

Xena: Warrior Princess - Subtext Virtual Season 9



Production #V912 – Water, Water Everywhere

Virtual Airdate – March 3, 2004

WRITTEN BY
TNovan

PRODUCED BY
Carol Stephens

DIRECTED BY
Denise Byrd

SCREENGRABS
Judi Mair

ARTWORK
Lucia

TITLE GRAPHIC
Linda (Calli)

TEASER

FADE IN:

EXT. OCEAN - NIGHT

There is a fierce storm rolling across the water. A ship is being badly battered on the harsh waves. Even as crewmembers struggle to keep the ship steady, others are washed overboard into the angry sea.

Xena, with Gabrielle hot on her heels, moves from the stern to the bow, trying to get past men fighting ropes to keep the sails in some sort of working order.

Over the howl of the wind, the sounds of timbers creaking and breaking can be heard clearly over the shouts of the men.

XENA

(shouting)

Gabrielle! The foremast is going!
There's nothing we can do.
Get ready to go into the water!



Before Gabrielle can respond, the foremast begins to splinter and crumble. As it swings from side to side, the ropes holding the main mast begin to snap and ricochet around the deck. Gabrielle's eyes widen. Without a moment's hesitation she charges Xena and knocks her to the deck, just as the main stays break loose sending rope and tackles directly toward where her head had been.

As they hit the deck, the ship suddenly pitches to the port side, causing them to half roll, half slide to the port side railing. Hanging on to each other they both understand that there is little to be done and the ship will be lost. There is only confirmation when they hear a crewmember.

CREWMAN

WHIRLPOOL!

FADE TO:

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

The view is of an expanse of ocean; it is calmer now but the angry storm clouds on the horizon tell a different story. The wind is still strong enough to cause whitecaps on the waves that carry lengths of wood that are the remains of a ship.

An arm shoots straight from the water and wraps around a large piece of debris. Xena's head appears above the water. She gasps and draws in a lungful of badly needed air as she draws herself up and onto the remains of the ship.



Her eyes are closed and it's clear that whatever has befallen her and Gabrielle is serious enough to have sapped her strength and energy. Taking several slow, deep breaths she opens her eyes and focuses on what appears to be ripples in the water just in front of her. With what little strength she has left, Xena's hand darts out and snatches something in the water. She pulls Gabrielle above water and draws her to the plank.



Once she is resting on the wood, Gabrielle begins to choke and expel water from her mouth and nose. She is quiet for a moment then her eyes open, dazed and confused. She still manages to find Xena's face and she smiles weakly.

GABRIELLE

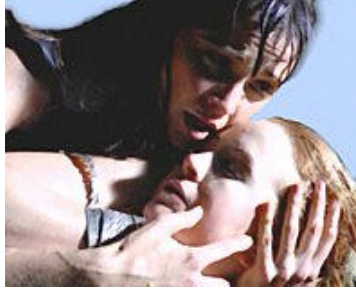
(hoarsely)

The other side?

XENA

The other side.

Gabrielle seems to accept this fate and her eyes close. With the last of her strength, Xena reaches out and places her hand in Gabrielle's hair, making contact as her own eyes slip closed.



FADE TO:

EXT. ISLAND - DAY

Two men pull a small boat onto the beach and tie it up to a log. Gathering packs from the boat they sling them over their shoulders and begin walking a well-worn path along the sand.

AIAS

Did you have a good trip?

PHAIDON

Yes, it was wonderful to see my family again, but it is always difficult to remember that they are not accustomed to the same things that I am. And you?

AIAS

It was a quiet trip. I am sure Soteres will be pleased that there is very little talk of us any longer.

AIAS

I'm sure of it. I know he was concerned that someone might come looking again, but I don't think that will....

Before he can finish, Phaidon raises his hand in a gesture for Aias to be quiet. Aias looks in the direction that Phaidon is staring, but he can't see anything that might have raised his friend's alarm. He strains to see.

AIAS

What?

PHAIDON

I think I heard something.

AIAS

It is probably a gull.

PHAIDON

I don't think so.

Phaidon takes a few steps, moving to a cluster of scrub brush. He drops his pack quietly and then parts the vegetation. Aias peers over his shoulder and gasps when he sees Xena and Gabrielle, lying on the beach.

AIAS

Are they dead?

Phaidon watches them for a moment and shakes his head.

PHAIDON

I don't think so.

AIAS

What should we do?
We could go tell Soteres.

PHAIDON

If we take time to do that I think
they'll be dead by the time we
get back. We have to help them.
Aithousa would demand it.



FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Gabrielle draws a slow deep breath and blinks her eyes until they are finally focused on the room around her. The walls seem to be shimmering with bluish silver light but she can't quite make out more than that in her current state.

Her hand travels over the soft bedding until she finds Xena's hand. She turns her head to find her partner sleeping soundly next to her. She knows immediately that Xena is alive by the gentle rise and fall of her chest. Reassured and comforted by what she does know at the moment, that they are alive and together, Gabrielle closes her eyes to rest.

FADE TO:

INT. BEDROOM - SOMETIME LATER

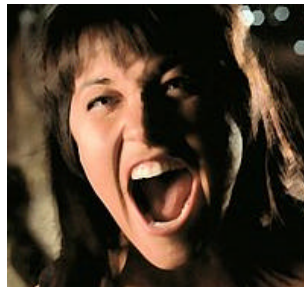
Xena awakes this time, apparently feeling much better as she sits up immediately and tries to take in everything around her. After a quick examination of the room she determines there is no immediate threat. Her attention is drawn to Gabrielle, who is now curled up on her side with her arms wrapped around a pillow.

Xena reaches out and touches a bandage on Gabrielle's forehead. Her brows draw together as her finger traces strips of something she's not familiar with that appear to be holding the bandage in place. Suddenly she realizes that she's not in the best shape of her life either.

Lowering the blanket covering her and Gabrielle, she finds a large white bandage on her side. It's held on with the same kind of strips that are completely intriguing to her. She tries to remove her bandage, and hisses when the tape pulls at her skin.

XENA

Son of a Bacchae!



The curse brings Gabrielle out of her slumber. She sits up, immediately concerned by the look on Xena's face.

GABRIELLE

What's wrong?
Are you in pain?

XENA

Hell yes! What is this?

She points to her side, causing Gabrielle to notice.

GABRIELLE

A bandage?



XENA

Oh funny. I mean the
stuff holding it on.

Gabrielle fingers the one edge of the tape.

GABRIELLE

It's sticky.

XENA

Yes, I am aware of that.
It takes the skin with it
when you remove it.

GABRIELLE

The skin it still there, Xena.
It must sting a little.

XENA

It stings a lot.

GABRIELLE

Maybe we should
put it back?

Xena nods and lays back so Gabrielle can press the bandage back into place. She glares at Gabrielle's little smile.

XENA

Don't be so smug; you
have one on your forehead.

Gabrielle's fingers travel to her forehead.

XENA

(cont'd)

And it's right on your hairline.
That should be fun.

Gabrielle decides to ignore Xena's comment as she pulls the blanket over her nude body.

GABRIELLE

Where are we?

XENA

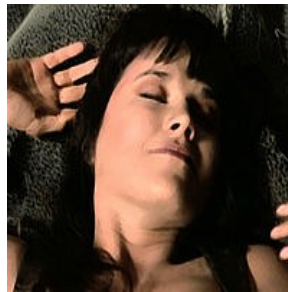
I have no idea.

GABRIELLE

We survived, right?

XENA

Oh yeah, trust me. No
'other side' has soft
beds and silk sheets.



GABRIELLE

Or food.

Gabrielle gets up from the bed, wrapping a blanket around her body as she makes her way to a corner of the room where a small table has been prepared with several types of food. Taking a seat at the table, she samples food from several different plates before she notices Xena staring at her.

GABRIELLE

What?

XENA

I'll bet if we had died,
you'd have gone to the
other side hungry.

GABRIELLE

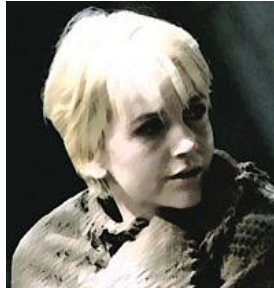
Come join me and stop
being such a grouch.
This lamb is wonderful.

Xena wraps the sheet around her body and takes a seat next to Gabrielle.

GABRIELLE

(cont'd)

So, how long do we wait
before we go exploring
and find out where we are?



Xena picks through the food before answering.

XENA

Obviously we're not in any
immediate danger. They
wouldn't save our lives
to hurt us later.

Gabrielle stops in mid bite and puts the food back on her plate, staring at it.

XENA

(cont'd)

What's wrong?

GABRIELLE

One word.... Cannibals.

Xena chuckles, pushing Gabrielle's plate back to her.

XENA

Does this look like a place
where cannibals live?

GABRIELLE

Maybe they're neat cannibals.

XENA

Eat. After we've rested a bit
more, we'll see if we can find
something to wear besides
the bedclothes and try
to locate our host.

FADE TO:

INT. COUNSUL ROOM - SAME DAY

Several men and women are seated around a large oval table. They are talking quietly among themselves and there seems to be a very serious current to their conversations. Finally, after a few minutes, an older woman taps a small crystal on the table to get the attention of the others.

VERA

As you are all aware, we have a very serious problem right now that we need to address. Aias and Phaidon brought two strangers here. They were absolutely correct in bringing these women to our home. They had no choice in the matter in adherence to our laws, but now we are faced with what to do with them.

An elderly gentleman with a long gray beard and a ponytail of the same color running down his back, seems to consider her words as he strokes his beard.

SOTERES

I think we must try and persuade them to remain here with us. It is the wisest course of action, since allowing them to return topside is nearly impossible.

GEDEON

And if they don't wish to stay?
Then what?

SOTERES

Then Vera and I will decide
if it is time to hand them over
to you and the military.

TERALYN

Seems we are caught between a rock and a hard place. On hand we can't see any harm come to them, because our laws forbid us to, but on the other we can't let them leave because they could give us away to the topsiders.

SOTERES

It is indeed a difficult position we are in. Before we consider any options, we should talk with our guests and see how reasonable they are.
Gedeon, are they still sleeping?

The general turns to a small screen in the table and presses a few buttons. The screen comes to life and shows Xena and Gabrielle rummaging through the cabinets in their room.

GEDEON

No sir, they are awake
and appear to be looking
for their clothes.



SOTERES

What did you do with
their clothes?

GEDEON

We took them. The tall one was
wearing armor, primitive, but armor
nonetheless and weapons. She
must certainly be a warrior topside.

The fair-haired one had a pair of
defensive weapons. They appear
to be fairly harmless, but I'm sure in
the right hands they could be deadly.

SOTERES

Do you think hers
are the right hands?

GEDEON

I'm sure of it. Our technology gives
us weapons these two could not
even dream about, but it also give
us a disadvantage when dealing
with topsiders. They are far more
cunning because they have to be.
We just point and destroy; they must
have plans, with options and
contingencies in their warfare. They
adapt quickly to any situation and
can be quite deadly when provoked.

SOTERES

Then let us not provoke them.

VERA

A wise decision I think.
Let us talk with them and
hopefully reason with them.

TERALYN

Perhaps when they see the
riches and the advancements
our world has to offer they
will stay without argument.

SOTERES

Perhaps, but don't count on it.
People from the topside world
can be frightened and mistrustful
of things they do not understand.
This may spur them to fight to escape.

GEDEON

They can't escape from Atlantis
and live to see the surface.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - CONCURRENT

Xena sits at the table, drumming her fingers and looking very irritated. Gabrielle closes the door on the cabinet and turns to her partner.

GABRIELLE

Ideas?



XENA

Sheets are fashionable?

As Gabrielle is about to reply, there is a knock on the door and they both stand to face it. Both of them look as if they're prepared for a fight.

XENA

Come in.

The door slides to the right revealing Soteris, Vera and Gedeon. They step inside and the door slides closed behind them.

SOTERES

Welcome to Atlantis, friends.
I am Soteris. This is
Vera and Gedeon.

XENA

I'm Xena. This is Gabrielle.

VERA

Welcome, Xena and Gabrielle.

GEDEON

I have your clothes.

He steps forward with their clothes all neatly folded in one hand and their boots in the other. He places the items on the table between them.

GEDEON

We had them cleaned for you.

XENA

Thank you. Where are
my armor and weapons?



SOTERES

I'm afraid we had to keep them for the
time being, Xena. Surely you understand.
You are strangers to us. We are a
peaceful people, and we wish no
trouble. Two of our young men found
you on the beach, close to death.
They brought you here and our
staff saw to your needs.

XENA

Gabrielle and I are grateful for your
assistance. The ship on which we
were traveling was caught up in a
storm and broken apart. Without
your help, we would have died, but
if you will be so kind as to return
my armor and our weapons,
we'll be on our way.

SOTERES

Well you see, there's the problem.
If you leave, you could jeopardize
the lives of everyone who lives here.

GEDEON

And you understand we
can't allow that.

GABRIELLE

And you don't seem to understand
it's a bad idea to try and keep Xena
someplace she doesn't want to stay.

VERA

You don't know that you don't want
to stay here. Let us show you our
world. We have much to offer.
Things the likes of which you have
never seen before. You may
find our home to your liking.

XENA

Where the people are prisoners?
Somehow I don't think so.

GEDEON

Our people are not prisoners
Xena, but they understand the
need for secrecy. They do not
speak of their home when they
are among your people.

XENA

My people? Aren't they
your people too?

SOTERES

No. We are different.
(beat)

Please, before you make
any judgments about us, let
us show you our world and
explain it to you. Please?

XENA

Just a second.

Xena and Gabrielle turn their backs, taking a few steps away from the elders.

GABRIELLE

(whispering)

Have a look around?



XENA

I think so. If there is a way out
of here, we need to find it.

Gabrielle nods her agreement and they turn their attention back to the trio.

XENA

We'd love to have
a look around.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. ATLANTIS - LATER THAT SAME DAY

Now dressed in their regular clothes, sans armor and weapons Xena and Gabrielle are following Soteris and Vera. They walk through an arch way where the two elders stop on a balcony and just watch as their guests take in everything they are about to see.

Xena stops at the railing and stares down into what appears to be a large underwater city. Gabrielle is looking above and around her at the glass dome that protects the city. It looks like any other city, with people bustling about, dealing with every day tasks, except all around them is the protection of the dome.

The city goes on for as far as the eye can see and they both would have never believed such a thing existed if they hadn't seen it with their own eyes.



GABRIELLE

By the Gods.



XENA

We're underwater?

VERA

Several leagues as
a matter of fact.

SOTERES

So you see Xena, escape is quite
impossible. If the water pressure
didn't kill you, then you would surely
drown before you reached the surface.

GABRIELLE

Then how did we get here?

SOTERES

We have vehicles capable of
traveling back and forth between
our world and the surface.

GABRIELLE

If you don't intend to let us go,
why even bother to bring us here?

VERA

Our laws forbid us to allow someone
to die if we can prevent it. As I
said, we could save your lives.

SOTERES

But now that puts us in this
predicament. This is our world.
We came here when we could
no longer live among your people
topside. They had become too
aggressive, too warlike. We are
a peaceful people. We can defend
ourselves, but that is always a
last resort. We would just
prefer not to have conflict at all.

XENA

But what about Gedeon?
He's obviously a military man.

SOTERES

He is, and he commands our
forces. Like I said, we can
protect ourselves.

GABRIELLE

How did you even come
to be down here?

SOTERES

Many generations ago, our ancestors tried to settle topside with your ancestors. Our ancestors had capabilities that yours did not. It wasn't long before our ancestors were forced to leave the land and take sanctuary under the water because of the wars between our people.

GABRIELLE

Why didn't you just share what you had?

VERA

It's difficult to explain, but we couldn't. It would have been interfering with the natural progression of your ancestors. They had to make their own legacies.

XENA

So you came here and you've survived in this place for multiple generations?



SOTERES

Yes, and over the years your people have tried to find this place. If that were to happen we would have no choice but to destroy our world and the people from yours that would invade.

GABRIELLE

You don't have to worry about Xena and me. We respect your right to remain hidden away here. We wouldn't tell anyone.

VERA

If it were your world and your people, would you take that chance?

FADE TO:

INT. CITY - AFTERNOON

Vera is showing Xena and Gabrielle around the city. Xena is looking at everything. Gabrielle seems fascinated by a particular light affixed to one of the buildings.

GABRIELLE

Xena look at this.

She reaches out to touch the glass that is emanating the light, but pulls back when she feels the heat.

GABRIELLE

(cont'd)

There's no flame.

Vera smiles as she watches them inspect the lamp.

VERA

It's called electricity. We use the natural power of the water around us to generate energy. We harness that energy and use it to power our city. Every home, every business has electricity.

XENA

How do you put it out?

VERA

With a switch.

GABRIELLE

You can just turn it on and off?



VERA

Yes.

XENA

It's amazing.

VERA

Yes. But one of those things that your people are not ready for.

GABRIELLE

But why? This seems like a very good thing. The possibilities are limitless.

VERA

Exactly. Tell me, do you know people who could use this as a weapon?

XENA

I could use it as a weapon.

VERA

Would you?

XENA

If I had to.

VERA

And there are others like you?

Xena nods the admission, obviously not feeling good about it. Gabrielle reaches out and takes Xena's hand to offer silent support.

GABRIELLE

If you have this, then there must be other things. Is there anything else you're willing to show us?

VERA

Child, I will show you everything if it will help convince you that it is best for you to stay here.

GABRIELLE

Convince me.

FADE TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - AFTERNOON

While not up the standards of a 21st century medical facility, this hospital is far more advanced than anything Xena or Gabrielle have ever seen. Everything is clean and sterile. The staff is dressed in uniforms that easily distinguish doctors from nurses. There are only two patients per room and as they enter the central monitoring area, Xena stops to stare at a bank of screens that display every room.

XENA

How do you do this?



VERA

Crystal optics. We mine crystal from the ocean floor, which allows us to process it into many different things.

As a doctor walks by, Gabrielle takes his arm.

GABRIELLE

Excuse me?

DOCTOR

Yes?

Gabrielle points to her bandage.

GABRIELLE

What is this?

The doctor looks at Vera, confused, then back to Gabrielle.

DOCTOR

A bandage?

GABRIELLE

I know that. The stuff holding it on?

DOCTOR

Oh, yes. Adhesive.

He can see that she's not quite understanding.

DOCTOR

Umm, glue?

GABRIELLE

Glue? Wouldn't it be easier
just to tie the bandage on?

Amused, the doctor just shakes his head.

DOCTOR

No.

VERA

Come. Let me show
you some other things.

CUT TO:

INT. DOME - SHORT TIME LATER

Standing on a walkway, looking over a railing, Xena and Gabrielle watch as divers swim back and forth between a platform and what appears to be a mine entrance under the water.

Xena seems particularly interested in the equipment they are using to breathe underwater. Each diver is wearing a mask and a singular small tank on their backs with a smaller mask over their mouth and nose.



VERA

There's not enough air in one of those to get you to the top, Xena. And even if there were, the water pressure outside the dome would kill you. The workers use the tanks to swim from the mining shaft to the foreman's platform. Underground, there are air filled shafts where the miners are extracting various ores from the ground. Atlantis sits in what is basically a valley at the base of a dormant volcano.

XENA

What make you so
sure it's dormant?

VERA

Our scientists assure
us there's no danger.

XENA

That's what they thought
in Pompeii too.

GABRIELLE

Vera, how can you ask us to
remain here? We're not of your
people. We don't belong here.
We have nothing to offer you.



VERA

Your presence here
offers us security.

XENA

But was it right to save our
lives only to make us prisoners?

VERA

You wouldn't be prisoners.

XENA

Would we ever be
allowed to go back up?

VERA

I'm afraid not.

XENA

Then we're prisoners. It
would have been better to
let us die than to try and keep
us caged up like animals.

VERA

(confused)

But you wouldn't be
'caged' up. You would be
free to live among us.

Xena gestures around the series of domes.

XENA

In... this glass cage.

VERA

I'm sorry.

FADE TO:

INT. LIVINGROOM - EARLY EVENING

Xena is pacing like a caged tiger as Gabrielle sits at a table watching her.

GABRIELLE

Is that helping?

XENA

It isn't hurting.

GABRIELLE

Okay.... Xena, is a life here
really worse than death?

XENA

Yes.

GABRIELLE

But think about how comfortable
it is here. The buildings are
heated without fireplaces.
They have water that runs hot
and cold at the same time....

XENA

Good for them.

GABRIELLE

They have plumbing....

XENA

The Romans have plumbing.
Look where it's gotten them.

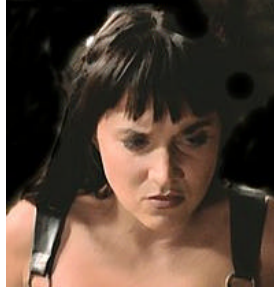
GABRIELLE

Did you ever stop to think that after all the things we've been through lately this is someone's way of telling us to slow down?

Xena sighs and takes a seat next to Gabrielle.

XENA

Maybe. I'm willing to slow down. Just not here.



GABRIELLE

Okay, but getting out is going to be tough.

XENA

I know, but they keep saying they trust us to live among them. We can use that to our advantage.

GABRIELLE

That's a plan I see forming isn't it?

XENA

I think so.

FADE TO:

INT. CITY - EVENING

Xena and Gabrielle are walking, unescorted through the streets of the city. People are still moving around, but with a more leisurely pace than before.

XENA

I think this must be their evening.

GABRIELLE

How can you tell?

XENA

They don't seem to be
in as much of a hurry.

GABRIELLE

Good point.

XENA

And with evening, most
people want to relax.

She stops and looks over the crowd until she sees three young men coming toward her. Stepping in front of them, she forces them to stop, but before she can say one word they look at her and then to Gabrielle and lascivious grins spread across their faces.

YOUNG MAN 1

You're not from around
here, are you?

XENA

No, we're not and we're
wondering what you do
for fun in this bubble.

YOUNG MAN 2

Well, we could tell you....

YOUNG MAN 3

But it would be more
fun to show you.

Xena looks to Gabrielle and smiles.



XENA

What do you know...
we found a comedy act.

GABRIELLE

(shrugging)
Who knew?

YOUNG MAN 1

Now, now ladies....

This remark gets twin raised brows; one dark, one blonde as in perfect unison Xena and Gabrielle cross their arms.

GABRIELLE

Free piece of advice.
This is a really bad idea.

YOUNG MAN 2

Really? Three of us, two
of you and women to boot....

The men begin to move toward them, their intentions clear.

GABRIELLE

(to Xena)

I think I prefer our
reputations preceding us.

XENA

Yeah.

Before any of the men can move, Xena strikes out. Gabrielle does the same less than one second behind her. Two of the men drop to their knees, choking and gasping for air. The third man stares wide eyed at his two companions, and then turns and runs back the way they had come.

XENA

You have thirty...

GABRIELLE

... seconds to live.

XENA

We don't want trouble.

GABRIELLE

We just want to know
where to get a drink.



YOUNG MAN 1

Pub....

YOUNG MAN 2

Mermaid Inn....

YOUNG MAN 1

That way....

He jerks his thumb over his shoulder. Together, Xena and Gabrielle remove the pinch, stepping back as the men both drop face down to the ground.

Without a word Xena and Gabrielle step around them and continue into the city.

FADE TO:

INT. MERMAID INN - NIGHT

Sitting at a table in the center of the room, Gabrielle is drinking a yellowish drink from a tall clear glass. Xena's glass is the same but her drink is a dark brown color.

GABRIELLE

This is good.

XENA

Not bad.

GABRIELLE

That was pretty rotten of us.

XENA

They asked for it. A bully
is a bully; I don't care
where they live.

Gedeon along with four of his officers enters the pub and sighs as he walks over to the table where Xena and Gabrielle are sitting.

GEDEON

I'm sure there is a good
reason why you attacked
two of our citizens.

XENA

They were looking for trouble.

GEDEON

They're young men, Xena.
They work hard in the mines
all day. They were trying
to blow off some steam.

XENA

They shouldn't have
blown in my direction.



GABRIELLE

We actually
didn't hurt them.

XENA

But we can
protect ourselves.

GEDEON

I can see that.

He gestures to his men, who bring up weapons that Xena has never seen before, but she knows anything with a trigger can't be good.

GEDEON

(cont'd)

You're under arrest.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. JAIL CELL - NIGHT

Xena is lying on a cot. Gabrielle is leaning against the wall staring at the shimmering blue bars that hold them in.

GABRIELLE

Getting us arrested
was part of your plan?



XENA

Yep.

Sighing, Gabrielle crosses the cell and takes a seat on the end of the cot.

GABRIELLE

Clue me in next time.

XENA

Next time I need to
get us arrested, I will.

GABRIELLE

Looking at their security?

XENA

And weapons.

GABRIELLE

Tight and powerful.

XENA

Yep.

GABRIELLE

I trust the plan
has a second part.

XENA

I'm working on it.

GABRIELLE

And in the meantime?

XENA

Let's sleep on it.

Gabrielle smiles and crawls between Xena and the wall to settle her head on Xena's shoulder.

GABRIELLE

This is pretty good,
even for jail.

XENA

We've been in worse.

GABRIELLE

Very true.

Placing a tender kiss to Xena's cheek, Gabrielle snuggles in and closes her eyes. Xena remains awake and staring at the ceiling.

FADE TO:

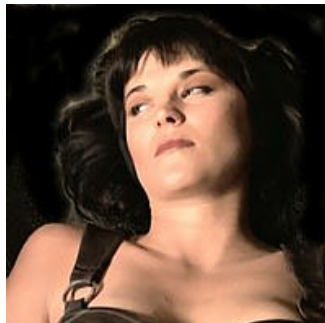
INT. JAIL CELL - MORNING

A tall, distinguished man enters the outer chamber of the cells. He stops just before the bars of the cell where Xena and Gabrielle are being held. He doesn't seem the least bit surprised to see them both asleep in the same cot even though there are others that are available.

GAGE

Excuse me?

He waits patiently for a response. Slowly, taking her own time, Xena finally opens her eyes and turns her head.



GAGE

(cont'd)

Good morning. My name is
Gage. I'm your advocate.

XENA

For what?

GAGE

Court.

XENA

Court?

GAGE

Yes. For the charges
pending against you.

Drawing a deep breath, Xena slowly sits up, careful not to disturb Gabrielle.

XENA

They're putting us on trial?

GAGE

Yes, for two counts of assault.

XENA

I see. And if we lose?

GAGE

You'll probably be sentenced
to two years of working in the
mines. A year for each count.

XENA

So you get four years of
prisoner labor out of us
for defending ourselves.



GAGE

If we lose.

XENA

And tell me....

She stands and walks with purpose to the bars that separate them

XENA

(cont'd)

What are the chances
we will win?

GAGE

I can't say right now. I need
to talk to you and your friend,
and then speak to the prosecutor.

XENA

So we're not guilty yet?

GAGE

Not yet. That's not the
way we do things here.

FADE TO:

INT. OFFICE - LATE MORNING

Gage is sitting at a small table with Xena and Gabrielle, looking at notes he is taking while they have breakfast.

GAGE

So you put this 'pinch'
on the young men?

XENA

Yes.



GAGE

And this is a maneuver
you do with your hands.

GABRIELLE

Would you like us
to demonstrate?

GAGE

Ah... no. Thank you.

XENA

Look, it's mostly a
defensive action.

GAGE

But it can kill?

GABRIELLE

It can, but if you take it off
in time, it's mostly harmless.

GAGE

Mostly?

XENA

Some people suffer
a mild nosebleed.

GAGE

I see. Other than that
there are no side effects?

XENA

Not that we're aware of.

GABRIELLE

So when will the trial start?

GAGE

This afternoon. It will be
before a panel of judges
and shouldn't take very long.

XENA

It generally doesn't take
long to convict someone.

GAGE

You're not convicted yet and I think we can show these fellows have caused trouble before. I've talked to three local merchants who have had incidents with them in the past. The only trouble I can see is that they are claiming it was unprovoked.

XENA

Of course they are.

FADE TO:

INT. COURTROOM - AFTERNOON

Gage, Xena and Gabrielle are seated at one table. The PROSECUTOR and the THREE MEN are seated at a table across the room, facing them. At a third table between them, THREE JUDGES dressed in red robes are preparing to hear the case.

In a small gallery, various members of the city including Soteris, Vera and Gedeon are watching and waiting.

JUDGE ALGIS

We are here today to investigate charges brought against the topsiders....

He pauses as he looks down at a paper in front of him.

JUDGE ALGIS

(cont'd)

Xena and Gabrielle?
Correct?

GAGE

Yes, Magistrate.



JUDGE MICU

The three accusers, Ahban, Perico and Birger are prepared to testify against these topsiders?

The advocate for the young men stands, smoothing his silver robes before addressing the panel.

CAIO

They are Magistrate. They will all
three testify to the same thing.

The three judges take a moment to confer and the third one, a woman with a very regal bearing turns her eyes to Xena and Gabrielle

JUDGE SOFIA

We have spoken with Elders Soteris and Vera and commander Gedeon. They all seem to think that this situation was a terrible misunderstanding between our citizens and people not of this world. They think that we should take into special consideration that you two were brought here when you were in no condition to protest. That you were told that you would remain here and that you had been among our people for less than one day.

XENA

That would be nice.



The woman is not amused at Xena and it shows in her eyes as she purses her lips before continuing.

JUDGE SOFIA

As I understand it, you readily
admit to using this 'pinch' on
the accusers. Is that right?

Xena is about to say something, when both Gage and Gabrielle each take an arm to stop her.

GAGE

That's correct, Magistrate. They
do admit to doing it, but they
state it was self-defense.

JUDGE SOFIA

We've read their statements,
Advocate Gage. Our concern is
this: while we must punish this
act of aggression we don't wish to
make the punishment unreasonable.

JUDGE MICA

The normal sentence for this crime
would be one year, per charge,
per accused. Therefore a four-year
sentence to the mines.

There is a slight commotion at the table where Gage sits. As Gedeon looks over he sees Gage and Gabrielle once again hanging onto Xena who looks like she's ready to attack the entire room.

JUDGE ALGIS

In consideration of all the
factors, we are willing to offer
you a reduced sentence. One
year labor in the mines.

XENA

(whispering to Gage)
Do we have a choice?

GAGE

Take it. Trust me. Take it.

Xena looks him in the eye to measure his sincerity. Once she determines he is making the best choice for them, she turns to Gabrielle.

XENA

(whispering)
This was not
part of my plan.

GABRIELLE

I know.



XENA

We can work with this.

GABRIELLE

I have no doubt.

Squeezing Gabrielle's hand, Xena turns and nods to Gage.

GAGE

We accept, Magistrate.

JUDGE SOFIA

Then the sentence shall start in three days time. The mining foremen will take the time to train and equip them so that they can perform their duties safely.

JUDGE MICA

Gedeon, take them into custody. Court adjourned.

FADE TO:

INT. MINING OFFICE - MORNING - THREE DAYS LATER

Gedeon stands with two guards, watching as the mine foreman hand new clothes to Xena and Gabrielle.

FOREMAN

These are the uniforms you need to wear while working in the mines. They are waterproof and will keep you warm in the water. We can heat the area somewhat, but not enough to keep you from freezing to death.

He gestures to a curtained off area.

FOREMAN

(cont'd)

You can change in there.

With twin sighs, they move behind the curtain.

CUT TO:

INT. MINING OFFICE - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Stepping out from behind the curtain Xena and Gabrielle are dressed in what passes for wetsuits. It's clear neither of them is happy with the close fit of the clothes.

FOREMAN

I know it's uncomfortable at first,
but trust me... you'll be glad you have
them when you're in the water.

He hands them footwear that completes the outfit.

FOREMAN

(cont'd)

These too.

As they slip into the boots, the foreman turns to Gedeon.

FOREMAN

(cont'd)

I think I can take it from here.
I've handled prisoners before.

GEDEON

The guards have orders to
shoot them on site if they give
you trouble or try to escape.

FOREMAN

They'll be fine. I'm sure you
have things to attend to.

Gedeon nods and leaves the office, taking his guards with him.

GEDEON

(off screen)

Guard this door.

The foreman watches from a window until Gedeon is out of site. Then he retrieves a long dark duffle bag from inside a large chest. He slides it across the floor to Xena.

FOREMAN

Put your regular clothes in there.

Xena gathers up the bundles of clothes and opens the bag to find all their weapons and her armor.

XENA

What the...?

FOREMAN

Look, we don't have time for a
lot of talking. If you two want to
get out of here, you'll do exactly
as I say when I say it and you'll look
like model prisoners. Understand?

XENA

Yes, but where are you going
to take us that Gedeon and
his goon won't find us?



FOREMAN

Topside.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. MINING OFFICE - SHORTLY THEREAFTER

The foreman busies himself collecting equipment that they'll need for whatever plan it is that he has.

GABRIELLE

It's not that we're ungrateful
or anything, but why do
you want to help us?

FOREMAN

Some of our people stayed up there
when most of them left and I have
relatives topside. Some of us have
heard of you two. The heroes that
even the Gods can't stop. They need
you up top far more than we need to
keep you down here. Besides you don't
belong in our world. We were born to it.
We understand it, you would never adapt.

XENA

Can't argue with that logic.

FOREMAN

Getting out of here is not going
to be easy. Very dangerous.

GABRIELLE

We're okay with danger.

The foreman smiles as he removes two sets of equipment from a locker.

FOREMAN

I figured as much. I'm going to
take you to Lessa. She is the
person who trains the miners.
She will teach you how to use
this and she will lead you to
the place that will get you
back to the top.

GABRIELLE

Before we go, what's
your name?

FOREMAN

Lukas.

GABRIELLE

Thank you, Lukas,
for all your help.

LUKAS

You're welcome. Come
on, Lessa is waiting.

CUT TO:

INT. CAVERN - EARLY AFTERNOON

Following Lukas through a series of tunnels, they finally enter a large cavern where a YOUNG WOMAN and TWO BOYS are waiting for them. The cavern is large and in the center of it is a well lit pool of water that shimmers silver and blue.

LUKAS

This is Lessa, Stian and Rani.
They're going to help you
get back to the top.

He offers his hand and a sincere look to Xena.

LUKAS

(cont'd)
Good luck.

XENA

(taking his hand)
Thank you.



LUKAS

(to Lessa)
You have about two hours before
Gedeon is going to start looking
for them. You need to make it work
this time. It's our only chance.

LESSA

It'll work. I'm going to teach them
how to use the gear and then the
boys are going to show them
the slide and the valve.

Lukas nods and departs the cavern quickly. Lessa turns to them and smiles.

LESSA

I take it you both know
how to swim?

XENA

Yes, we seem to have done
more than our share lately.

LESSA

Maybe when you get back, you'll
go someplace inland for a bit.

GABRIELLE

I think that's a grand idea.



LESSA

What we need to do first is teach
you how to use the masks and
tanks. So climb into that water
and let's get started.

FADE TO:

INT. CAVERN - AFTERNOON

Xena's head pops up out of the water, her face covered by two masks, one for seeing and the other that covers her mouth and nose for breathing. She pulls down the air mask and smiles at Lessa who is sitting on the edge of the pool with her legs in the water.

XENA

I LOVE this.

Lessa chuckles and nods.

LESSA

It's fun. Where's Gabrielle?

XENA

She's still under there
chasing the boys around
and getting used to this.

LESSA

Well, go get her. We need
to get you on your way.

Xena replaces the mask and disappears under the water.

CUT TO:

INT. TUNNEL - AFTERNOON

Lessa is leading the group of Xena, Gabrielle and the boys down another series of tunnels. In the distance, voices and noises indicative of mining activity can be heard.

LESSA

The boys are going to lead you
to the wash. They know how to
use it and no one will miss them.

If one of us from the mine
disappeared for the time it will
take to get them there and back,
it would alert the guards. They'll
take you from here. Be well.

XENA

Thank you, Lessa.

She disappears back the way they came and the boys move forward. Shouldering the bag and her gear, Xena follows with Gabrielle right behind her.

RANI

We're going to take you to a partially
collapsed tunnel. You'll have to use
the mask and tank to swim through it.

It's long so don't worry if you feel
like you've been in there a while.

STIAN

When you come out of the tunnel you
can drop the tank and mask. You won't
need them anymore and we can get
them later. Follow the next tunnel you
find that goes left. That will bring you to
a waterfall. You have to go over the falls,
but the pool at the bottom is very deep.

RANI

The current will carry you to another cavern that will wash you into the very center of the cavern.

This is where it gets very tricky. We have a lot of fun, but we know how to do it. When you wash out you have to make sure that you stop yourself from going to the other side. After you catch your breath you'll find a stack of wooden boards. Each of you take a board, hold it in front of you and run for the rushing water. You need to land in the center of the stream, face first with the board under you.

STIAN

You are going to have very little control over the boards, only the weight of your body.

You'll have to use it to keep the board away from the sides of the wash or you'll get smashed.

RANI

(dryly)

And probably dead.

Xena and Gabrielle try to hide their amusement, knowing that it's going to take more than a description like that to scare them. But they do try to look properly concerned.

XENA

(seriously)

Thanks for the warning.

GABRIELLE

So what happens at the end of the wash?

RANI

Well, towards the end of the wash, you're going to hit a stream vent that is going to hopefully boost you through the opening to the topside.

XENA

Where are we going to come out?

STIAN

Topside.

XENA

Right, but where topside?

RANI

We don't know. We never look around; we just climb back down and follow the footpath back.

GABRIELLE

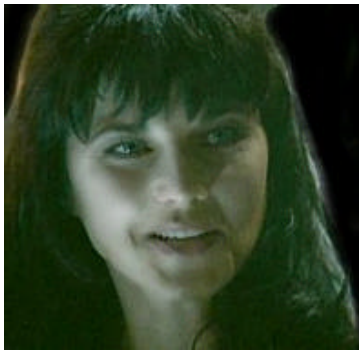
You do this for fun?

RANI

Yeah, but if the elders ever found out about it, they'd kill us.

XENA

We appreciate your help, boys.
I think we can take it from here.
You'd better get back before someone misses you.



RANI

Okay. Take care.

Xena and Gabrielle wave to them as they retreat back up the tunnel.

XENA

We may as well get to it.

FADE TO:

INT. TUNNEL - A SHORT WHILE LATER

Their path has stopped and in front of them is the underwater mouth of the next leg of their journey. They put the tanks on their backs then the masks into place before slipping into the water, where they tread at the edge for a moment before pulling the duffel in after them. Each taking a handle, they manage it as they swim into the tunnel. For the most part it is dark, with only a small disk of light every few feet to guide them. They continue a slow, but steady swim forward.

FADE TO:

INT. CAVERN - CONTINUOUS

The dark tunnel has let out into a pool. Surfacing, Xena and Gabrielle find themselves in another cavern. This one is large and the sound of rushing water is unmistakable. Pulling themselves out of the water, they sit on the edge of the pool for a moment to strip off tanks and masks and rest after what appears to have been a long swim. Xena hauls the bag out of the water and then lays back on the edge to catch her breath.

XENA

I'm getting old.

GABRIELLE

We're just not use to breathing like that. My chest hurts, but I'm starting to feel better now. I don't know how they do it.



XENA

They're used to it.

She coughs a couple of times and takes a deep breath of fresh air. She is lying there watching the lights reflections from the water on the ceiling of the cave, apparently contemplating her navel.

XENA

Let's stay here.

GABRIELLE

Let's not. You know how I am about being wet.

Rolling over and pushing up on her arms, Xena grins at Gabrielle

XENA

No comment. Okay, let's go. A dive over the waterfall is next.

Leaving behind the tanks and masks, they make their way toward the sound of the waterfall. Stopping at the very edge they look down at what must be a 150-foot drop.

GABRIELLE

They do this for fun?

XENA

They're young. All sorts
of stupid things are fun
when you're young.

GABRIELLE

We survived a shipwreck
for this? I swear.

XENA

Well, in for a dinar, in
for a gold piece, as
Autolycus would say.

Xena reaches out and takes Gabrielle's hand.

XENA

(cont'd)

On three?

Gabrielle nods quickly and Xena counts.

XENA

(cont'd)

One... two... three!

They both jump from the edge, and get caught in the rush of the water on the way down, forcing their hands apart. Xena manages to maintain a grip on the bag but regrets it when she lands slightly before it and it comes down hard on her shoulder. She is pushed under the water; her last clear vision is of Gabrielle being swept down stream with the current.

Kicking hard, Xena manages to break above the water as she and the bag are caught up and swept after Gabrielle. Xena realizes that there is very little control here and the best she can do is try to keep from being bashed against the rocks and the sides of the wash.



CUT TO:

INT. WASH - CONTINUOUS

Gabrielle has swallowed more than her share of water and is feeling tired and sore by the time she sees the median the boys told them about. She's headed for it at a high rate of speed and she knows the stop is going to be far more painful than the trip. Fighting the current of the water, she tries desperately to turn sideways, knowing her whole body can better withstand the impact than her head.

Forced onto the expanses of wet rock, there is what might be a muffled curse as Gabrielle drag herself out of the water further up to solid ground. With a groan, she rolls over in time to see Xena pushing the bag out of the water and hauling herself up to collapse on top of it.

They both lay there silent, trying to regain their breath. Xena looks over to find a stack of long slightly curved boards lying off to the side.

XENA

I don't think I'm
ready for that.

GABRIELLE

I suggest we rest.

XENA

Great idea.

She leaves the bag but pulls herself over to lie next to Gabrielle.

XENA

Thirsty?

GABRIELLE

Funny.



FADE TO:

INT. CAVERN - CONTINUOUS - A SHORT WHILE LATER

Xena and Gabrielle are both now on their feet and examining the boards that they will use on the finally leg of their escape. The board Xena has is just a bit shorter than she is, one end is somewhat pointed and the other is straight.

XENA

Interesting.

GABRIELLE

If it keeps us from going under
I'm all for it. How are you
going to handle the bag?

XENA

The bag gets its own board.
Hopefully we won't lose our gear.

CUT TO:

INT. CAVERN - CONTINUOUS

Xena pushes a board with the bag lashed to it into the water and watches as it shoots down the wash and disappears.

GABRIELLE

You want to go first?

XENA

Yeah, wait until I'm out of sight
before you go in. I have a feeling
that we're going to need some
distance between us. That
passage is pretty narrow.

GABRIELLE

Okay. Be careful.

XENA

I will.

Xena leans over and kisses Gabrielle gently.

XENA

(cont'd)

See you topside.



GABRIELLE

Right behind you.

Gabrielle steps back and watches as Xena times the current and then dives forward with the board under her. It doesn't take long for her to disappear but there is a loud yell as she does. That causes Gabrielle to laugh because she knows it's Xena's 'having fun' yell she is hearing.

GABRIELLE

(cont'd)

Just goes to prove you
don't need to be young
to enjoy stupid things.

Taking a deep breath Gabrielle grips her board and then follows Xena.

CUT TO:

INT. WASH - CONTINUOUS

Xena has a huge smile on her face as she rides the board down the wash. For everything she's been through, it's clear she's completely enjoying this experience. It hasn't taken her long to get the idea of using her body to guide the board to keep it away from the walls.

Ahead of her she can hear a high whistling sound and she can see a far more natural light. It seems that the board is picking up speed, as the whistling grows louder.

Suddenly there is a loud 'pop' and Xena knows she is no longer on the water. Taking a quick look around it's very clear that she's airborne and headed directly for the small opening that is allowing the light in.

She closes her eyes tight, grips the board and contemplates a prayer to gods she never trusted.

CUT TO:

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Xena is lying on the board on the ground, obviously not moving. Her eyes are still closed and she is taking mental inventory of her condition. Pleased with what she assesses, she opens her eyes to see the board with the bag lying a few feet away. The board is battered, but still intact as well.

Another 'pop' causes her to turn her head in time to see Gabrielle shoot out of the vent. The trajectory is at a slight angle and Gabrielle's scream is one of partial fear and partial amusement. The board soars slightly past Xena and skids to a stop in the tall grass.

Pushing herself up, Xena moves quickly to where Gabrielle landed. She stands over her waiting for Gabrielle to move. When she doesn't, Xena drops to her knees.

XENA

Gabrielle?

After another few seconds, one green eye opens and she smiles.

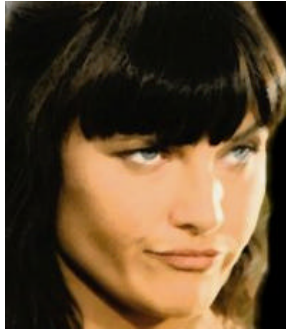
GABRIELLE

Okay THAT was fun.

Xena smirks.

XENA

We're not doing it again.



FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FOUR

TAG

FADE IN:

INT. INN - EVENING

Xena and Gabrielle are seated at a corner table. Remnants of dinner are scattered about on various plates, and they both look quite satisfied. Xena is tipped back in her chair with one foot up on another to assist in her balance. Gabrielle is sipping from a steaming mug. Neither of them seems terribly concerned about making conversation. It is a comfortable moment for them and they are rather enjoying it.

Several people enter the inn and the tavern keeper begins shifting tables around a small stage.

GABRIELLE

Wonder what's going on?

Having overheard her, the innkeeper turns and smiles.

INNKEEPER

We're having a bard tonight.
One of the best in the land.

XENA

(dryly)
Oh goody.

Gabrielle grins and gives her a playful shove with her foot.

GABRIELLE

Be nice.

Xena smiles back and points to herself in a 'me?' gesture.

A young woman crosses the room and takes a seat on a stool. The room quiets down.

BARD

I sing of Atlantis....

XENA

Let's go.



In complete agreement, Gabrielle stands and they quietly head for the back of the room and the stairs that will take them to their room. The innkeeper stops them.

INNKEEPER

Aren't you staying?

GABRIELLE

We've heard it.

They nod goodnight and make their way up the stairs.

FADE OUT.

DISCLAIMER

No Alantians were harmed during the making of this motion picture and their secret is safe to this day.