

SHIPPER SEASON NINE



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Logline

When Xena and Gabrielle return to Amazon Lands for Lykia's initiation they find that trouble is brewing between the Amazons and a group of villagers--a conflict that could mean war. Meanwhile, Lykia deals with becoming an Amazon, hoping that as one, she will be able to calm the rage within her soul.

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TEASER

FADE IN

ANNOUNCER (voice-over):

Previously on Xena...

From THE BONDS WE CHOOSE:

A group of bandits on horseback are looting and burning a village. They are led by a man on horseback wearing a helmet and a mask over his face. A young woman runs through the streets, calling out amidst the chaos.

LYKIA:

Darion!

CUT TO

From TURNABOUT:

Xena is talking with Haimon.

XENA (with an anguished look):

It was Nero who led the gang that raided Darion's village...

DISSOLVE TO

From THE BONDS WE CHOOSE:

Lykia pauses, catching sight of Darion. There is a long shot of a small boy witnessing the carnage going on around him. Lykia watches in terror as the masked leader runs his sword through an elderly woman right next to the boy.

LYKIA (with a shrill cry):

Darion!

The leader spins to see Lykia charging at him. Deftly he sidesteps her lunge and makes a grab for her arm, twisting it behind her back. Laughing, he backhands her across the face, picks her up and throws her over his shoulder.

XENA (voice-over):

It was Nero who kidnapped Darion's sister.

The leader reacts quickly, tossing Lykia across his saddle, then mounting his horse. He takes off at a wild pace with the other bandits close behind.

CUT TO

From JUDGMENT CALLS:

Agrippina, bloody from her stab wounds, kneels on the floor of her bedroom. Xena is beside her.

AGRIPPINA:

It's funny...the girl who did it...he gave her to me. (she coughs, blood trickling from her mouth) He got her in one of those raids they did...

CUT TO

From JUDGMENT CALLS:

Xena is looking down at Agrippina's dead body. Lykia is standing in front of her.

LYKIA (with sudden vehemence):

He took me from my village--killed my family... (points to Agrippina's body) She knew about it--and she thanked him!

CUT TO

From JUDGEMENT CALLS:

Later scene, inside the house. Lykia sees Darion.

LYKIA (whispers):

Darion?

DARION (shock giving way to joy):

Lykia--you're here!

He rushes toward her and wraps his arms tightly around her waist, hugging her. Lykia hugs him but the look on her face is still numb.

CUT TO

From PROMISED LAND:

Lykia is standing in front of Xena and Gabrielle.

LYKIA:

I don't belong in my village anymore.

Pan to Xena, who looks at her with grim understanding.

GABRIELLE:

Where else will you go?

LYKIA:

The Amazons. I-- (glances at Darion) --we could stay with them. Couldn't we?

Xena and Gabrielle exchange glances. The scene fades out.

Fade in. A forest. Behind the trees, the setting sun can be seen in the background. Xena and Gabrielle are walking along a forest path, leading their horses behind them.

GABRIELLE:

You know, I never thought Lykia would actually go through with this.



XENA:

The Amazon initiation? (softly) It'll be good for her. She needs someone like the Amazons to be there for her. She deserves a place she can call home... (her expression turns grim) ...after everything she's been through.

GABRIELLE:

So does Darion. (thoughtfully) I wonder--

They're interrupted by a loud crack from above and then a whooping war cry. Four Amazons fly down from the trees wearing masks like the ones in "Hooves and Harlots." They all surround Xena and Gabrielle with their swords drawn. Xena and Gabrielle stop, both raising their hands to show the Amazon peace sign. The Amazon in front of them unmask herself; she is a tall blonde woman with strong but soft features. She is wearing the clothing of a Northern Amazon. She gives Xena and Gabrielle a formal but welcoming smile.

GABRIELLE:

Hello, Tynne.



TYNNE:

Queen Eve sent me out to meet you. We'll escort you to the village.

CUT TO

Xena and Gabrielle walking with the Amazons through the forest.

TYNNE:

I'm glad you're here.

GABRIELLE:

You mean, for Lykia's initiation?

Tynne gives her an odd look, as if wanting to say something but hesitant.

XENA (noticing her concern):

What's going on?

TYNNE (shaking her head):

Well.... A bit of trouble. It might be best for you to talk to the Queen.

CUT TO

Xena and Gabrielle enter Eve's hut. Eve looks up as she sees them, her face expressing joy and some relief.

EVE (rises):

Mother--Gabrielle.

She approaches and hugs Xena, then Gabrielle.

EVE:

I was worried--

XENA (guardedly):

About what?

EVE:

That you wouldn't make it for Lykia's initiation, of course. It's tonight. (smiles) I'm really glad you're here.

Even though Eve seems happy, Xena can sense concern and so can Gabrielle.

XENA:

Is everything all right?

Eve slowly looks down and shakes her head.

EVE:

We've been having some...problems.

GABRIELLE (concerned):

Yeah, Tynne mentioned it. What's going on?

EVE (a bit uncomfortably):

Well, it's...a long story. Maybe I'll tell you after the--

She is interrupted by a knock on the door.

EVE (hastily):

Come in?

An Amazon enters.

AMAZON:

Queen Eve--Lykia wants to see you.

EVE (relieved):

Oh--send her in.

The Amazon steps out. Lykia comes in. She is wearing Amazon clothing. Xena looks at her, smiling but with obviously mixed feelings.

GABRIELLE:

Lykia... (looking over her) You look great!

LYKIA (a little timidly):

I was told you were here... What brings you to the village?

XENA:

We came for your initiation, of course.

LYKIA :

Really? That's...Darion will be glad to see you.

GABRIELLE:

How is Darion?

LYKIA (a strange expression on her face):

Oh--he's fine. He's-- (She sighs) He gets so bored sometimes--not being allowed to join the other kids and all...

Close-up on Gabrielle as her face falls.



XENA (her face hard with suppressed anger):
What do you mean, not allowed to join the other kids?

EVE (glances at Xena):
Mother--this is an Amazon village...

Xena looks reproachfully at Eve.

EVE (awkwardly):
Mother...the only way I could get the council to allow Darion to live here was if he and Lykia stayed in a hut on the edge of the village. But I come over to see him all the time, and Klymene--

GABRIELLE (sighs and shakes her head):
You should have told us.

There is a brief uncomfortable silence.

EVE:
Look--why don't we talk about this later? (glances at Lykia) This is Lykia's special day--we don't want to spoil it.

GABRIELLE:
All right. (determined) But I want to see Darion--now.

CUT TO

A hut on the edge of the village. Darion is playing in the yard, running around with the toy dragon he got in Britannia and pretending to make it fly as he makes roaring noises. Suddenly he stops and turns, his face lighting up with joy. The camera pans to show Gabrielle coming up. Seeing Darion and meeting his eyes, she slows down, almost fearful. Darion stands frozen for a moment, then takes off running toward Gabrielle.

DARION (excited):
Gabrielle!

With a gasp, Gabrielle takes off running toward him. They hug fiercely, Darion's head pressed to Gabrielle's chest.

GABRIELLE (choking back a sob):
I've missed you, Darion.

DARION (emotional):

I'm so glad you're here... I didn't even know you were coming. (he looks up at her, hopeful) Are we going on another adventure?

Gabrielle pulls back and looks at him, her face expressing conflicting emotions--anxiety, love, and anguish--as we:

FADE OUT

ACT ONE

FADE IN

Inside the hut. Darion is showing Gabrielle around.

DARION (points to a wooden chest in the corner of a room):
And this is where I keep all my toys.

GABRIELLE (trying to hide her emotion):
It's a nice room. (pauses) Darion--have you been happy here?

DARION (putting on a brave face):
Great. (after a brief silence his expression turns sad) But I miss you. (after another pause) And Xena, and--Argo...and everybody. (after a pause) And Haimon.

GABRIELLE (pained):
Oh, Darion... (she strokes his hair)

DARION:
So can we go on an adventure?

GABRIELLE (with a forced smile):
We'll see. (after a pause, she sighs) I've missed you too.

There is a short and slightly tense silence.

DARION (trying to lighten the mood):
Hey, you came just in time for Lykia's... (he frowns, trying to remember the word)

GABRIELLE (smiles tensely):
Initiation.

DARION (shrugging):
Yeah...whatever. (with sudden vehemence) I think it's *stupid*, anyway.

Gabrielle gives him a long, concerned look.

CUT TO

Night. Amazon ceremonial hut--exterior view. The chanting can be heard coming from inside.

CUT TO

Inside the hut. Gabrielle, Eve, Cyane, and Lykia all stand in the center of the hut. Gabrielle is fastening the back of Lykia's brown leather top. Strands of beads and feathers are placed in Lykia's hair. Lykia is breathing hard and looks very nervous.

Eve is standing in front of her, with a small bowl containing a red ceremonial paint. Eve dips her fingers in it making a small swipe on her forehead through the middle of her eyebrows. She then makes two swipes on her cheeks under each eye. She smiles, seeing Lykia's nervousness.

Cyane then walks up to Lykia, with a delicately crafted Amazon sword in her hand. She is holding it horizontally by letting it rest on both of her hands.

CYANE:

Your sword, Lykia.

Lykia nods and grabs the handle of her sword tightly, her face reflecting in the blade.

The camera pans over to Gabrielle, who looks a little unsure about seeing Lykia with a weapon.

CUT TO

Amazon village square. The Amazons continue dancing as Lykia, Gabrielle, Cyane, and Eve all exit the ceremonial hut. Lykia has her sword strapped onto her back. Eve walks up to a large wooden podium, overlooking the area. She stands in front, watching as the ceremonial dancing continues around the fire. She holds up her hand for them to stop, which all of the Amazons do and bow down to their Queen.

EVE (hiding her smile, to the Amazons):

Amazons you may rise. (they all get up off the ground) We have all gathered here to celebrate the initiation of a new sister, Lykia!

The Amazons all cheer.



EVE (looking off to the side):
Lykia, you may step forward.

The camera pulls over as Gabrielle smiles and removes her hand from Lykia's shoulder. Lykia takes a deep breath and walks up the podium, kneeling before Eve. Eve smiles as Cyane walks up next to her holding a large bowl filled with water.

Eve cups the waters in her hands.

EVE (softly):

As children, Amazons are baptized to symbolize new birth within the tribe. (she lets the water run down Lykia's face) As an adult, your initiation symbolizes rebirth not only for the tribe, but for you as well. You will now be looked at forever more as a sister, and an Amazon. (shouting to the Amazons) Amazons, behold your new sister, LYKIA!

All of the Amazons cheer and begin chanting and dancing again. Antiope rushes up to the podium and pulls Lykia down forcing her to "dance." You can tell she is embarrassed, but she has a smile on her face the whole time.

The camera pulls over to Xena and Gabrielle, both of them smile.

DISSOLVE TO

Later. Some of the Amazons are still awake celebrating Lykia's initiation. The camera pulls over to Eve's hut.

DISSOLVE TO

The Queen's hut. Eve is sitting at a large table, browsing through scrolls sprawled out all over the table. She stops for a moment and looks up.

The camera pulls around to show Xena and Gabrielle entering the hut.

EVE:

I'm so glad you came. It means a lot for Lykia and Darion...and me.

Eve sighs.

XENA (concerned):

Eve, what's going on?

Eve sighs, and nods her head. She motions for Xena and Gabrielle to sit down.

EVE:

About a month ago, after I returned from Moesia, a group of farmers came and settled on our hunting lands. I went with a couple of the elders and talked to the farmers. (sighing) They had no intention of moving. All we asked was for them to move off our hunting lands, just a little further down. I've tried compromising with them but they don't want to have anything to do with us.

XENA (understanding the situation):

They want you to leave.



EVE (nodding):

Exactly. (angrily) These lands have been part of the Amazon tribe for years, and I'm not about to lose them... (frustrated) To make matters worse, they're clearing so much land that they've driven off most of the game. And what they haven't driven off they hunt for themselves. It's going to be a lean winter if we don't do something.

GABRIELLE (warily):

How are the other Amazons taking all this?

EVE (shaking her head):

They're angry. A few of them think we should attack the village and force them off our lands, Morai especially.

Xena looks to Gabrielle, not knowing who Morai is.

GABRIELLE (filling her in):

Morai lost her sister in the battle at Corinth against Sabina. She made things...difficult for me when I was Queen.

XENA:

Well let's hope that calmer heads will prevail. I'll go to the village in the morning and see if I can talk some sense into the farmers.

Eve nods.

EVE:

I hope you have better luck than I had. (standing up) After that I'll have to meet with the Amazon Council to discuss our next step.

XENA:

Well, then I'll just have to make them an offer they can't refuse.

Eve nods and smiles uncomfortably. It's obvious she's not convinced Xena will be able to deliver on her promise.

XENA (to Eve):

We'll see you in the morning.

Xena and Gabrielle exit.

EVE (sighing):

I hope this turns out okay...

CUT TO

Xena and Gabrielle's cabin. It is just before sunrise. Xena and Gabrielle are still asleep. A cry of distress is suddenly heard and both Xena and Gabrielle sit bolt upright. Another cry is heard.

GABRIELLE:

Darion!

Gabrielle flies out of bed and out of the room. Xena follows.

CUT TO

Darion's room. He is thrashing violently in his sleep. Gabrielle comes over to him and sits on the edge of the bed. Xena hangs back in the doorway. She reaches out to touch his shoulder.

GABRIELLE:

Darion? Hey--

DARION (swiping with his fists):

Raise the roof! Raise the--

Gabrielle pulls back, catching his wrists.

GABRIELLE:

Darion! Wake up. Come on. (She shakes him awake) Darion!

His eyes fly open and he glances around in confusion and terror. Slowly he focuses on Gabrielle.

DARION:

Gabrielle?

He falls into her arms and she holds him tightly. Gabrielle kisses the top of Darion's head and holds him a little tighter, almost uncomfortably tight.

GABRIELLE:

It's okay...it's okay.

Xena frowns and exchanges a worried look with Gabrielle.

CUT TO

Xena and Gabrielle's room. The sun has risen. Xena is seated on her cot, lacing up her gauntlet when Gabrielle shuffles in tiredly.

XENA:

How is he?

GABRIELLE:

I got him back to sleep. (she frowns) He's having nightmares again. I thought once Domitius was... (she shakes her head as if to shake off a memory) I knew something was bothering him but I...

XENA:

I'll go talk to the settlers. You should stay here with Darion and make sure he's okay.

GABRIELLE (sighs in appreciation):

Thank you.

Xena nods and smiles thinly, obviously more concerned about Darion than she is admitting to.

CUT TO

A small village that looks like it's still under construction. Villagers are busy helping carry large pieces of wood and raising barns. There seem to be a good fifty villagers.

The camera pulls around as Xena walks out of the forest and into the village. She scans the area, noticing the chopped down trees and now barren lands. She walks into the village, getting curious looks by many of the other villagers.

An old man walks by her, pulling a cart.

XENA:

Excuse me. Where can I find your village leader?

OLD MAN (suspiciously):

Who wants to know?

XENA:

I've got some business with him.

OLD MAN (sizes her up and sneers):

What are you? One of those Amazons? If so, then you're wasting your time. We're not going anywhere.

XENA:

Thanks for the warning. But if it's all the same to you, I'd rather talk to someone in charge.

MAN (off-screen):

That would be me. I'm Teras.

The camera pulls around to show a man, Teras. He is a tall blond man in his mid-thirties, in regular villager clothes but very neat, well-groomed and clean-shaven.

XENA:

Teras. I'm here to try to work out the problem between you and the Amazons.

TERAS (laughs):

There's nothing to work out. We aren't going anywhere. (forcefully) So unless you're here to tell me that you and your tribe are leaving, I want you out of my village.

XENA (angrily):

These are their lands!

TERAS (smirking):

By whose decree? The Amazons are little more than squatters. Officially, this was all unclaimed land until King Melodic came along.

The villagers all around them nod and mutter in agreement.

XENA (becoming frustrated):

Look, all they're asking is that you move off their hunting lands, if you go a little further down the river--

TERAS (puzzled):

You speak of them as "they." Are you not an Amazon?

XENA:

No. I'm a friend.

TERAS (looking her over):

You don't look like any of the women around here. Who are you?

XENA:

The name is Xena.

Gasps are heard among the villagers, and Teras looks nervous, clearly regretting his earlier cocky stance. Then he clears his throat, stands up straight and tries to appear confident.

TERAS (impressed):

The Warrior Princess. Of course. I've heard all about you. You fight for the common people--for the Greater Good. Well, let me ask you something, Xena. Should a barbaric tribe of warrior women be allowed to stand in the way of progress? All the Amazons do with this land is hunt on it and pick it clean. We're cultivating it. So who's really serving the greater good?

The camera zooms in on Xena's expression; she seems taken aback for a moment.

TERAS (quietly):

We don't want to hurt anyone or to cause trouble. We just came out here to make an honest living. As will countless others...



XENA (shocked):

Others?

Teras pulls out a scroll from under his belt and hands it to Xena. She unravels it.

TERAS:

This village is only the beginning. King Melodic of Ascania has ordered the creation of several more throughout these lands.

Xena looks over the scroll, her eyes widening as she realizes the situation at hand.

TERAS:

I'm sorry, Xena. The king doesn't have anything against the Amazons, but if they resist he's prepared to send an army here to protect us.

XENA:

You mean--to crush the Amazons.

TERAS (defensively):

They're free to go elsewhere, or to stay and cooperate. No one wants to destroy them--

XENA (angrily):

No, just their way of life.

CUT TO

A riverbank in the woods. Darion is wading in the water, bending down to watch and listen for fish, Xena-style. Lykia and Gabrielle are sitting on the bank watching him. The camera zooms in them.



LYKIA:

I can never thank you enough for what you did. Being there for Darion--

GABRIELLE (shaking her head, softly):

Lykia, you don't owe me any thanks. Darion is like my own...

Lykia glances at her and Gabrielle trails off into an awkward silence, then finally speaks.

GABRIELLE:

He's having nightmares again.

LYKIA (nods):

I know...



GABRIELLE:

They're bad--as bad as they were before.

LYKIA:

He's young. Children have nightmares--

GABRIELLE:

Not like this. (she pauses) It's all the violence.

LYKIA:

He's seen a lot. But I've really been practicing my fighting. He won't ever have to be scared again. (a cocky, almost challenging smirk) I bet I'd even be a match for you.

DARION (yells off-screen):
I got one!

Quick pan to Darion as he throws a fish toward Gabrielle and Lykia.

LYKIA (wonderingly):
He's really good at this... (glances at Gabrielle) Did you teach him?

GABRIELLE (smiles):
No, he picked it up from Xena...better than I did. He's a quick learner.

They watch Darion as he returns to fishing. Gabrielle turns thoughtfully to Lykia as the camera zooms in on them.

GABRIELLE:
Lykia, do you really think being a warrior is the right path for you?

LYKIA (after a brief pause):
I'm an Amazon now...Amazons are warriors.

GABRIELLE (shaking her head):
You're also all Darion has left. I think that's a little more important than--

LYKIA:
I agree. (her fist clenches unconsciously) I'm not about to let anything happen to him. I'll do anything I have to protect him.

GABRIELLE (softly):
And that might end up hurting Darion most of all.

Close-up on Gabrielle, looking worried, as we:

FADE OUT

ACT TWO

FADE IN

Eve is in her hut, sitting at a desk and looking worriedly over some scrolls. Xena comes in and Eve looks up.

EVE (surprised):
Mother. You're back sooner than I expected. How did--?

She trails off at the look on Xena's face.

XENA (shaking her head):
Not good.

Xena hands Eve the scroll. Eve looks confused and unravels the scroll reading it over. She looks up in shock.

EVE:

They're forcing us off our lands.

XENA (grimly):

Not right now. But eventually--that's where things are going.

EVE (lost for words):

This can't be happening.

XENA (determined):

It will happen. (Off Eve's shocked look) Unless we stop it.

Close-up on Eve as she looks at her, concerned.

As the camera starts to pull back, a rising murmur of voices is heard from outside. Finally a voice rises through the din.

VOICE (off-camera):

How much longer are we going to take this?

Eve and Xena exchange anxious glances. Then Eve strides outside, Xena following her.

CUT TO

Outside Eve's hut. Morai is talking to a group of seven or eight Amazons, other women coming up to them to see what the commotion is.

MORAI (shouting):

The Amazons are warriors! Have we become so weak that we let *peasants* take over our land?! We can't deny our heritage; we have to fight!

The Amazons around her nod and murmur in agreement.

MORAI:

Just recently, we were drawn into a war with Sabina to aid the Corinthians--to fight someone else's battle--and now, we aren't allowed to fight a group of worthless farmers?! It's time we look after ourselves--protected our way of life!

The murmurs grow louder; a few Amazons cry out, "Yeah!"

MORAI (emboldened by their support):

I say we attack the village--burn it to the ground--and send those men running in fear!

EVE (off-screen, shouting):

What's wrong with you, Morai? Have you lost your mind?

The camera pans around to show an angry Eve behind them with Xena by her side.

MORAI (growling):

What's wrong with *you*? Are you an Amazon queen or are you back to preaching peace?

EVE (firmly):

I never *stopped* believing in peace. (she stops for a moment, as if to ponder her own words) I know there are times when peace isn't possible. But this isn't the right time to fight.

MORAI (yelling):

Then what's it the right time for? Wooing them with flowers and kind words? (angrily) Not long ago, you left us to defend a bunch of Romans--but you won't lead your own people into battle!

Morai storms off. The other Amazons watch her, then turn expectantly to Eve, who looks anguished. Xena gives her an anxious look, noticing the distress in her daughter's eyes.

CUT TO

The Queen's Council chambers (as seen in "Path of Vengeance"). Xena and Gabrielle stand by the door. Eve and the other Amazon leaders stand further inside the room.

CYANE:

We don't have many more options.

XENA:

There are always options.

EVE:

These people aren't warriors--they're peasants. We can't fight them. And besides--you heard what my mother said. If we try to drive them off-- (she trails off)

GABRIELLE:

--you'll have to deal with King Melodic's army.

CYANE (looking at Gabrielle):

Then what do we do? We've tried everything. They won't negotiate with us, they won't leave. And now we find out other settlers are going to start moving in.

GABRIELLE:

Maybe Xena and I can go talk to the king and work something out. (Off Cyane's scoff) It can't hurt to try.

EVE (still looking troubled):

All right. (to the other leaders) Do you all agree?

AMAZON LEADER #1 (dubious):

As Gabrielle said, it can't hurt to try it.

AMAZON LEADER #2:

I agree. Look, we're willing to fight for our lands--but we don't want an army coming out here if we can help it.

CYANE:

We've already lost too many people--in too many wars.

CUT TO

The Amazon village. Lykia and Antiope are practicing fighting moves.



Antiope jumps up and kicks her foot forward, Lykia leans back and dodges her foot. Lykia then spins around and goes for a sidekick, Antiope blocks it with her arm and spins around ready to sidestrike. Lykia quickly blocks the blow with her arm.

ANTIOPE (catching her breath):
You're getting pretty good.

Antiope spins around and goes for a kick that Lykia easily blocks. Lykia pushes down Antiope's foot, then does a spinning kick and hits Antiope in the side, knocking her flat on her face. As Antiope starts to get up, Lykia grunts and plants a foot on her back, rather roughly pushing her back down.

ANTIOPE (rather peeved):
Hey, back off!

Lykia's face changes and she steps back with a guilty look. Antiope gets up and turns around, looking upset.

ANTIOPE:
It's only practice, Lykia!

LYKIA:
I'm sorry--I just got carried away--

ANTIOPE (sighs):
Lykia--you can't let this anger take control of you. If you're looking to solve all of your problems by fighting...

Lykia lowers her head, and then looks back up at Antiope defiantly.

LYKIA:
I just want to prove myself. (determined) To show that I can be a real warrior--a real Amazon.

ANTIOPE (looks at her gently):

There's more to being an Amazon than fighting.

Lykia gives her a doubtful look.

CUT TO

The Council chambers.

EVE:

Before we end this meeting--there's also the matter of-- (she glances worriedly at Gabrielle) Lykia and her brother.

Pan to Gabrielle, who looks concerned.

GABRIELLE:

What about them? I thought it had been decided that Darion could stay with his sister-- (bitterly) -- as long as they lived in that hut on the edge of the village...

CYANE:

He is allowed to stay there. Lykia can't--not now that she's a full Amazon. For the next year, she'll have to stay in a hut with the other warriors in training.

EVE:

And even if she could be excused from that--

AMAZON LEADER #1:

--which she can't--

EVE (glances at her uneasily):

--she would have to go out with the night patrol twice a week.

CYANE:

It's one of the duties of the new warriors--as well as part of their training.

Zoom in on Gabrielle, who looks at her in dismay.

CUT TO

Outside the Council hut. Eve walks out briskly, flanked by Xena and Gabrielle.

GABRIELLE (vehemently):

Eve--why didn't you tell us?

EVE (defensive):

Tell you what?

GABRIELLE (angry):

Do you really think it's right to leave a little boy all by himself in some hut on the edge of the village? What happens the next time he has a nightmare? He needs someone with him.

Eve stops and turns to face her.

EVE:

Gabrielle, look--I am *trying* to work something out. Klymene could stay with him a lot of nights--we're also trying to get a woman from one of the neighboring farms...



GABRIELLE (almost shouting):

This isn't *right*!

EVE:

Did you really think that this time it was going to be different? That he was just going to be welcomed with open arms? This might not be the best solution, but it's the best one that I--

Gabrielle shakes her head, refusing to listen, and storms off; Xena half-heartedly tries to follow.



XENA (shouts after her):

Where are you going?

GABRIELLE:

To see Darion. (She suddenly stops in her tracks, turns around and looks bitterly at Eve, then speaks in an angry, sarcastic tone.) That's still allowed, isn't it?

Gabrielle walks away. Xena wants to follow her, then looks at the clearly distressed Eve and stops.

XENA (shakes her head):

Eve.... You have to understand. That boy means so much to her. She feels responsible--

EVE (in a near-whisper):

I do understand.

CUT TO

Close-up on Gabrielle, looking down.

GABRIELLE:

He belongs with his mother.

She raises her head, a stricken look on her face. There is a brief silence.

DARION (off-camera):

And then?

The camera pulls back to show Gabrielle sitting next to Darion on a log in the yard outside the hut. Gabrielle is reading from a scroll. She clears her throat and resumes reading.

GABRIELLE:

"And I said, 'Well, whoever she is, she obviously-- (she pauses for a moment, a catch in her throat) --doesn't want him. (pauses again and finishes in a near-whisper) Imagine sending a baby down the river.'"

DARION:

What kind of mother would do that?

Gabrielle looks at him silently.

DARION (looks at her anxiously):

Gabrielle--are you all right?

GABRIELLE:

Yeah, yeah... I'm sorry--I just got distracted. (resumes reading) "But Xena said, 'Maybe she had a good reason.' I wondered if she could be right--"

While she is reading, Darion looks up. His face lights up with a surprised smile.

DARION (jumps to his feet):

Xena!

Gabrielle looks up to see Xena walking up to them.

XENA (to Darion):

Hey, kiddo.

Darion runs up to her and she squats down to hug him, then rises.

XENA (to Gabrielle):

Are you--

GABRIELLE (with a forced smile):

I'm fine.

Xena glances at Darion and then at Gabrielle, obviously wanting to talk to Gabrielle alone.

GABRIELLE (to Darion):

Darion--why don't you show Xena that wood carving you made? (to Xena) I bet you didn't know that Darion carves wood now. (smiles) He's an artist.

DARION:

Sure.

He runs inside the house. Gabrielle gets up and walks up to Xena.

GABRIELLE:

I'm all right. I just... (shakes her head) I thought that once Darion found his sister, he'd have a real home--a real family...



XENA (gently):

You *are* his real family, Gabrielle.



GABRIELLE:

As long as he's here--he's going to be treated like some kind of--leper. (she shakes her head) This is wrong.

XENA:

The Amazons have always endured as a nation of women.

GABRIELLE:

Maybe it's too high a price to pay. (Off Xena's shocked look, she turns away and sighs, then looks at Xena again) Xena--you know how devoted I've always been to the Amazons. But... (struggles for words) ...how much longer do you think they can go on like this?

Xena is visibly taken aback and is about to say something when Darion runs out of the hut holding a crudely carved wooden figure.

DARION:

There! Look, I made this myself!

Xena takes the figure from him and examines it with a puzzled look on her face.

XENA (frowns):

A horse--in a pointed hat.

DARION (bursts out laughing):

No, silly. It's a unicorn! You know, like the ones we saw in Britannia?

XENA:

Oh yeah.

DARION (dreamy):

That was so much fun! (suddenly animated) Gabrielle promised we'd go on another adventure!

Xena gives Gabrielle a rather sharp questioning look.

GABRIELLE (flustered):

Well, I--I said we'd talk about it.

XENA:

Right. (She gives the wooden unicorn back to Darion, smiling) Nice work. You've got quite a knack for this, kid.

DARION (beaming):

Hey, thanks!

XENA (turns to Gabrielle):

So. Eve and I are off to Ascania to have a chat with that king. Coming?

GABRIELLE (unsure):

I--Xena ... (glances at Darion) I wanted to spend some time--

XENA (understanding):

Don't worry. I'll handle it.

GABRIELLE (guiltily):

Are you sure?

XENA (smiles):

Yeah, I'm sure. Have fun, you two.

She walks off, mounts Argo who is waiting nearby, and rides away at a trot, Gabrielle watching her thoughtfully.

DARION (tugs at Gabrielle's arm):

Come on! I want to hear the rest of that scroll!

CUT TO

Xena and Eve riding through the forest.

CUT TO

The city of Ascania--a typical bustling Greek city, Xenaverse-style, with people going about their daily business. Xena and Eve ride through the streets.

CUT TO

An exterior shot of the royal palace.

CUT TO

The palace gates, manned by two armored guards. Xena and Eve approach on horseback and stop as the guards bar their passage by crossing their spears.

GUARD #1:

What's your business here?

XENA:

We've come to see the king.

GUARD #2 (guffaws):

The king's busy.

XENA (with a chilly smile):

Well, tell him Xena, Warrior Princess is here on urgent business. Maybe then he'll find some free time.

The guards exchange nervous looks.

CUT TO

Inside a lavishly decorate palace chamber. Medium close-up on King Melodic, an older man with curly graying hair and a short gray beard, wearing a small crown and embroidered purple robes, sitting at an ornate desk. He is looking up.

KING MELODIC (trying to hide his nervousness):
So. You're--the legendary Xena.

Pan to Xena and Eve standing in front of him.

KING MELODIC (continues, looking to Eve):
And you must be--

EVE:
Eve. Queen of the Amazons.

KING MELODIC:
Formerly--Livia of Rome.

Eve looks uneasy for a moment but nods steadily.

EVE:
I think you know why we're here.

KING MELODIC:
You want me to remove the settlements. (Sits back, folding his arms on his chest) Well, I'm not going to do that.

EVE:
You're just going to steal our lands.

KING MELODIC:
You can't steal something that doesn't belong to anyone. In the eyes of the law, the ownership of these lands is--a gray area.



EVE:
These lands have *a/ways* belonged to the Amazons!

KING MELODIC (derisively):
The Amazons. Tribes--with no notion of property rights--or civilization.

XENA:

At least they have some notion of honor--which is more than I can say for *some* people.

KING MELODIC (glances at her, then continues):

Savages who still live by hunting, fishing and making war. *We* intend to use these lands for agriculture and commerce--to cultivate fields, to raise cattle and build industries. (to Eve) You were once a Roman; you should know the differences between civilization and barbarism.

XENA (wryly):

Well, I'm sorry if the Amazons didn't ask for your approval for their customs. I'm afraid you'll have to make other plans. Unless, of course, you want to go down in history as just another power-hungry warlord who was stupid enough to go up against the Warrior Princess.

King Melodic looks rather nervous but tries to stay in charge.

KING MELODIC:

I've heard of your exploits, Xena. I--respect you. But this isn't your fight.

XENA:

It's my daughter's fight. It's my friends' fight. You want to take your chances on that?

KING MELODIC:

You may be a great warrior--but you're only one woman.

XENA (smirks):

I have many skills--and many friends.

KING MELODIC:

Are you threatening me? You better get out of here before I call in my guards and they *make* you leave.

XENA:

Not until you've heard me out.

She steps closer to him.

KING MELODIC (opens his mouth):

Gu--

Before he can finish, Xena lunges forward and jabs her fingers into his neck. He tries to move or speak but finds that he can't. His eyes bulge in terror.



XENA (leans in closer and snarls):

Listen up, *Your Majesty*. You mess with the Amazons, you mess with me. I don't know what you've heard about me, but you can just assume that the worst of it is true. So, for your own good--*back off!* You've got three days to start moving those settlements off Amazon lands. Otherwise, you'll have a war on your hands that you're not going to like. (straightens up) You got that? (off his terrified look) Yeah, I think you have.

She jabs her fingers into his neck, releasing him. He gasps for breath.

XENA:

I hope we *don't* meet again. (to Eve) Come on, Eve. We're done here.

KING MELODIC (enraged, his voice still hoarse):

Not yet. (Yells hoarsely) Guards! *Guards!*

The doors open and several burly guards step in.

KING MELODIC (points to Xena and Eve):

Seize those women! They tried to kill me!

Two guards rush at Xena; she jumps up in the air and kicks them, sending them flying through the doorway. Yet another guard charges her while a fourth and a fifth attack Eve. She punches one of them and sends him flying into Xena, who lands a kick that sends him flying toward Melodic and sprawling across the desk. The king jumps to his feet, looking on in amazement and fear as Xena elbows her other attacker in the neck and Eve spins around, giving her other attacker a swift side-kick to the chest.

The first two guards come rushing back in and rush at Xena with their swords at the ready, while the two guards who attacked Eve before rally and attack her again, aided by two other guards who have just run in.

Zoom in on Xena as she spars with her two opponents, deflects a blow from one guard's sword and kicks him in the gut, knocking him down.

Pan to King Melodic who looks on fearfully.

Pan to Eve, who is surrounded by four guards momentarily blocking her from view. With a fierce cry, she flips over the heads of the two guards behind her, then kicks them in the back, knocking them into the two guards in front of them so that they all collapse in a heap.

Pan to Xena as she swings her foot forward in a round kick and knocks the sword from the other attacker's hands.

Pan to Eve as she grabs two of the guard's swords and points them at the guards, who are still down. She is breathing hard.

Close-up on King Melodic, his lips trembling in fear and rage.

Pan to Xena as she spins again, kicking her attacker's feet from under him and sending him to the ground. With a flourish, she twirls her sword and slips it back into the scabbard.

XENA (grinning wickedly):

I think your men have had enough. Have you?

King Melodic stares at her silently.

XENA:

Because I guarantee you--if you don't leave the Amazons alone, what you just saw will be--a preview of coming attractions.

KING MELODIC:

Maybe we can--talk.

XENA (grins):

Good.

CUT TO

The palace hallway. Xena and Eve stride out of the king's chamber. The guards look after them resentfully but do nothing.

XENA (with a strange expression--clearly, she still has mixed feelings about Eve fighting):

You handled that well.

EVE:

So did you. (pauses for a moment as they walk) You think he'll leave the Amazons alone?

XENA (coldly):

I hope he got the message.

EVE (sighs):

I hope you're right...maybe, for once, we'll be able to resolve this without bloodshed.

CUT TO

The forest. A deer grazes in a clearing. Morai is crouched behind a young Amazon girl of about twelve or thirteen. The girl is aiming a bow and arrow. Her arm quivers as she draws the bow back. Morai nods approvingly.

MORAI (whispering):

That's it, Priscilla. Take your time...don't rush. Haste makes for an empty stomach. (she turns and speaks over her shoulder) Remember that.

Three girls the same age as Priscilla are crouching silently behind Morai. They nod silently, obviously anxious over their first hunt.

A faint rustle is heard from the underbrush and Morai cocks her head in that direction, listening. After a moment, she straightens and reaches out to close her hand around the shaft of the arrow. Priscilla sighs and releases the tension in the bow and looks up at Morai expectantly.

MORAI:

Don't move. Don't make a sound.

Morai draws her sword and moves silently through the underbrush. A teenage boy, about sixteen, is kneeling down behind a bush. We can see that he is from the village by the way he is dressed. He carefully picks up his bow next to him and gets an arrow from his quiver. He begins to crawl forward, moving the bushes aside. Morai presses the tip of sword into the back of his neck.

MORAI:

Drop it!

The boy turns to her, looking terrified, as we:

FADE OUT

ACT THREE

FADE IN

The Amazons' Council Chamber. All the Amazons leaders are there except Eve. Cyane and Gabrielle, looking worried, stand next to each other. Morai stands in front of them. The boy is on his knees, his hands tied behind his back. He looks terrified.

MORAI (speaking to the Amazons):

They've stolen our lands, taken our game. Now they're after our children!



BOY:

I wasn't!

MORAI:

Liar!

She swings as if about to strike him.

Pan to Gabrielle.

GABRIELLE (shouting):

Morai!

Morai steps back, obviously frustrated.

MORAI:

He was by the river; he was after the children. I saw him--

GABRIELLE (firmly):

Back off, Morai. I'll question him.

She approaches the boy, who looks up at her nervously.

GABRIELLE (gently):

What's your name?

The boy swallows, trying not to show his fear.

BOY (muttering):

Caleb.

GABRIELLE:

How old are you?

CALEB:

Seventeen.

GABRIELLE:

You're from the village nearby?

CALEB:

That's right. (with sudden vehemence) They'll be looking for me, you know!

GABRIELLE:

We don't mean you any harm, Caleb.

Pan to Morai, who scoffs but turns away under a withering look from Cyane. Cyane comes up to Gabrielle and Caleb.

CYANE:

Caleb, what were you doing in the woods?

CALEB:

I was hunting, that's all! I had no idea there were children around. Please believe me...

Gabrielle looks at him intently, then slowly nods.

GABRIELLE:

I believe you.

MORAI (in disbelief):

What! Are you--

CYANE (cutting her off):

So do I.

GABRIELLE:

Morai, you said yourself there was game around. He must have been after the same deer as you and the girls.



CYANE:

You haven't got a shred of evidence that he was aiming at the girls.

MORAI:

He could see them from where he was.

CALEB (heatedly):

I couldn't! I was looking at--

MORAI (hits him in the back of the head, hard enough to make him wince):

Shut up!

Gabrielle grabs her arm, hard.

MORAI:

Hey!



GABRIELLE (glares at her):

Stop it, Morai. This is not how we treat prisoners. And this boy (nods at Caleb) shouldn't even be a prisoner. It's obvious he's--

MORAI (interrupts):

Says who? You have no authority here anymore.

CYANE:

I agree with Gabrielle.

AMAZON LEADER #1:

We should let the boy go. There's still a chance to resolve things peaceably with those villagers--

CALEB:

Please let me go. They're going to miss me and come looking for me.. (looks up at Cyane and Gabrielle) You know I didn't do anything wrong!

MORAI (scornfully):

Didn't do anything wrong! You were on our lands. You don't belong here!

CALEB (shouts):

I wasn't trying to hurt those girls!

GABRIELLE (shakes her head):

Most of us believe you, Caleb. But it isn't that simple Morai is your accuser--by Amazon law, you have to be tried in front of the Queen.

CYANE:

We have to hold him here until Eve comes back. (to Caleb) It's only going to be for a few hours.

GABRIELLE:

We don't need to keep him tied up, do we?

Pan to Morai, who opens her mouth to speak but snaps it shut under Cyane's glare.

CYANE:

No, of course not.

Gabrielle bends down, pulls a sai from her boot and cuts the ropes Caleb's hands are tied with. He gets up, rubbing his wrists.

CALEB (mutters, somewhat reassured but still obviously nervous):
Thanks.

GABRIELE:
The villagers will be wondering where he is. They need to know he's safe.

CYANE:
We'll send a messenger.

GABRIELLE:
We'll need to send some proof that he's all right.

She looks at Caleb expectantly and he thinks a moment. From his neck he removes a leather cord with a pendant attached.

CALEB:
This was my father's. Show it to my mother. She'll know that I'm fine.

CYANE:
She could think you're dead.

CALEB (gets an idea):
Can you get me something to write on?

GABRIELLE:
Sure.

CUT TO

Forest. Late afternoon. A search party of about ten villagers, including a couple of women, is walking through the forest, scanning the area.

A woman stops and looks at something on the ground, then gasps. She bends down and picks up an arrow on the ground. She looks at the markings on the arrow's blunt end. Fear fills her face.

WOMAN (worried):
That was...Caleb's.

MALE VILLAGER #1:
Are you sure?

WOMAN (almost sobs):
I'm sure! That was my boy's!

The villagers look around. Another man points to the ground. The camera zooms in on the trampled grass and the boot marks.

MALE VILLAGER #2:

Someone attacked him!

Caleb's mother starts to whimper.

CALEB'S MOTHER (crying):

It was women! Those savages!

MALE VILLAGER #1 (angrily):

They must have taken him hostage. King Melodic is forcing them off their lands, so they're taking it out on us!

FEMALE VILLAGER #1:

They want to drive us out!

The villagers murmur in anger and fear.

CALEB'S MOTHER (shouts through tears):

Let's go back to the village and get the others. We're going to march in there and get Caleb back!

CUT TO

The Amazon village. Tynne is about to mount a brown horse. Cyane and Gabrielle stand facing her.

GABRIELLE:

You've got the letter and the pendant?

TYNNE:

Yeah, right here. (pats at her belt)

CYANE:

Be careful.



TYNNE:

Thanks. I'll be back soon.

She gets in the saddle and rides off.

CUT TO

The Ascanian settlement. Dusk. The settlers are all crowded in the main square. Some of them are holding shovels, rakes, sticks and other farming implements that can be used as weapons. Teras is standing in the center of the circle, Caleb's tearful mother next to him.

TERAS (shouts):

Now, remember--all we want to do is get Caleb back. If they give him back to us without a fight, then we leave.

MALE VILLAGER #1 (yelling):

I say once we get Caleb, we burn that village of theirs right to the ground!

Some of the villagers cheer.

TERAS (trying to calm them):

We don't want a war with the Amazons!

FEMALE VILLAGER #2 (almost sobbing):

Then what are we supposed to do? Wait until they come after our children again?

There's a murmur of agreement among the villagers.

TERAS (shaking his head):

Look here--calm down. We've talked with their queen before--they may be barbarians, but they don't seem like the kind who would just go snatching kids--

CALEB'S MOTHER (shouts):

They snatched mine!

FEMALE VILLAGER #3:

That's right! Burn their village!

Suddenly there is a commotion off-camera. Pan over to two teenage boys who are running toward the crowd, both out of breath.

BOY #1 (pointing back):

An Amazon... (breathing hard) ...one of the Amazons just rode into the village!

All of the villagers begin to talk at once. Some clutch their weapons tighter.

TERAS (shouting):

Hold it! Lets just find out if Caleb is all right before we start anything!

The clamor dies down a little, but the villagers still look scared and belligerent.

Pan to the woman riding toward them. It's Tynne. She brings her horse to a halt and smiles at the villagers, trying to look as friendly as she can.

CALEB'S MOTHER (shouting):

Where is my son?!

Tynne dismounts and walks toward the villagers. Their angry demeanor obviously makes her nervous, but she is doing her best to stay calm.

TYNNE (gently):

Your son is safe. Everything is fine.

TERAS:

Then why isn't he here?!



TYNNE:

There was--a misunderstanding. Everything will be okay, so please--

CALEB'S MOTHER (shocked and scared):

Misunderstanding? What's going on? What are you doing to him?!

TYNNE:

Look--

She reaches for her belt where she has the letter and the pendant.

MALE VOICE FROM THE CROWD (off-camera, shouting):

She's going for her sword!

As the camera zooms in, we see that the sword is on the other side of Tynne's belt. Tynne is about to say something but before she can speak, a male villager brings a shovel down on her head. She falls.



TERAS (yells):
No, wait--

As she tries to get up, another villager, a woman, stabs her with a pitchfork. The man with the shovel hits her again and she collapses, unconscious.

TERAS (shouting):
Stop! Stop!

The villagers back off slowly. Teras steps toward the unconscious Tynne.

TERAS:
What did you think you were doing?

MALE VILLAGER #4 (defensive):
I saw her...she was trying to grab her sword.

FEMALE VILLAGER #3:
She was! I saw it too.

TERAS (confused):
It doesn't make sense.

MALE VILLAGER #3 (to Teras):
We can use her to our advantage. As a bargaining chip to get Caleb back.

Teras slowly nods.

DISSOLVE TO

A wide shot of the Amazon village at dusk. Xena and Eve ride in as the camera slowly zooms in. Gabrielle and Cyane come out briskly to meet them.

XENA (dismounting):
Hey, good news. I think we're getting somewhere with King Melodic.

GABRIELLE:
Yeah? Well, we have some bad news back here.

Xena and Eve give her worried looks.

DISSOLVE TO

The council chamber where the Amazon leaders have all gathered. The din of voices fades in.

Eve is sitting in the chair in the middle of the queens' council, flanked by Cyane and the other leaders. Xena and Gabrielle stand to the side. Morai is standing in front of the council. Caleb stands behind her, fidgeting and obviously scared.

EVE:

Clearly, what happened was a misunderstanding. Yes, Caleb was hunting on our lands and that's against our law--but we're hoping to have that issue resolved and to reach an agreement with the settlers. He's not on trial for that. He's being charged with trying to attack the children--but clearly, he had no intention of hurting them.

MORAI (angrily):

And you are going to take his word for it? (shouting) He was hiding in the bushes with a weapon! The girls were in danger!

EVE:

He's just a boy. Do you really think that a seventeen-year-old farm boy would go hunting for Amazon children with a bow and arrow? He'd have to be crazy!

MORAI:

Well, maybe he is. Or maybe the others sent him. They want us out of here, don't they? They're the enemy--all of them. Why should we expect them to act reasonably?

EVE:

That's not evidence, Morai. That's just your hatred speaking. This trial is over. You may step back.

Morai stays where she is.

EVE (forcefully):

Step back, Morai.

Pan to Xena, who looks at Eve with obvious pride.

Glaring at her, Morai retires to the back of the chamber.

EVE (to the other leaders):

How do you vote?

CYANE:

Not guilty.

AMAZON LEADER #1:

Not guilty.

Pan to Caleb, who gives a sigh of relief, and to Morai, who flinches in disgust.

AMAZON LEADER #2:

Guilty.

A flash of joy on Morai's face.

A montage of the other four council members voting, their voices merging with each other: "Not guilty--guilty--guilty--not guilty."

Pan to Eve; a close-up on her face.

EVE:

Not guilty. (rises) Caleb--you are free to go.

Morai spits on the floor and storms out.

GABRIELLE (shakes her head):

I'll try to talk to her...

Xena nods her assent and Gabrielle follows Morai outside.

EVE:

It's getting dark. One of us should take the boy back to the village.

XENA:

I'll take him.

CUT TO

The street in the Amazon village. Morai is practicing moves with a staff to vent her anger. Gabrielle comes up behind her.

GABRIELLE (softly):

Morai.

Morai turns abruptly, flipping the staff as if about to hit Gabrielle.

MORAI (brusquely):

What do you want?

GABRIELLE:

To talk.

MORAI (rolling her eyes):

To rub it in?

GABRIELLE (trying to hold back frustration):

Morai, did you really think Caleb wanted to hurt those children?

Morai looks away, then looks defiantly at Gabrielle.

MORAI:

Who cares. He's one of *them*. (viciously) If it were up to me, he would die just for hunting on our grounds.

Gabrielle shakes her head in disbelief.

GABRIELLE:

Morai...are you angry at *them*? Or at me?

MORAI:

You know, I had always looked up to you. I'd grown up hearing all those stories about you and Xena. And then you showed up, and-- (shakes her head) How many Amazons did you lead to their deaths in the war against Bellerophon? Against Sabina?

GABRIELLE (softly):

Morai...

MORAI (voice cracking):

There was always someone who was more important to you than our tribe. First Xena--then, this--*male child*. You went off and left us...to be ruled by yet another queen who'd rather show kindness to strangers than protect her own people!

GABRIELLE:

Morai, the Amazons can't stand alone against the whole world... (sighs) Things aren't so--black and white.

MORAI:

We're being pushed off our lands! Is that black and white enough for you? (shouting) Now is the time to teach everyone a lesson not to mess with the Amazons! Now is the time to fight!

Gabrielle stares at her, not sure what to say.

CUT TO

Nightfall. The riverbank near the Amazon village. A group of about fifteen people from the Ascanian village, mostly men, are standing around; they are armed with pitchforks, shovels, and sticks, and carrying torches and lanterns. Teras is at the head of the group. Caleb's mother, looking desperate and determined, stands next to him. One of the farmers, a man in his mid-thirties of medium height, with curly dark hair and a beard, is leading Tynne's horse; the still-unconscious Tynne is slumped across the horse's back.

TERAS (to the man leading the horse):

All right, Barkus. You stay here with the Amazon. We're going to go get Caleb back.

BARKUS:

Help me get her down.

He unties the rope and, with Teras' help, gets Tynne off the horse and eases her down on the ground. She moans slightly and stirs.

BARKUS (displeased):

I still say we should have gotten her to the healer first. She doesn't look good.

MALE VILLAGER #1 (scoffs):

Listen to the big softie.

TERAS:

The Amazons can take care of her. If they don't make any trouble about Caleb, we'll turn her over to them right away.

CUT TO

Xena rides through the Ascanian village, Caleb sitting behind her.

CALEB:

There's my house!

Xena brings Argo to a half trot, dismounts and helps Caleb down.

CALEB:

Thanks. (hesitates) Look, a lot of the folks in my village don't trust the Amazons, but I'm gonna tell them--

Before he can finish, the door of the house opens and a girl of about fourteen looks out.

GIRL (overjoyed and surprised):

Caleb!

CALEB (turns to her):

Hey, sis. (squeezes her in a tight hug) It's good to be home. Is mom okay?

GIRL:

She... (hesitates) ...she went over to the Amazon village with the others.

CALEB (frowns):

What for?

GIRL:

To get you back, of course. We didn't know--

CALEB:

Wait, didn't you get my message?

GIRL (puzzled):

What message?

XENA (frowns):

The Amazons sent someone over--with a message from Caleb.

The girl stares at her in shock.

GIRL (whispers):
Oh, by the gods...

CUT TO

By the river, Barkus is sitting on the grass. A lantern stands next to him. Tynne is sprawled on the ground. She stirs again, moans and suddenly lifts her head.

TYNNE (hoarsely):
Help me...

BARKUS (scrambles to his feet):
Hold on a minute...

He runs to the water's edge, scoops up some water in his hands and brings it to Tynne. She drinks avidly and moans again.

BARKUS:
You're gonna be all right. In a little bit, we're gonna get you back to your people and they'll patch you up--

TYNNE (moans):
Letter--

BARKUS:
Letter? What letter? (shakes his head) Must be delirious...



TYNNE (weakly, pointing toward her belt):
There...letter...Caleb...he's okay...

Suddenly understanding, Barkus fumbles at her belt. He pulls out a small scroll and the pendant, and quickly unwraps the scroll, trying to read it by the light of the lantern.

BARKUS:
Let's see, what does it say here...too bad I never had much schooling... (squints at the scroll)
Moth-er--I--am all--what's that word?--all right...

He reads on, moving his lips, then lowers the scroll and looks up at Tynne in dismay.

BARKUS:

Oh brother. (shakes his head) What a mess. Come on, we'd better get you back to your village.

He tucks the scroll and pendant behind his own belt, then tries to help Tynne to her feet but she collapses, moaning.

CUT TO

Night. Amazon village. The mob of Ascanian villagers, with their torches and weapons, stand in the village square shouting. Eve and Cyane come toward them. As the two queens approach, the shouts die down and there is a moment's silence.

EVE (authoritatively):

What do you want here?

TERAS (forcefully):

We have come to get Caleb!

EVE (confused):

Caleb! But we already sent him back to you.

Taken aback, the villagers exchange puzzled looks, not knowing whether to believe her or what to do next.

CYANE:

Didn't you get the message before? His letter said we'd sent him back in the evening.

TERAS (bewildered):

What are you talking about, woman? What letter?

EVE:

Didn't Tynne bring you the letter and the pendant from Caleb? (with sudden alarm) Where is Tynne? Where's the Amazon that went to your village?

VILLAGER #1 (growling):

You want the bitch back, then give us Caleb!

Some of the villagers shout in agreement. By now many other Amazons have come out of their huts to see what the commotion is, and are starting to assemble behind Cyane and Eve. Gabrielle comes up too.

TERAS (tersely):

Shut up, Icarion. (to Eve) We want Caleb.

EVE:

I already told you--Xena is taking him back to your village. (repeats forcefully) Where is Tynne?

The villagers don't move.

EVE (shouting):

Where is Tynne?!

CUT TO

Forest. Night. A rustle is heard and the camera zooms in on several Amazons stealing quietly through the woods. We see Antiope and Lykia among them. They are carrying spears.

Off-camera, a noise is heard--it sounds like a moan.

ANTIOPE (in a whisper):

Did you hear that?

AMAZON #2 (also whispering):

It came from there...where the river is.

A moan is heard again, followed by the indistinct sound of a man's voice.

ANTIOPE:

All right, we have to check this out. Lykia--stay close to me. This is your first night patrol, so--

Her voice fades into the night as the Amazons move on.

DISSOLVE TO

Barkus struggling to get Tynne to her feet.

BARKUS:

Come on--

The branches part and several Amazons step silently out onto the riverbank. They are the night patrol.

A shot from the Amazons' point of view of Barkus struggling with Tynne in the moonlight.

ANTIOPE:

It's Tynne! Let go of her, you animal!

Barkus looks back in fright and lets go of Tynne, who collapses to the ground. The Amazons run toward him and Barkus holds up his hands in a gesture of surrender. Meanwhile, Antiope bends over Tynne, pressing her fingers to Tynne's neck.

BARKUS:

Hey, take it easy! She--

Antiope stands up straight.

ANTIOPE:

She's dead.



LYKIA (yells suddenly):
You bastard!

She lunges at Barkus and, before anyone can stop her, plunges her spear into his stomach. Close-up on Barkus as he gasps, his eyes bulging and blood dripping from his mouth.

Lykia pulls the spear out of his stomach, causing Barkus' to collapse to the ground.

ANTIOPE:
You didn't have to do that!

LYKIA (helplessly):
|--|--

The clearing suddenly fills with voices. Pan to show the Ascanian villagers led by Teras. Next to them are Eve, Cyane and Gabrielle.

Close-up on Lykia, a lost expression on her face as she looks at them.

TERAS (shouting):
Barkus!

He rushes to the fallen man.

Gabrielle stares at the dying Barkus and at the bloodied spear in Lykia's hand.



GABIRELLE (in a near-whisper):
Lykia?

FADE OUT

ACT FOUR

FADE IN

Night. A burning funeral pyre. The sounds of Xena's funeral song fill the air. Flames engulf the pile of wood and the shrouded body on top of it. The camera zooms out to show the Amazons in a dance of mourning around the funeral pyre, while others stand to the side showing their respect.

The camera pans along to show Eve standing in front of the pyre, Antiope and Cyane next to her, staring mournfully into the flames. The camera pulls back down to show Xena singing the funeral song. A sad-looking Gabrielle stands at her side, with Klymene next to her.

The camera pulls back to show Lykia. There are tears in her eyes. She stares blankly ahead of her.

The camera zooms back in on the burning funeral pyre, and then moves up following the smoke into the sky.

DISSOLVE TO

Morning. A hillside. The sounds of Xena's funeral song are still heard in the background, but at much lower volume.

The Ascanian village can be seen in the background. The somber-looking villagers have gathered in front of a small gravestone. It's obviously a new grave, with fresh soil covering the area--Barkus' grave.

Teras, Caleb, and Caleb's mother and sister are seen with the group of villagers. Standing closest to the grave is a woman with tears rolling down her cheeks, holding a bunch of white flowers. Next to her are two boys, one about ten, the other no more than six; they too are crying.

The woman steps forward and places the flowers on top of the dirt. The camera begins to pull away as the music fades.

DISSOLVE TO

Day. A wide shot of the Amazon village. Everything looks quiet and subdued.

CUT TO

Eve, standing in front of the burnt-out funeral pyre.

Xena and Gabrielle walk up next to her. Xena puts a comforting hand on her shoulder. Eve continues to stare at the pyre.

EVE (sorrowful):

She was such a brave woman--so devoted to her tribe. (almost tearful) It's my fault she died.

XENA (softly):

Eve...it's not your fault.



EVE:

If I had been here when they brought in Caleb, none of this would have happened. (pauses, then speaks angrily) They beat her to death, Mother. (off of Xena's distraught expression) She had a wound on the back of her head, cuts and bruises all over --

Gabrielle looks as if she is going to be sick.

EVE:

It's against all my beliefs--but everything inside me is telling me that the people who did this to her should pay!

The camera pans over Xena's stern yet anguished expression and then over to Gabrielle, who stares ahead, struggling with her own feelings.

CYANE (off-camera):

Queen Eve.

Eve turns around.

CYANE:

There are people here--from the settlement.

Pan to Teras and several other villagers, men and women, who are coming toward them. They look very grim. Xena, Gabrielle, Eve and Cyane stand facing them silently. Within a few paces of them, the villagers stop.

TERAS:

We never wanted a war with you people. But now--one of us is dead. Barkus was a good man--a husband, a father.

FEMALE VILLAGER #2 (shouting):

Why did you have to kill him?

GABRIELLE (speaking up):

It was a misunderstanding. The Amazons on night patrol thought he was attacking Tynne--and one of them attacked him.

MALE VILLAGER #2 (angrily):

She didn't attack him...she killed him.

EVE (defensive):

She was responding to a threat!

TERAS:

Either way, she took away a man's life. We're not going to forget it. We want you to turn her over so we can take her to Ascania for trial.

MALE VILLAGER #1:

We want justice!

XENA:

And what would justice be?

TERAS (dryly):

Death.

Xena's stern expression remains.

EVE:

Then I want whoever's responsible for Tynne's death turned over to *us* for trial.

TERAS:

You mean--the Amazon you sent to the village.

EVE:

That's right. The Amazon you beat to death--when she went to you with a message from Caleb that he was all right.

TERAS (averts his eyes):

Yes, Caleb told us about that. (sighs) We found the letter and the pendant on Barkus...the Amazon must have given them to him, just before-- (he trails off, shaking his head, then looks up at Eve and the others) Look, what happened to your friend was a misunderstanding--we thought she was reaching for her sword. (grudgingly) I'm--sorry about that.

MALE VILLAGER #1 (angrily):

I'm not! Barbarians and killers, all of them!

The camera pulls back for a wide shot of the scene. We see more Amazons from all sides of the village coming up to see what's going on.

Zoom in on the villagers and the women facing them.

TERAS (shakes his head):

Icarion--you're not helping here. (to Eve, Xena and the others) Look, you have to understand--there's a lot of anger in the village right now about Barkus' death.



XENA (wryly):

So. What happened to Tynne was just a misunderstanding, but what happened to Barkus was a crime punishable by death.

TERAS (heatedly):

That's different!

There's suddenly a commotion among the villagers.

MALE VILLAGER #3 (pointing ahead):

That's her!

Pan to Lykia, who is coming toward them with Antiope. They stop in their tracks. There is an angry murmur among the settlers.

FEMALE VILLAGER #2:

The murderer! There she is!

MALE VILLAGER #1 (pumps his fist in the air):

Kill the murdering bitch!

Pan over to Lykia, who looks both scared and angry. She takes a few steps forward. Lykia puts a hand on her arm, holding her back.

Xena steps between Lykia and the villagers.

XENA:

There's not going to be any more killing. Listen to me--

TERAS:

She murdered one of our men. She won't get away with it! If we can't get justice from you, we'll appeal to King Melodic himself--let's see what you say when you have his army at your gates!

EVE:

And who's going to get justice for Tynne?

TERAS:

I'm telling you, it was an accident. We had no intention of killing her. We thought she was--

XENA (interrupts):

Yeah, you thought she was reaching for a weapon. Or maybe that's what you *wanted* to think. Because (sarcastically) she was a *savage*, right?

TERAS:

It's too bad that it happened, but it doesn't make Barkus' death right!

MALE VILLAGER #1:

Enough talk! Get her!

He charges toward Lykia. Before Xena or anyone else can interfere, Lykia charges toward him. He tries to grab her but she twists his arm and throws him down, then kicks him in the stomach. He yells in pain. Teras makes a move toward them.

EVE (shouts):

Lykia, that's enough!

Breathing hard, Lykia steps back, as does Teras. Lykia lowers her head, then looks up grimly at the villagers.



LYKIA (looking for words):

Look, I'm...I'm sorry that your friend died, okay? If I could take it back I would. (sighs) I used to be just like you until my village was raided. I wanted to be an Amazon so I'd always be able to fight back if--something happened again. I thought I had to fight back.

As she speaks the camera pans over the faces of the villagers. A few look sympathetic, but most seem unforgiving.

Gabrielle steps forward.

GABRIELLE:

I know you're angry. Well, so are we. We lost the same thing you did: a friend, a family member... (softly) ...we're hurting as much as you are. What happened was a misunderstanding--on both sides. People wanting to--strike first and ask questions later. Do you really want more deaths? Do you want a war over this?

The camera pans over the faces of the villagers; they look angry and hurt, but it seems Gabrielle's words are starting to sink in.

Suddenly there is a murmur again. Xena, Gabrielle and Eve look up to see a rider approaching; he is on a richly caparisoned gray horse, and is wearing a black and purple outfit with a short cloak and a gold chain around his neck. The villagers murmur.

VILLAGERS:

--It's a messenger!

--Looks like he's from King Melodic!

The Amazons and the villagers watch silently as the rider approaches and brings his horse to a halt.

MESSENGER (to the Amazons):

Which one of you is Eve, Queen of the Amazons?

Eve steps forward.

EVE:

That's me. Who wants to know?

MESSENGER:

I've got a letter for you from King Melodic of Ascania--and-- (his eyes scan the other women and pause on Xena) for Xena, Warrior Princess as well. (looks at the villagers from the settlement, puzzled) Are you from the Lanis settlement, by any chance?

TERAS:

We are. I'm Teras--the head of the settlement. Listen, we have --

MESSENGER:

Good. Saves me a trip to your little village.

He dismounts and pulls three scrolls from under his belt. He hands one to Eve and one to Xena, then walks over to Teras and gives him the remaining scroll.

The camera pans from Xena to Eve to Teras as they unfurl their scrolls, then back. Teras looks puzzled and nervous; Xena smiles slightly as Gabrielle peers over her arm to see what the scroll says; Eve looks relieved.

EVE (looks up):

It looks like King Melodic has changed his mind. He recognizes these lands as the property of the Amazons, and is calling off the further building of settlements. He's asking that we let the Lanis settlement stay here--if we can negotiate an agreement with the settlers on their use of these lands for farming and hunting.

There are cheers and sighs of relief among the Amazons, and unhappy murmurs among the villagers.

MALE VILLAGER #1 (mutters):
Stabbed in the back.

EVE (to the messenger):
Tell the King that the Queen of the Amazons--appreciates his peaceful intentions.

TERAS (reluctantly):
We'll obey the King's orders...as best we can.

XENA (smirks a little):
Tell the King Xena said hello.

MESSENGER:
I hope everyone's happy, because King Melodic certainly doesn't want any more trouble here.

He mounts his horse and rides away. The villagers and the Amazons look after him as the beat of the horse's hooves fades.

Eve and Teras stare at each other, neither looking particularly happy.

EVE (coldly):
I think the negotiations will have to wait until-- (she glances at the burnt-out funeral pyre) --a better time.

There is a long pause.

TERAS (holds up the scroll; with a touch of bitterness):
If you think this means that we're going to be the best of friends from now on--

XENA:
If it can keep you from killing each other, that's good enough.

TERAS (to the other farmers):
Let's get out of here.

Some of the villagers mutter unhappily but follow him nonetheless. The Amazons stand silently, watching them walk away.

GABRIELLE:
Looks like one less problem the Amazons have to deal with.

EVE (not too sure):
I hope you're right. (to Xena and Gabrielle) I can't thank you enough.

XENA (shrugging):
Just doing our job.

GABRIELLE (staring ahead):
I should talk to Lykia...

Pan to Lykia, who is walking away from the crowd, a slender, lonely figure.

DISSOLVE TO

An open field. Darion is holding a kite string with both hands. Xena stands beside him, smirking. He looks up with a troubled expression on his face.

DARION:

Xena!

XENA:

You've got to run with it, Darion! Run!

Lykia stands on the riverbank watching from a distance. Her expression is unreadable. She regards the spear in her hands thoughtfully. Gabrielle steps up beside her. Neither woman can look at the other and keep their eyes on Darion instead.

DARION:

I did it! It's flying!

XENA:

You sure did. (she tugs on the string) Make sure to keep that taut.

LYKIA:

Another thing Xena has taught him.

Gabrielle says nothing. Lykia watches Xena and Darion a moment.

LYKIA:

Do you think I could ever do that? (off Gabrielle's questioning look) Teach him all those things?

GABRIELLE (after a brief pause):

I think--you've got some things you need to work out for yourself first.

XENA:

Keep running, Darion! Don't let it fall!

Xena takes off after Darion and he laughs.

LYKIA:

Darion hates it here. (she shakes her head) I don't think I ever realized that until I saw him with you. You're the one he wants to be with.

GABRIELLE:

You know he loves you, Lykia.

LYKIA:

But it's you he adores. (she smiles dryly) I feel like I'm supposed to deliver some speech now about taking good care of him and keeping him safe... (she laughs ironically) And look at the two I'm leaving him with.

GABRIELLE:

I'll keep him safe. I promise.



LYKIA:

You'd better.

Lykia's tone is faintly threatening. A look passes between Gabrielle and Lykia that isn't friendly. The tension is broken by Darion calling out.

DARION:

Gabrielle! Come and see what Xena's shown me!

Gabrielle waves to him and turns back to look at Lykia who is regarding her spear intently. She studies Lykia thoughtfully and realizes the girl is at a crossroads.

GABRIELLE (in a hushed voice):

You know, sometimes you go so far down a path that you can't turn around. (after a pause) Don't go down that path unless you have to, Lykia.

Gabrielle walks off towards Darion and Xena, leaving Lykia. The girl stands still for a moment, obviously thinking about what Gabrielle has told her. Finally, she clutches her spear tightly, holding it firmly against her.

DISSOLVE TO

Night. A small campfire is sitting in a forest clearing. The camera pulls along the campfire to show Darion curled up in a blanket sound asleep.

In typical Warrior Princess style, Xena is sitting on a log sharpening her sword. Gabrielle is seated next to her. Her eyes seem to stare into the burning flames.

GABRIELLE (softly):

Xena...

XENA (glancing up at Gabrielle):

Hmm?

GABRIELLE:

Do you think... (pondering her words) Do you think the Amazons can continue on like this?

Xena stops sharpening her sword.

XENA:

Gabrielle, the Amazons have gone on for hundreds of years...

GABRIELLE (shaking her head):

I know, its just...all this bloodshed. Sometimes I wonder if it's worth it. Maybe this is all a lost cause. Maybe the Amazons are just a dying breed and there's nothing anyone can do to stop it.

Xena quickly glances up at Gabrielle, as if surprised that her friend is having such thoughts.

XENA:

Relics of a bygone age?

Gabrielle shrugs, admitting the possibility.

XENA (whispering):

As long as there are people like you and Cyane, and Tynne...and Eve...to carry on what the Amazons stand for, they'll never fade away.

Gabrielle smiles skeptically.



GABRIELLE:

Do you really believe that?

XENA (nods):

I believe that.

With a faint smile of relief, Gabrielle lies down on her bedroll, lying on her stomach facing Darion and away from Xena.

GABRIELLE:

Good night, Xena.

XENA:

Good night, Gabrielle.

After a moment Gabrielle is breathing evenly, asleep. Xena watches Gabrielle; after a moment she shakes her head and smiles sadly, whispering to her herself.



XENA:

I wish I *could* believe it...

Xena brushes her fingertips under her left eye and looks off into the forest as the camera slowly pulls up away from her until we:

FADE OUT

THE END

[Ares' presence was missed this week. These are the Shipper Seasons, aren't they?]