to drugs and Xena's remedy for withdrawal sickness was later found inscribed in the medical records of Hippocrates citing her as the healer.