

SHIPPER SEASON EIGHT



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Logline

Cerberus has escaped from the Underworld and Hades has asked for Xena and Gabrielle to find his three-headed dog. While they are on the chase, they reminisce about past adventures.

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TEASER

FADE IN

Xena and Gabrielle are riding through the countryside--a hilly green valley with some sparse trees. The camera zooms in. They are talking, their conversation still inaudible, both of them looking happy and relaxed.

Suddenly Xena pulls Argo to a halt and stops and listens. Gabrielle stops as well.

XENA (whispering to Gabrielle):
You hear that?

GABRIELLE (frowns):
What?

A distant noise is heard; it sounds like screams.

Xena kicks the stirrups and rides forward.

XENA:
Yah!

Gabrielle rides fast behind her.

CUT TO

Xena and Gabrielle bring their horses to a halt on the top of a hill. Down below a village can be seen. People can be seen running around frantically; some houses are burning or smoldering.

GABRIELLE (sighing):
Another day in the life...

XENA (kicking the stirrups):
Yah!

Xena rides down the hill.

CUT TO

Xena and Gabrielle ride into the village to survey a scene of chaos. Many huts are caved in or seriously damaged; people are putting out fires; household utensils, bread loaves and fruit are scattered on the ground, as well as broken clay pots; many villagers look bruised and scratched.

MIDDLE-AGED MAN (standing near a collapsed hut):
I found her! She's here!

Several people rush toward him. Xena and Gabrielle dismount and join them as well. A faint cry of "Help!" is heard from under the wreck. The villagers start pushing the broken boards away, with Xena

and Gabrielle helping them. Finally a young woman is pulled out from the rubble. She looks frightened and bruised.

MIDDLE-AGED MAN:

Thank the gods--you're all right!

XENA:

Is anyone badly hurt?

YOUNG MAN:

I don't think so.

Xena looks around.

XENA:

What happened here?

GABRIELLE (sadly):

Come on, Xena, do you really need to ask?

[FLASHBACK]

A montage--scenes of villages being attacked.



GABRIELLE (voice-over):

It's not like we haven't seen this scenario many times before...

[END OF FLASHBACK]

Close-up of the face of a terrified-looking old woman in the crowd of villagers.

OLD WOMAN:

It was a d-d-d-d-d-dog!

GABRIELLE (shocked):

I take that back. (shakes her head) A dog? Well, that's--original.

XENA (skeptical):

A dog. How big was this dog?

Gabrielle can't help but snicker, getting cold stares from the villagers.

GABRIELLE (holding back laughter):

I'm sorry, it's just... (she looks around, surveying the damage) ...it's hard to believe that a dog could do something like this.

FEMALE VILLAGER (shouting):

But it was huge!

All of the villagers start to nod, using their hands and arms to show how massive the dog was.

OLD WOMAN (piping in):

And don't forget the three heads!

All of the villagers nod and begin talking over each other.

XENA (frowns):

Three heads?

[FLASHBACK]



[END OF FLASHBACK]

Xena and Gabrielle are staring at the villagers.

XENA (still skeptical):

So you're saying that a giant three-headed dog attacked your village...

All of the villagers nod and talk over each other again.

GABRIELLE:

Did it breathe fire?

MALE VILLAGER (laughs):

Really, now! That's quite an imagination you've got... (laughs again, shaking his head) Breathing fire...

The camera pulls back to show Xena smirking.

XENA (sarcastically):

Yeah--come on Gabrielle, breathing fire? Where do you come up with this stuff? (serious) All right now back to the three-headed dog.

MALE VILLAGER (oblivious to her sarcasm):

Well, you see, it was just this morning--everyone was going on with their daily business and all of a sudden this giant dog comes barging into the village--

OLD WOMAN (piping in):

I saw it, it was chasing a cat!

MALE VILLAGER:

It just plowed through everything in its path--even the houses! We had nothing to defend ourselves with! It was such a massive beast...

Xena and Gabrielle exchange puzzled looks.

GABRIELLE (quietly):

You really think this story is true?

VOICE (off-screen):

Yes, it is.

Xena whips around abruptly and draws her sword. At the point of her sword, there is a flash of orange light. Then, a black-clad figure materializes. The camera pulls back to show that it's Hades, God of the Underworld.

HADES (smiles thinly):

Hello, Xena.

XENA (narrows her eyes at him suspiciously):

Hades. I take it you have something to do with this?

Hades smiles a bit sheepishly as we:

FADE OUT

ACT ONE

FADE IN

On the same scene as before. Xena and Gabrielle are standing in the village, with their backs to the rest of the villagers, Hades standing in front of Xena.

The camera pans to the group of villagers as they stare at Hades in shock.

Mutterings in the crowd:

-- Hades?

-- He's a god!

-- Did you see that?

-- The God of the Underworld!

The camera zooms in on the old woman we saw before.

OLD WOMAN (in a quiet, terrified voice):

Maybe we're already dead!!!

Pan back to Hades.



HADES:

I am really sorry to bother you, Xena, but as you can see...there's been a problem.

XENA (smirks):

Let me guess. You're missing a dog.

GABRIELLE:

Cerberus--the three-headed dog of Tartarus. Of course!

The camera pans back to the villagers.

MALE VILLAGER (sarcastic):

Took you long enough to catch on!

Gabrielle turns and gives him an irritated look. Meanwhile, Xena glares at Hades, obviously displeased.

XENA:

So I take it you came to pick up your dog-- (looks around and then glares at Hades again) --and I'm sure you'll fix the damage it caused.

HADES (sighs):

Well...actually, I'm on a pretty tight schedule. You see, that's how Cerberus escaped. It's been chaos in the Underworld! The shades have rebelled.



GABRIELLE:

The shades. I take it they're fed up with floating around in despair for eternity?

HADES (shrugs):

It never bothered them before. Maybe it's because things got a bit lax while... (awkwardly) ...while I wasn't around. Anyway, in the past few weeks, it's gotten totally out of hand! They even sunk Charon's boat, if you can believe it! The lines to the underworld got so long we had to have a waiting list!

XENA (sighing):

So what are you getting at, Hades?

HADES:

Well--in the midst of all the chaos, Cerberus managed to break free into the land of the living.

The camera pans around as the old woman comes up and nudges Gabrielle. Gabrielle turns and looks at her.

OLD WOMAN:

The land of the living! That's us. (beams) I guess we're still alive, then.

GABRIELLE (slightly confused):

Yeah...

The camera pulls back on Xena and Hades.



XENA:

So what's the problem? He's escaped. Go ahead and get him back.

HADES (exasperated):

Xena--can't you take a hint? I want *you* to get Cerberus for me! I've got to get back and get the situation under control. And as if that wasn't enough, I just had a shipload of pirates come in.

XENA:

Hades, you're a god.

HADES:

And you're Xena. Besides... (gives her a sly look) ...what happened to "people don't need the gods to help them"?

GABRIELLE (glances at Xena and speaks in a half-whisper):

He's got a point.

Xena sighs.

XENA:

Monsters were never really my thing. That was more Hercules' department.

GABRIELLE:

Oh really?

[FLASHBACK]





[END OF FLASHBACK]

XENA:

Well there were a few exceptions.

GABRIELLE:

Not to mention Elis Island and the dragon, the chimera--

XENA:

All right, Gabrielle--you made your point.

Gabrielle smirks.

HADES (hastily):

Well, good--I'm glad we've gotten that straightened out. Wish I could stay and chat, but...

GABRIELLE:

Wait, wait, wait! How are we supposed to--?

HADES:

I'm sure Xena can figure it out. Just catch him and I'll take it from there.

Hades dematerializes in a flash of light as the villagers gasp in awe. Xena and Gabrielle turn around to face them. Everyone looks at them expectantly.

XENA (sighs):

Looks like we've got a dog to catch.

They turn and walk toward their horses.

GABRIELLE (sighing):

Gods. Can't live with them, and can't live without them... (pauses) ...literally.

XENA:

Yeah, well--I'm getting a little sick and tired of cleaning up their messes.

[FLASHBACK]



[END OF FLASHBACK]

GABRIELLE:

Hades does have a point, though. We've always said that mortals shouldn't depend on the gods to help them when they can help themselves.

XENA:

Yeah, well--maybe the gods shouldn't depend on mortals to help them when it's their three-headed dog on the loose.

GABRIELLE (stops suddenly and stares down at the ground with a shocked expression on her face):
Uh...Xena.

Xena stops as well and turns.

XENA:

What is it?

GABRIELLE (points down):

Look.

Xena walks up to Gabrielle as the camera pans down to show the ground in front of Gabrielle, and a giant paw print.

GABRIELLE:

This is one big dog.

XENA (shrugging):
What did you expect?

GABRIELLE:
Uhh...something smaller?

XENA:
You mean, like Horace?

[FLASHBACK]



[END OF FLASHBACK]

Xena smiles a little, lost in reverie, then shakes it off. She and Gabrielle approach their horses.

OLD WOMAN (off-camera):
Xena!

Xena and Gabrielle stop and turn around. A group of villagers is following them; the old woman steps forward.

OLD WOMAN (to Xena):
Xena and (to Gabrielle) ...uh...you--we have good news for you!

XENA:
And that would be?

OLD WOMAN:
You're in luck--my son is coming with you.

A gangly young man with dark oily hair, with a large pack on his back, steps forward.

GABRIELLE:
I--thank you, but I don't think we need anyone else coming along.

OLD WOMAN:
Anyone? He isn't just anyone! He's the village dogcatcher!

She grins proudly. The villagers cheer.

OLD WOMAN (excitedly):

Isn't that great?!

YOUNG MAN (proudly):

Hello, ladies. My name is Talis, I am a professional dogcatcher and I am here to save the day. (Xena and Gabrielle exchange amused glances as he comes closer.) And may I say--I am really looking forward to working with the Mighty Warrior Princess herself.

Xena crosses her arms over her chest and gives him a once-over, grinning crookedly.

XENA:

You may. But I think we'll be able to handle this one on our own.

OLD WOMAN:

But you don't understand. It's the boy's job!

The villagers mutter and nod in agreement.

TALIS (showing off):

Yeah. You know, if you want to catch a dog (points to his head) you have to think like a dog.

Mutters of "Yeah!", "That's right!" are heard from the villagers.

XENA (sighs):

Fine, you can come along.

The villagers cheer.

TALIS (grins):

You won't regret this, gorgeous.

Xena rolls her eyes as Gabrielle snickers.

XENA (brusquely):

Let's go.

She mounts Argo. Gabrielle gets in the saddle too, and they ride off at a trot. Behind them Talis begins to jog to keep up; he drops his backpack, spilling his supplies--a rope, a dog collar, a muzzle, and some doggy biscuits. Xena and Gabrielle pull their horses to a stop and watch, obviously amused, as Talis picks up his things and stuffs them back inside the pack.

XENA (smirks):

Does he remind you of someone?

Gabrielle looks at Talis and smiles.

[FLASHBACK]

Scenes of Joxer being clumsy.



[END OF FLASHBACK]

GABRIELLE (to Xena, quietly):
So why exactly is he coming with us?

XENA:

Well, who knows. Maybe he really will be of some help. (off Gabrielle's skeptical look) Besides, all of the villagers seemed pretty set on having him come along. Look, this animal trashed their homes. Maybe it's important for them to know that one of them is doing something to stop it. You know--to have faith in themselves.

Gabrielle shrugs.

CUT TO

Countryside. Xena and Gabrielle are walking on foot, leading their horses along a path. Talis walks in front of them, tracking the large paw prints.

GABRIELLE (to Xena):
So what's the plan?

XENA:

Well, after we catch up with it--

TALIS (turns, clearing his throat):

Let me tell you exactly what we have to do. (off Xena's glare) Well, after all, sweetheart, *I'm* the dogcatcher.

Xena grabs him by the neck and pulls him close.

XENA (grins dangerously):

All right, let's get a few things straight. First, you'll be *dog food* if you try any of that "sweetheart" stuff again. Second--like I said, we do things my way. Got it?

Talis nods as Xena removes her hand from his neck and gives him a slight pat on the cheek.

XENA (smiling):

Good, glad we have an understanding.

Talis, looking stunned, suddenly gives her a beatific smile and touches his cheek where she touched him.

GABRIELLE:

Xena, why don't we try Talis' plan.

XENA (stunned):

What?

GABRIELLE:

Well, it *is* his profession...

XENA (shocked):

All right... (turns to Talis, through clenched teeth) What's your plan?

TALIS (importantly):

First, we have to find the pooch.

XENA:

Don't worry, we'll find it. Then what?

TALIS:

Well... (he takes off his pack and rummages in it) first we use one of these (shows a bone-shaped doggy biscuit) to lure the animal...

XENA:

A doggy biscuit. (smirks) We're talking about Cerberus. You know, the three-headed Hound of Tartarus?

GABRIELLE:

Well, Xena, it's still a dog. (to Talis) Maybe you should use *three* biscuits.

TALIS (nods):

Good idea. (shows a coil of rope) Then we use this to trap it... (Xena gives him a dubious look) And then, for especially unruly beasts...there's this.

Talis pulls out a small dart. Gabrielle gives him a puzzled look.

XENA:

Let me guess. This is supposed to put him to sleep.

TALIS (grins wickedly):

This baby has enough strength to knock out a horse. (Argo neighs and Talis gives her a nervous look.) Uh-I didn't mean that literally.

GABRIELLE (smiles encouragingly):

Sounds like a great plan.

XENA (annoyed):

Fine, we'll try it your way. (Quick pan to Gabrielle, who is smirking a bit, and then to Talis, who beams with pride.) But first, we have to find the dog.

TALIS:

Allow me! (He strides resolutely ahead of Xena and Gabrielle, then turns around) I'm a professional dogcatcher, you see. When it comes to tracking a dog, I'm your man.

He walks ahead, scrutinizing the tracks on the ground.

XENA (to Gabrielle, somewhat grouchy):

What was that?

GABRIELLE (confused):

What was what?

XENA:

You want to try to do it *his* way?

GABRIELLE:

Well, you're the one who wanted to bring him with us...

XENA (narrows her eyes at Gabrielle):

Wait. Are you trying to get back at me?

GABRIELLE:

What?

XENA:

I know what you can be like when you get mad.

[FLASHBACK]



[END OF FLASHBACK]

Gabrielle shakes her head as they continue to walk past a grove.

GABRIELLE:

Xena, you're the one who's being grumpy.

XENA:

Me?

She stops and whirls around to face Gabrielle, glaring at her.

GABRIELLE (sighing):

Well-- (her eyes widen suddenly and her mouth hangs open)

XENA:

Well what?

The camera pans around to show Gabrielle's point of view. Behind Xena's back, Cerberus can be seen peeking out from behind the trees of the grove, its three heads clearly visible. The dog is snarling, baring three full sets of teeth.

GABRIELLE (points):

Dog!

XENA (narrows her eyes):

Excuse me?

A growl is heard behind her. Realizing what's happening, she slowly turns her head and sees Cerberus. It is the size of a horse, with brownish gray fur and glowing eyes, wearing spiked leather collars around its three necks. One of its heads is growling; then the other two join in. Argo neighs nervously and backs up, as does Klio.

XENA:

I think we found the dog.

The camera pulls back for a wide shot of Cerberus advancing toward Xena and Gabrielle as we:

FADE OUT

ACT TWO

FADE IN

The same scene as before. Cerberus continues to advance towards Xena and Gabrielle.

XENA (to Cerberus, calmly):

All--right, easy boy.

Xena's hand slowly trails down towards her chakram.

Cerberus' three heads starts barking and snarling in a discordant chorus, baring their teeth.

GABRIELLE (whispering to Xena, standing very still):

What do we do now?

Xena stands very still. Cerberus comes up close and starts sniffing her. A gob of slobber falls down from the middle head's mouth on Xena's boot.

XENA (whispers back, trying not to move):
Just stay calm. We've been in worse situations.

GABRIELLE (sounds dubious):
Umm...yeah, I guess we have.

[FLASHBACK]



[END OF FLASHBACK]

Suddenly, as Cerberus is about to a snap at her, Xena grabs her chakram off her side and tosses it.

The chakram flies through the air, striking a nearby tree. The camera pulls back to show all three of Cerberus' heads darting towards the sound of the chakram. Then, his snarls turning to excited barks, he runs off chasing it.

XENA (chuckles):
Some monster.

GABRIELLE (with a nervous laugh):
I don't know, Xena. It still looked like it was about to bite your head off. (In the distance we hear the chakram strike against something.) Saved by the chakram...again.

[FLASHBACK]



[END OF FLASHBACK]

GABRIELLE:

Oh no--look!

The camera pans over to show Cerberus running and leaping after the chakram as it whizzes back toward Xena. Leaping in the air, the dog catches the chakram with the jaws of its right head. Close-up of Gabrielle as she gasps and of Xena as she glares.

Cerberus trots up to Xena, wagging its tail, and lays down the chakram at her feet. Then it looks up at her, wagging its tail even more vigorously, its tongues hanging out, drooling everywhere. Xena bends down slowly to pick up the chakram, covered in doggy slobber, and then stands up straight.

XENA (grins):

Like I said--not much of a monster...

GABRIELLE:

Now we just have to catch him. (looks around, exasperated) Where is that kid and his dart with the sleeping potion?

TALIS (off-camera):

Hey, I found him!

Cerberus turns one of his three heads and growls.

Talis can be seen running toward them. Then he stops in his tracks, looking terrified.

TALIS:

Uhhh...hold still...uhhhh....nice pooch... (he rummages frantically in his pack; then, to Xena) Uh-- could you, uh, distract it while I get the dart?

XENA (lifts an eyebrow):

Distract it, uh? I thought you were the professional.

TALIS:

I am....it's just that... (still rummaging) ...this is an--uh--unusual breed...

Xena clicks her tongue and makes as if to throw the chakram in a direction away from Talis. Cerberus yelps and takes off running but then realizes that the chakram hasn't been thrown and comes back toward Xena.

TALIS:

All right, I got it!

He puts the dart in a blowpipe, comes closer and blows the dart at Cerberus. The dart misses the dog and hits Klio, who gives a short alarmed neigh and starts to sag, then drops on her knees.

GABRIELLE (furious):

You!

She charges at Talis, who screams and starts running. Alarmed by the ruckus, Cerberus turns and runs off, disappearing into the grove.

TALIS (runs up to Xena, with Gabrielle in pursuit):

Help! Save me!

XENA (steps to stand in front of him):

Come on, Gabrielle. He meant well.

GABRIELLE:

He shot my horse!



XENA:

It's okay, she'll just take a nap. (shrugs) At least now we know that this thing really will knock out a horse...

GABRIELLE:

That's not funny, Xena!

XENA (mischievously):

Well, you did want to try his plan... (off Gabrielle's glare) Come on, we've still got a dog to catch. (To Talis) Next time, I shoot the dart.

CUT TO

Forest clearing. Xena is leaning against a tree. The camera follows up the tree to see Talis tying a large rope around a branch. The camera pulls around following the rope through many twists and turns around different branches and trees all leading down to a large noose in the rope lying on the ground in the forest pathway.

TALIS (explaining to Xena):

So you see, once the dog steps in the noose it will trigger a chain reaction, eventually causing the animal to be pulled up into the air.

Pan down to Xena, who raises an eyebrow looking at Talis' handiwork. She doesn't look too convinced.

TALIS:

And that's when you shoot it with the dart...

He makes a gesture to indicate blowing into a pipe, only to lose balance and fall off the tree. He gets up and shakes himself off as Xena gives him a wry look.

The camera pans back to show Gabrielle coming into the clearing.

GABRIELLE:

It's headed this way.

XENA:

How's Klio?

GABRIELLE (glares at Talis):

Still sleeping it off... All right--are we ready?

TALIS:

Yeah. And now for your part... (Grinning, he reaches into his pocket and pulls out a large dog biscuit, which he hands to Gabrielle.) You lead the pooch into the trap.

GABRIELLE:

Wait a minute--

XENA (sarcastic):

Gabrielle, it's *his* plan.

Gabrielle gives her a smirk that may be mock exasperation or a genuine "Oh, you're going to get it!"

Xena smirks back at her, then turns around and begins running up the side of a tree Amazon style. She flips up to the top and settles herself between some branches.

TALIS (looks up in amazement):

How did you do that?

XENA:

Didn't you know? I have many skills.

[FLASHBACK]



[END OF FLASHBACK]

Gabrielle, waits in the pathway, biscuit in her hand.

GABRIELLE (to herself, sarcastic):

Gabrielle put into a position to be saved. Now there's something you don't see every day.

[FLASHBACK]



[END OF FLASHBACK]

The camera pans up to show Xena and Talis nestled in the tree safe above. The camera pulls back on Gabrielle.

GABRIELLE (muttering to herself):

Why do I feel like I'm the bait and not the biscuit...

[FLASHBACK]

From "A Necessary Evil"



CALLISTO:

Now--do we stake Gabrielle out like the sacrificial lamb she is--or are we to trust that she won't be running?

GABRIELLE:

I'm not going anywhere, Callisto. Like Xena said, it ends here.

[END OF FLASHBACK]

Gabrielle stands in the path as the camera pulls around to show Cerberus entering the pathway, all three heads sniffing on the ground until it's head darts up to Gabrielle--and the biscuit!

GABRIELLE (calmly):

Hey buddy... (taking a step back while extending her hand out to show the biscuit) You want this?

Cerberus takes a step forward, his three tongues sticking out. Gabrielle smiles as she continues to bait him.

GABRIELLE (smiling):

Come on, you can have it.

Cerberus takes another step forward and we see that the noose is just a few yards in front of him.

The camera pulls up to show Talis and Xena as they watch as Cerberus slowly gets closer. We zoom into Cerberus' foot as it lifts up and hovers over the noose.

Gabrielle looks a little worried as she sees all three of the heads dart to the side towards a cluster of bushes.

Suddenly from the bushes a rabbit jumps out and runs across the path in front of Cerberus. In an instant Cerberus takes off after the rabbit, missing the noose on the ground.

Xena leaps down and lands behind Cerberus as he takes off after the rabbit. Xena blows the dart at Cerberus and it hits him in the behind. He continues to run. Xena stares after him, perplexed, and Xena gives a long sigh as the barking is heard in the distance. From the trees above Talis "falls" down.

TALIS (sighing):

Well, that didn't quite work out the way I wanted it to...

GABRIELLE:

I don't have very good luck with rabbits...

[FLASHBACK]



[END OF FLASHBACK]

TALIS (to Xena):
You missed!

GABRIELLE:
Xena never misses.

[FLASHBACK]

Scenes from "Been There, Done That" with Xena lining up the whole course with her chakram.



[END OF FLASHBACK]

XENA:
I didn't miss. That dart didn't do a thing to him. (realization dawns on her) Of course--this isn't just any dog! He belongs to the gods. He's immortal. You can't knock him out with an ordinary sleeping potion.

TALIS (deflated):
Of course.

XENA:

We'll just have to go with a different plan. (patting him on the back) It was a good effort, though.

TALIS (incredibly flattered):

Wow--thanks!

Xena rolls her eyes as Talis stumbles away behind her.

XENA:

I'm going to see where Cerberus went.

In the background behind them we see that Talis accidentally walked into the noose, causing him to fling up in the air.

GABRIELLE:

Okay. What's the plan after that?

In the background Talis hangs upside down, swinging from side to side.

XENA:

I'm not sure yet.

She starts walking away.

GABRIELLE (shouting to her):

You're kidding me, right? You always have a plan!

She shakes her head and walks toward the hanging Talis.

TALIS (still upside down):

Hey. Have you ever thought of settling down?

GABRIELLE (laughs):

With you?

TALIS:

Nah. I mean, once Xena and I have hooked up, I don't think she's going to have too much time for you anymore.

GABRIELLE (laughs):

Riiiiight...

Still laughing, she starts to walk away.

TALIS (shouting to her):

Uh...wait... (fumbling for her name) ...you! You think you could let me down?

[FLASHBACK]

Scene from "Intimate Stranger"



Joxer hanging upside down on a rope, Xena standing in front of him.

JOXER:

Great! Well, you think you could cut me down without dropping me flat on my face.

XENA (cutting the rope causing him to drop flat on his face):

No.

[END OF FLASHBACK]

Gabrielle walks back to Talis with one of her sais in her hand.

GABRIELLE (smiling):

Of course I could.

Gabrielle swings the sais across the rope, causing Talis to fall flat on his face.

TALIS (getting up):

Thanks.

GABRIELLE:

No problem.

CUT TO

A riverbank. Xena is taking off her armor; Gabrielle comes up, leading Klio who is still a bit wobbly. Argo stands nearby.

GABRIELLE:

What are you doing?

XENA (puts her chakram down on top of her armor):

The tracks end here--I think he swam to the other side. I'm going to try and track him down. (nods toward Klio) How's the horse?

GABRIELLE:

Seems like it's worn off.

XENA:

Good. (she takes off her boots and wades into the water, wearing only her tunic) Wait for me here. We may not be able to catch him yet, but I want to make sure we've got him some place where he can do no harm.

GABRIELLE (grinning):

Are you talking about Cerberus or Talis?

XENA (grins back at her):

Both.

She jumps into the water and swims toward the other side. Just then, Talis comes up.

TALIS (looking around):

Where's Xena?

GABRIELLE (brushing Klio):

Tracking Cerberus to the other side of the river. She'll be back.

Talis nods and the camera pans down to show Talis has picked a handful of wild daisies.

TALIS:

Good. I picked these for her. Think she'll like them?

GABRIELLE:

Well, she...to tell you the truth, Xena isn't really a flowers kind of person.

TALIS (crushed):

Oh. You mean, she's never liked flowers...at all?

Gabrielle thinks a minute.

[FLASHBACK]

Scene from "Animal Attraction"



[END OF FLASHBACK]

GABRIELLE:

Uh... (shakes her head) ...not really.

Talis gives out a sad sigh. All of a sudden his eyes light up and he takes off towards the stump, dropping the flowers and picking up the chakram.

TALIS (grins):

Well, then--maybe I could polish her chakram for her.

The camera pulls back as Gabrielle drops the brush and rushes towards Talis, taking the chakram away.

GABRIELLE:

Xena doesn't like people touching her chakram.

[FLASHBACK]



[END OF FLASHBACK]

Gabrielle carefully sets the chakram back down.

TALIS:

Wow...it's an amazing weapon. I heard only Xena herself can wield it.

GABRIELLE (slightly miffed):

Well, actually...you're wrong. I can use it too.

TALIS (amazed):

Really? I bet it took a lot of practice.

GABRIELLE:

Yeah--you could say that...

[FLASHBACK]

From "King of Assassins":



[END OF FLASHBACK]

TALIS:

And you can actually make it return to you?

GABRIELLE:

Yeah.

TALIS:

I don't believe you. I bet only Xena can do that.

GABRIELLE (picks up the chakram):

All right--watch!

Gabrielle, pulling her arm back, lets go of the chakram, letting it fly through the air. The camera follows as it strikes one...two...three trees before it makes its way back to her.

Extending her hand, Gabrielle catches the chakram by the handle.

XENA (off-screen):

Gabrielle...

The camera pans around to show Xena coming out of the river, looking obviously displeased.

XENA:

What was *that*?

Gabrielle turns around to face Xena, caught in the act.

GABRIELLE (smiling sheepishly):

Well--see--Talis--

TALIS (piping in):

I told her not to do that!

Gabrielle turns her head giving Talis a "what?!" look. Xena raises an eyebrow as she walks up to Gabrielle and extends her hand. Gabrielle hands that chakram back to Xena.

XENA (smiles wryly):

Now that's a good girl.

She puts the chakram down with her other weapons, then shakes herself off, spraying a startled-looking Talis with water.

GABRIELLE:

Well?

XENA:

I tracked him to a cave on the other side of the river. He's asleep.

TALIS (excited):

Hey, the potion worked! (grins broadly) See--I told you!

XENA (shrugs):

A little too late. But at least it will keep him away from other villages.

TALIS (comes up to Xena, nervously):

Xena? I picked these (holding out the flowers) for you.

XENA (slightly at a loss for words):

Uh--thanks. That's nice.

TALIS (giggles):

See, I knew you'd like them.

He thrusts the flowers at Xena but she turns around and starts putting on her armor, leaving Talis to stand with his hand outstretched still holding the flowers.

TALIS (deflated):

Um...I'll go get some of my stuff (pointing towards his supplies) over there.

As he walks off, Gabrielle comes up to help buckle Xena's armor. She shakes her head and smiles.

GABRIELLE:

You know, he's starting to remind me of Hower.

[FLASHBACK]



[END OF FLASHBACK]

Xena glances over at Talis, who is picking up his bag and casting furtive glances at Xena.

XENA (raises an eyebrow):
Hower? This guy makes Hower look like...

GABRIELLE (chimes in):
Marc Antony?

[FLASHBACK]



[END OF FLASHBACK]

XENA (picks up her sword and chakram):
All right--we'd better get going.

GABRIELLE:
Where to? You still haven't told me what the plan is.

Xena looks at Gabrielle.

[FLASHBACK]



From "You Are There":

GABRIELLE:
So, what's the plan?

XENA:
I'm going after Odin.

GABRIELLE:
Well, there's gotta be more to it than that.

XENA:

Why do you do that?

GABRIELLE:

Do what?

XENA:

Ask me to spell out the plan! You'd think after all these years, you could maybe join the dots yourself.

GABRIELLE:

Well, why do I have to drag it out of you?! You know, I wish I knew the pinch. I would force you to share your "little plan" with me.

[END OF FLASHBACK]

XENA (smiles):

I'm going to pay a visit to an old friend.

Gabrielle gives her a quizzical look as we:

FADE OUT

ACT THREE

FADE IN

The same scene.

GABRIELLE:

An old friend...let's see. (She smirks a little) Ares?

XENA (shakes her head):

Close... (gives the chakram a spin) ...but no hit.

GABRIELLE (thinks):

Another god, huh? (suspiciously) Did you say a *friend*?

XENA (shrugs):

Well--we have a history.

[FLASHBACK]

Scene from "Looking Death in the Eye":



A cave entrance comes to view.

Xena enters; Hephaestus is working at his forge.

XENA:

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

HEPHAESTUS:

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

XENA:

No, that's a perversion--not a hobby.

Hephaestus yells and starts to fight Xena. He throws her against a rock; she is battered and bleeding. Celesta appears.

XENA (voice-over):

Well...admittedly, last time I paid him a visit, it wasn't exactly a friendly chat.

Hephaestus is about to deliver the killing blow to Xena when Gabrielle stops him.

GABRIELLE:

Xena! His chains!

They fight and Gabrielle gets hold of Hephaestus' chains and throws them to Xena.

XENA (yells as she binds Celesta with the chains):

The chains of Hephaestus hold even the gods.

Gabrielle is still fighting Hephaestus. He is about to kill her but Xena charges him and pushes him into a pit; he goes over a cliff, screaming.

[END OF FLASHBACK]

GABRIELLE (skeptical):

Right... Want me to come with you?

XENA:

Nah, you'd better stay and keep an eye on the monster.

GABRIELLE (glances over at Talis):

Which one? (Xena chuckles.) Do you have to leave me with *him*? I swear--if I hear any more of this "Xena this, Xena that," I'm going to-- (makes an angry face)

XENA (grins a little):

Come on, Gabrielle--it can't be *that* bad.

GABRIELLE:

Right. Just another man head over heels in love with the Warrior Princess.

XENA (smiles):

Come on Gabrielle, it's not like you haven't had your fair share of admirers.

[FLASHBACK]



[END OF FLASHBACK]

GABRIELLE (smiles a little):

Well, at least I didn't leave you to babysit them!

XENA (grins):

Good point.

As she speaks, she walks over to Argo, jumps in the saddle and starts to ride off, then glances at Gabrielle.

XENA:

Read him a couple of your scrolls!

GABRIELLE (looks after her, thoughtfully):

Now there's an idea...

CUT TO

The entrance in Hephaestus' cave--the one seen in the "Looking Death In the Eye" flashback. Xena comes up.

CUT TO

Inside the cave, illuminated by a red glow from Hephaestus' forge. In the corner, Hephaestus is pounding the metal of a finely crafted sword. As the camera moves closer, we see that this is not the Hephaestus from the flashback--the one with dreadlocks--but the other one with the scarred face (from "Motherhood"). This makes us wonder if The Powers That Be are trying to mess with our minds by switching the actor every other episode, or if the other actor was just unavailable.

XENA (off screen):

Hephaestus. Hope you don't mind me stopping by.

Hephaestus' head darts up as the camera pulls around to show Xena in the entryway. He stops pounding.

HEPHAESTUS (not very pleased):

Xena. To what do I owe the--surprise?

He holds up his hammer in a defensive move.

XENA:

I need a favor.



HEPHAESTUS (laughs):

A favor? In return for what, an axe in the chest?

[FLASHBACK]

Scene from "Motherhood":



[END OF FLASHBACK]

XENA (hands on her hips):

Well, if I remember right, I also saved you and the rest of your family from the depths of hell.

[FLASHBACK]

From "The Dirty Half Dozen":



[END OF FLASHBACK]

HEPHAESTUS (sighs):

All right then--what do you want?

XENA:

How about some chains? (off Hephaestus' look of mock shock) This is business, Hephaestus. *Gods'* business. Hades' dog, Cerberus, is on the loose and we have to catch him. He's no ordinary dog--only chains meant for the gods can hold him.

HEPHAESTUS:

Why didn't you say so in the first place?

He puts down his hammer on the table, then walks to the corner and gets a cluster of large thick chains off a rack. They dematerialize in his hand, then rematerialize in front of Xena.

XENA:

Thanks.

She picks up the chains and slings them over her shoulder, then turns to go.

HEPHAESTUS:

Wait, wait, wait. (A piece of parchment materializes in his hand.) They're due back tomorrow before sundown. And you have to sign a rental slip.

XENA (raises her eyebrow):

A rental slip?

HEPHAESTUS:

New regulations. We've got to keep an eye on these things--we're still missing the ones you grabbed last time.

XENA:

Don't tell me there's a late charge. (looks down at the chains) These can hold Cerberus, right?

HEPHAESTUS (scoffs):

Cerberus? Those chains could hold Ares himself.

Xena stares at him thoughtfully, weighing the chains in her hand.

[FLASHBACK]

From "Motherhood":



[END OF FLASHBACK]

The camera pulls in on Xena, lost in reflection for a moment. Then she shakes herself slightly, obviously snapping out of it. Hephaestus looks at her curiously.

XENA (with a wry half-grin):

Ares? That won't be necessary.

Hephaestus hands her a quill, she signs the parchment and heads toward the cave exit.

CUT TO

Forest clearing. Gabrielle is sitting on a small log, reading from a scroll, while Talis is walking back and forth behind her. Klio is grazing in the background.

GABRIELLE (reads):

And when we left Ares on the farm, Xena realized something really important...

[FLASHBACK]

From "Old Ares Had a Farm":

Xena and Gabrielle ride through the fields.



XENA:

You can't look for peace in the world around you. You've gotta find it in your own heart. I was happier when I was a kid here 'cause I was loved and I felt like I belonged. I was lucky then and I'm lucky now.

GABRIELLE:

Me, too.

[END OF FLASHBACK]

GABRIELLE (puts down the scroll):

That's it.

TALIS:

That was good. (with a goofy grin) So Xena dressed up as a country girl, huh? I bet she looked gorgeous!

GABRIELLE (rolls her eyes):

Um...yeah.

TALIS:

I bet she looks good in anything. Probably never had a bad-looking day in her whole life, huh?

Gabrielle thinks for a moment.

[FLASHBACK]



[END OF FLASHBACK]

GABRIELLE (makes a face):
We-ell...

TALIS (not listening):
Say--does she have a boyfriend?

GABRIELLE (nods uncomfortably):
You--might say that.

[FLASHBACK]





[END OF FLASHBACK]

TALIS (cocky):

I bet he's no match for me.

GABRIELLE (stares at him, exasperated):

Right... How about if we read one more scroll?

She picks up a saddlebag and starts to rummage in it. A scroll falls out and rolls toward Talis; he picks it up and unrolls it.

TALIS (starts reading with an effort):

And then--with nob-le indig-ni-ty...

GABRIELLE (corrects him):

Indignation. What have you got there, anyway?

TALIS (continues to read):

Xena said, "I don't think--"

[FLASHBACK]

From "Soul Possession".



[END OF FLASHBACK]

GABRIELLE (laughs):

Oh, that... That's not my scroll. (Shakes her head) Joxer wrote it...

[FLASHBACK]



[END OF FLASHBACK]

GABRIELLE (sighs as she rolls up the scroll):

That's not how it happened at all. (puts the scroll away) Here, let's try this one. (through her teeth) I hope Xena gets here soon...

CUT TO

Xena rides through the forest, the chains of Hephaestus slung over her saddle. Suddenly she slows down Argo and listens attentively. A growl and then a bark is heard faintly in the distance as we:

FADE OUT

ACT FOUR

FADE IN

[FLASHBACK]

Various clips from "Eternal Bonds".



[END OF FLASHBACK]

We fade back into the forest clearing. Gabrielle is still sitting and reading to Talis while he has a scroll in her hand while Talis listens to her.

GABRIELLE (reading):

"It doesn't matter where we take a stand," Xena said, "as long as we take one." And with that our heroes walked off into the sunset--having won the battle that day, but facing the real war that was ahead of them.

Gabrielle smiles and carefully rolls up the scroll.

TALIS:

Well, that sounded like a good adventure. (pan to Gabrielle who smiles at the compliment) Too bad the writing was so cheesy.

GABRIELLE (smile quickly fading):

Excuse me?

TALIS:

Well--take the battle scene. I mean--three armies, and it sounded like all those warriors were just taking turns coming at you and you were fighting them off one or two at a time. That didn't make any sense.

GABRIELLE (looks at him sheepishly):

Well...

[FLASHBACK]

From "The Quill Is Mightier".



[END OF FLASHBACK]

Gabrielle rolls her eyes as she gets up from the log.

TALIS (generously):

Oh, that's all right. That must have been one of your early scrolls.

GABRIELLE (irritated):

Not exactly. You try and write a masterpiece with a bunch of paranoid gods and priests on your heels!

Talis is not listening--he stares past her, his face dissolving into a beatific smile.

GABRIELLE (snaps):

What?

TALIS (with adoration):

Xena!

Gabrielle turns to see Xena ride up.

GABRIELLE:

Xena! (through clenched teeth) It's about time.

XENA (businesslike):

I know, we haven't got any time to waste.

She dismounts briskly.

GABRIELLE:

That's right--I'm about to murder our new pal.

XENA (not listening):

I think Cerberus is awake and running loose. (Yanks the chains off Argo's saddle) Come on, we've got a dog to catch.

Gabrielle turns and heads towards Klio to put the scroll in her saddlebag. As she stuffs the scrolls in the saddlebag, she mutters, obviously ticked off.

GABRIELLE (to herself):

Cheesy! Hah! He wouldn't know a good story if it came up and bit him on the--

CUT TO



A close-up of Cerberus, snapping the jaws of one of his three heads and barking.

The camera pulls back to show all three of the monster's heads barking furiously, and then further back, we see a horse-drawn cart, filled with some sort of goods, on a road that cuts through the forest. Cerberus, who is slightly bigger than the horse, stands on the side of the road slightly behind the cart, all three sets of teeth bared in a snarl. A terrified-looking man in a gray shirt and a blue cap is sitting on the front of the cart, holding the reins.

MAN (screams towards Cerberus):

Bad dog! Bad dog! Get out of here! Go!

Cerberus snarls.

MAN (terrified):

Uh...I mean nice dog...nice dog!



Cerberus starts barking furiously and moves toward the wagon. The horse bolts in fright as Cerberus takes off in pursuit. As the horse races, packages and rolled-up scrolls spill from the cart. Cerberus nips at the back of the cart.

Suddenly off camera a war cry pierces the air.

XENA (off-screen):
ALALALALALALA - SHEEYA!

The camera pulls in to show Xena riding in on Argo. When she gets close to Cerberus she flips off her horse, landing right in front of Cerberus and between him and the cart.

XENA (pulling out her chakram, to Cerberus):
Hold it there, buddy.

When Cerberus sees the chakram, it stops barking and gapes at Xena, all three tongues hanging out.

XENA (holding up chakram):
Yeah, you want it, don't you?

Xena pulls back and makes as if to throw the chakram, but hangs on to it. Cerberus takes off running in the direction he thought it went, then pauses and looks back to see that Xena still has the chakram. Xena grins mischievously, obviously enjoying the game.

Cerberus runs back towards Xena. This time she throws the chakram and Cerberus chases after it.

The camera pans back to Xena, who goes up to the man as he stops his horse and jumps down to pick up his cargo.

XENA:
You all right?

The man nods, obviously somewhat in shock, adjusting his cap.

MAN (shakes his head):
Lady, I've been carrying the mail for fifteen years...I've had my share of being chased and bitten by dogs. But *never* have I come across anything like--*that!*

With a shaky hand, he points to Cerberus, who is running and hopping trying to catch the chakram. We see the chakram strike a tree and split in two, causing Cerberus to start spinning in confusion. The camera then pans back to Xena who is helping the mailman load the scrolls and packages back in the cart.

XENA:

You'd better get out of here before it comes back.

MAILMAN (hurriedly):

Thanks!

He gets on the cart, grabs the reins and rides off.

Xena smiles and hops back on Argo as the chakram flies back towards her.

XENA (catching the chakram, shouting to Cerberus):

Come and get it!

Xena rides fast down the path back into the forest and Cerberus takes after her, barking.

Xena glances back to see Cerberus gaining on her.

XENA (kicking the stirrups):

Yah!

CUT TO

A forest clearing. Xena rides on through the clearing.

XENA (shouting):

Get ready, Gabrielle!

With Argo still riding fast Xena moves her feet up, and pushing forward, flips off her horse grabbing onto a hanging branch.

Xena swings and flips up, then lands on the branch she was swinging from. Looking down, she can hear Cerberus' barks coming closer.

The camera pulls up to show one of the chains of Hephaestus hanging above her. It's been wrapped around a tree branch kind of like a rolled-up hose.

Reaching up, she grabs onto the end of the chain and pauses for a second. As Cerberus comes near, she jumps off the branch towards the ground. We watch as the chain begins to unwrap rapidly.

The camera pulls down as Cerberus comes running. Xena flies down from the tree (with the chain still in her hand) and lands on Cerberus's back.

Holding onto his back she climbs towards its heads. Cerberus stops, snarling, and tries to shake her off.

Xena, pulling the chain tight, clips the end onto the back of one of Cerberus' spiked collars. The camera pulls up to show the other end of the chain tightly wrapped around the tree branch.

Xena flips off Cerberus as the dog struggles to break from the chain. As Cerberus growls and pulls at the chain, the camera pulls up to show the branch groaning and starting to creak.

XENA (yells):
Gabrielle, *now!*

The camera pans to Gabrielle and Talis behind the tree; Gabrielle is holding the end of another chain fastened to the tree trunk.

TALIS:
Leave it to the professionals!

He grabs the chain from Gabrielle and races toward the struggling Cerberus, aiming to fasten the chain on another one of its collars. He swipes the end of the chain at the collar; just then the dog turns with a growl and knocks him aside.

TALIS (shouting):
Whooooaaa!

He is knocked against a tree and falls to the ground unconscious.

The chain slips off to the ground. As Cerberus continues to struggle, the branch to which the first chain is attached creaks again and we see that it is starting to break. Pan down to Gabrielle, who comes running and picks up the end of the chain.

The branch breaks. Just as Cerberus is about to run loose, Gabrielle jumps forward and lands on the dog's back, managing to attach the end of the chain to another spiked collar. As Cerberus growls and struggles, she jumps off awkwardly and lands on her behind.

Xena walks up to Gabrielle and helps her up.

XENA (nods toward Cerberus, smiling):
Looks like he's not going anywhere for a while. Good job.

GABRIELLE (rubs her behind):
Next time I'll leave the jumping to you.

Talis stirs and lifts his head. The camera pulls back to show Xena, Gabrielle and the still-struggling Cerberus from his point of view. A flash of purple light is seen behind Xena and Gabrielle. It solidifies into a woman with long black hair, wearing a sleek dark blue dress and a little too much jewelry.

WOMAN (sounding rather like Fran from The Nanny, with similar mannerisms):
Oh good, you got the dog.

Talis groans and faints again.

XENA:
Persephone?

PERSEPHONE (extending her hand to Xena; she has long nails painted scarlet):

That's right. Persephone, Goddess of the Underworld. Hades wanted me to pick up the pooch. (walking up to Cerberus) Hope he wasn't too much trouble.

She starts scratching Cerberus's left head behind the ears. Cerberus growls contentedly and lies down.

XENA (sarcastic):

No trouble at all.

GABRIELLE (grins, wrinkling her nose):

Just a cute little doggy.

With the snap of her finger, Persephone causes the chains to snap off and then dematerializes Cerberus.

GABRIELLE (whispering to Xena):

You'd think she could have done that without having us catch him...

XENA (sighing):

Gods.

PERSEPHONE (to Xena and Gabrielle):

Well, thanks a lot. I'll be going now. (She starts to glow again, obviously about to vanish.)

XENA:

Now, wait just a minute. (Persephone stops glowing and turns to her) I think a little compensation is in order.

Gabrielle shoots her a surprised look.

PERSEPHONE (lifts an eyebrow):

Compensation? I thought you didn't charge. You know, like a hobby or something.

XENA:

Catching three-headed dogs? Some hobby. Nah, the money's not for me--it's to rebuild the village that got trashed by your pet.

PERSEPHONE (thinks a moment):

Well, I suppose it won't break our budget.

A purse materializes in her hand; she gives it to Xena.

XENA (looks inside):

That should cover it. Thanks.

PERSEPHONE (nodding):

Well I would love to stay and chat, but it's my day to be with mom. And if I'm not back in a little bit, all of Greece will be frozen over by the end of the day, if you know what I mean.

Persephone laughs (the irritating Fran laugh) as she dematerializes.

XENA:

Well, that's that. (looks around) Where's our dogcatcher?

GABRIELLE (looks around):

Oh, there he is.

The camera pulls around to show Talis slowly getting up and shaking his head.

TALIS (holding his head):

Ow. (looks up at Xena and Gabrielle, grinning) Hey--we did it!

The two women exchange an amused look.

CUT TO

The same village as before, at sunset. The village bustles with activity as people are still cleaning up the debris. The camera zooms in on a crowd in the village square, which is listening raptly to Talis. Xena and Gabrielle stand nearby listening.

TALIS (proudly):

...but before the beast knocked me out, I was able to fasten the chain on its collar and keep it from getting loose again!

The villagers cheer. Xena and Gabrielle exchange an amused glance.

GABRIELLE (quietly to Xena):

No harm in letting him believe that...

The old woman, Talis' mother, approaches them glowing with pride.

OLD WOMAN (to Xena and Gabrielle):

See, I knew you wouldn't regret taking him along!

Gabrielle nods, smiling but obviously making an effort to keep from showing her irritation.

As the crowd starts to dissipate, a middle-aged man comes up to Xena.

MIDDLE-AGED MAN:

The money you gave us should be enough to rebuild the village--we'll even have some left! Thank you.

XENA:

Good luck.

As the man walks away, Talis comes up to Xena.

TALIS:

I've got to tell you, Xena, I really enjoyed traveling with you and being a hero. (Xena gives him a suspicious look) I'd love to come along with you. (Quick pan to Gabrielle mouthing a horrified "no.") But I think my calling is to stay here and help rebuild my village. (sighs) So I guess it's the end.

XENA (jovially, slapping him on the shoulder):
I guess we're just--moving in different directions.

TALIS (nods solemnly):
That's right. (cheering up a bit) But maybe we'll meet again, my Warrior Princess. Good-bye!

CUT TO

Xena and Gabrielle riding out of the village.

GABRIELLE (grins):
Parting is such sweet sorrow, huh?

XENA:
Well, you know what they say. Long-distance relationships never work.

GABRIELLE (teasing):
Oh, is that so?

Xena gets a thoughtful look on her face.

[FLASHBACK]

From "You Are There":



[END OF FLASHBACK]

XENA (with a dreamy smile):
Maybe sometimes....

The camera starts to pull away so that we see Xena and Gabrielle from the back, their voices starting to fade.

GABRIELLE (mischievously):

So you think there's hope for you and Talis after all?

XENA (shakes her head and laughs):

Right...

The camera pulls out to show a wide shot of Xena and Gabrielle riding off into the sunset as we:

FADE OUT

THE END

[We have finally learned the answer to the question posed in the annoying song which shares the title of this motion picture. The shades let the dog out.]