

SHIPPER SEASON SEVEN



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Logline

Xena, Gabrielle, Eve and Ares journey down into Hell to free the gods before they are lost forever but in the process, they are met with some unexpected obstacles.

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TEASER

FADE IN

[MONTAGE OF PREVIOUS EPISODE]

ANNOUNCER:

Previously on Xena...

MICHAEL:

We are very close to our goal. The power of the Olympians belongs to our Lord...

CUT TO

MICHAEL (claps his hands on the tabletop):

It's time we finalized our dealings with Olympus and moved on. Xena has served us well, but she was always too stubborn. Her daughter's devotion is far more to my taste. Eve will be perfect--

CUT TO

GABRIELLE (surprised):

They wanted to kill Eve! You were protecting your daughter. There was no choice.

XENA:

That's the worst kind of situation, Gabrielle. When there's no choice.

CUT TO

EVE (glares at Michael):

Forget it. I'm not your puppet, Michael. I won't do your dirty work, not anymore.

CUT TO

EVE:

And what if I don't want to be the Messenger anymore?

CUT TO

XENA:

The gods are in *Hell*?!

CUT TO

A dark, leaden river becomes visible. Translucent gray shadows are milling about on the far bank. A ferry moves noiselessly through the water without disturbing it.

CUT TO

XENA (uncomfortably):

Ares, about your family...

ARES (shrugs):
It's over now.

XENA:
That's just it. It's not.

CUT TO

ARES (sighs):
Look, Xena--I know that we had our faults. But each of us had only our own slice of power. This God is gathering it all up--to himself.

XENA:
That's right... (thoughtfully) No one should control all the power of creation. There's no room in this world for one god.

CUT TO

Raphael approaches Androcleia's frozen form and lays his hands on her. White light begins to form around his fingers.

MICHAEL:
Stop! What do you think you're doing?

RAPHAEL:
You spoke to the darkness in this girl's soul. I speak to the light. She is free to choose as she wills.

CUT TO

Michael opens a shining portal and thrusts Raphael through it, then follows. Uriel snaps his fingers at the frozen people, then follows Michael. The portal irises shut.

CUT TO

XENA (looks at Eve, then back to Gabrielle):
We missed so much of her life...

GABRIELLE:
But we've gained more.

They are silent, looking out at the rocky headlands in the distance, their base lost in the evening mist and sea spray.

[END OF MONTAGE]

Xena and Gabrielle are sitting on the stairs of the temple; to the side of them is the image of steep, rocky cliffs a short distance away. Eve is leaning against a column, writing something into a scroll.

GABRIELLE (looks around for a moment, then fixes on Xena, who is watching Eve):
You know, Xena. I don't think we've seen the last of Michael.

XENA (sighs):

I know we haven't. Gabrielle, I've been thinking. I know we thought that killing the gods was the right thing to do, for Eve, and for the rest of the world, but does that justify executing them?

GABRIELLE (looks at Xena thoughtfully):

Are you implying that we should help the gods?

XENA (uncertain):

I don't know. They tormented mankind for centuries--who's to say they won't carry on?

GABRIELLE:

So, they weren't perfect. But who is? Do they deserve the punishment of being sent to Hell?

Xena looks almost regretful. The camera turns to Eve who is looking around curiously, no longer writing.

EVE:

What was Eli like? I used to be his Messenger--I have a right to know what I was teaching, don't I?

GABRIELLE:

Of course you do, Eve. Eli was very...he's hard to describe. He always knew what was right and even though he never spilled a drop of blood his whole life, he was such a strong person. He believed totally in what he taught. He had faith in people, above all.

EVE (wistful):

I wish I'd known him.

XENA:

You and he would've gotten along well.

EVE:

I hope so.

XENA:

He certainly wouldn't be a part of whatever it is that Michael has cooking--his convictions are too strong for that.

Eve nods then walks to the edge of the water. Then, she perks up looking around.

EVE:

What was that?

XENA:

What?

There is a distant rumbling from the direction of the rocky cliffs.

EVE:

That.

They all stand there looking at each other, hearing the rumbling again.

GABRIELLE:

Let's go check it out.

Xena turns in the direction of the sound and starts to walk toward the rocky cliffs. Eve and Gabrielle follow, but Xena motions to them to stay back, so they do. There is a large, dark cave next to the cliff. There is a flash of silver blue light and Ares appears. He walks up to them. He and Xena look at each other.

ARES:

You know what this is, don't you?

XENA:

The entrance to Tartarus and beyond that...Hell.

ARES:

The gods are down there--my family.

Xena looks away regretfully.

ARES:

All my life they had treated me as if I was a disease. I *had* become the pariah of Olympus; they didn't care about me and I didn't care about them. But now that they're gone...

Looks at the cave then back at Xena.

ARES:

...I guess I do miss them, a little.

Xena looks at Ares with understanding. Then she looks at Gabrielle and Eve next to her.

XENA:

Come on.

Beckons Eve and Gabrielle over; they come.

GABRIELLE:

Where are we going?

XENA (stops, looks back):

We're going to free the gods.

ARES (almost surprised):

Whoa. I thought we didn't like the gods. You know, the whole killing Eve thing? Or did I just dream all that?

XENA (grimly):

Michael's not getting away with this little number, not if I can help it. (off Ares' look) And they don't deserve this fate.

There is another rumble from inside the cave before Gabrielle, Xena, Eve, and Ares head down into the dark depths of the cave leading the way to Tartarus as we:

ACT ONE

FADE IN

All four of them descend into Hell, walking along a narrow rock ledge. Eve is holding onto Xena's shoulder for support. Ares is next to Xena and Gabrielle right behind them.

Gabrielle slips, causing small rocks to tumble down toward Xena, Ares and Eve. Eve quickly steps out of the way but Ares slips on the rocks and slides backwards, taking Xena with him. She braces her foot and they stop moving. Xena looks back at Gabrielle who is standing up from the fall that she had taken. She sees Xena's glare.

GABRIELLE:

Sorry.

Xena shakes her head and then looks at Ares who, is very close to her. He grins. Xena eyes him then snarls slightly.

XENA:

Would you mind moving your hand?

Ares looks at her innocently. Xena looks down to her side for a moment as if looking at something and then looks back at Ares and glares. Ares lifts his hands in the air and turns around, continuing down the slope. Xena smirks, and shakes her head before following.

The camera watches Xena and Ares walk down then moves back to Eve, Gabrielle walking up to her. The two younger women look at each other, chuckle and then continue down along the path.

CUT TO

The four of them reach a huge vault like room. In front of them stand three giants, holding manacles in each of their hundred hands. The three giants are chained to the wall.

EVE (quietly):

What are they?

ARES:

The Hecatoncheires-- (pointing to each one, starting from the left) --Briareus, Cottus, and Gyges. They guarded the Titans before...

XENA:

They reached the same fate as the gods will if we don't free them.

The giants see them walking up and they roar wildly.

BRIAREUS:

Oh look, brothers! We've got company.

COTTUS:

I guess you'll have to do. It's not like we have a choice of entertainment; not many people make it down here.

GYGES:

You lucked out.

They growl and then proceed forward as far as their chains will let them, waving their many hands at Xena, Eve, Gabrielle and Ares. Xena draws her sword as does Ares, and Gabrielle draws her sais. Eve stands back.

XENA (sneers):

No...you did.

They attack the giants with a combination of fierce aerial moves and sword blows to their mid sections. Xena, Gabrielle and Ares hold them back while Eve tries to run past, out of harm's way. As they run, Briareus, who sees that Gabrielle is watching Eve and hasn't noticed how close she is to him, reaches out one of his hands and grabs her. She struggles and drops her sais as the giant uses one of his other hands to fasten a manacle around her body.

Eve, now safe, sees her predicament. She notices that one of the sais has fallen very close to her foot. She picks it up, obviously considering battling Briareus herself. She looks at it for a second before throwing it to Gabrielle and calling out to Xena.

EVE:

Mother!

Xena hears and stops her attack on the other two giants. She reaches for her chakram, but just as she is about to throw it, she sees Gabrielle catch the sai and jab it into the giant's hand. Briareus roars and lets go of Gabrielle; she falls to the ground, rolls over and runs past him out of his reach to where Eve is standing. Xena adapts, throwing her chakram at Gyges' face instead. It cuts a gash in his forehead before bouncing off of the cave wall and similarly injuring Briareus and Cottus.

XENA:

Ares, come on! Let's go!

They run towards Eve and Gabrielle--Xena catches her chakram as she goes--and all four of them leave the screaming giants to their fate.

CUT TO

Xena, Ares, Gabrielle, and Eve walk through a narrow hall until they come to a pair of large iron rusted gates, ornately designed but rusted. They avoid looking at the sign above the gate.

GABRIELLE:

The Gates of Hell...

XENA (to Eve and Gabrielle):

And the sign. Wouldn't recommend looking at it. You remember what happened last time you did.

They nod, agreeing.

EVE:

Mother, what do you plan to do once you find the gods?

XENA:

We'll cross that bridge when we come to it. Lets just find them first.

Suddenly, there is a flare of white light before them. Xena draws her sword. When the light fades, it reveals Archangel Raphael. Xena softens her glare a little but doesn't lower her sword. Raphael seems uncomfortable, constantly looking over his shoulder.

RAPHAEL:

There's no need for that, Xena. I have something that will help you on your quest. It's from Eli. I don't have much time before Michael finds out I'm gone, so listen good.

EVE:

Michael keeping you on a short leash, is he?



RAPHAEL (ignores her comment; in Hebrew):

Kol ha'olam kulo, geshet tsar meod. V'ha-ikar: lo l'fached klal. (translates, off Gabrielle, Eve, Xena, and Ares' curious expressions) The whole world is a bridge--a very *narrow* bridge. But the main thing to recall is just this: have no fear. (disappears)

GABRIELLE:

What's that supposed to mean?

XENA:

We'll find out soon enough. Come on.

Xena pushes the gates open, they creak as she does so, and proceeds into Hell, Gabrielle, Eve, and Ares follow behind her as we:

FADE OUT

ACT TWO

FADE IN

We see a room filled with clouds of bluish smoke; everything is blue black. Xena, Gabrielle, Ares, and Eve enter and are soon lost in the fog, separated from each other.

GABRIELLE (moving the fog with her hands in an attempt to see):
Xena! Eve! Ares!

CUT TO

Another part of the room. Xena is hidden in fog away from the others.

XENA (hearing the calls):
Gabrielle! Eve! Ares!

CUT TO

Another part of the room. Eve is hidden away from the others as well.

EVE:
Mother, where are you?! Gabrielle!

CUT TO

Another part of the room. Ares is calling.

ARES:
Xena!!

They all continue to call for each other but are unable to locate each other through the thick fog.

CUT TO

Xena walks through the fog, looking, hearing the calling cease. The fog suddenly parts for her and she enters a clearing, seeing Ares standing in front of her. He looks almost transfixed by her appearance.

XENA (glad to see him):
Ares. (she smiles) Come on, we have to go find Eve and Gabrielle.

She tries to get him to come, but he pulls away from her, only to step closer again.

ARES:
That can wait... (seductively) I've waited so long to do this.

He gazes at her so tenderly that she can't help but stay where she is. He kisses her wildly. Xena tries half-heartedly to pull away, but soon starts kissing back.



XENA:

Ares...we have to go...

Ares caresses her body with his hands, ignoring what she's saying.

ARES (in a tender voice):

Tell me you're mine, Xena. Tell me you're mine...

XENA (closing her eyes in pleasure):

Yes...

Suddenly, his sinister laugh echoes through the room. Xena looks at him alarmed and sees an evil smile on his face.



ARES:

Welcome back! (continues to caress and kiss her) You and I will be unstoppable. We will rule the world like we had always dreamed of doing... (whispers) ...together.

She can't resist his touch, though she is clearly distraught.

XENA (weakly):

No. No... I have left that behind me...

ARES:

Have you, Xena? *They* don't think so.

He points to rows of severed heads surrounding them--heads of murdered villagers all muttering accusations at Xena.

HEAD #1:

You destroyed my village, Xena! My family!! You think you can just put that behind you?

HEAD #2:

My son died at your hand even as he begged for mercy!

HEAD #3:

You think the good deeds you do now will ever make up for what you did to us?

Xena's anguished. She shakes her head, putting her hands over her ears trying to drown out their voices but is unable to, they just get louder and louder.



XENA:

No... No!

CUT TO

Ares is walking through the fog. The fog begins to clear a path in front of him and he sees something that looks to be a figure before him.

ARES:

Xena?

The fog clears more and he sees Gabrielle and Eve lying on the ground.

ARES:

Ah. Two for the price of one. What are you doing? We have to go look for Xena. Come on.

There is no response from either woman.

ARES:

Wake up--we've got to go.

There is still nothing. Ares crouches by them and picks up Gabrielle's arm, pressing his finger to her wrist to check for a pulse. There isn't one.

ARES:

Not again...

He puts his hands on them, letting a blue glow shine around all three of them. He heals them again. When the blue light fades and Gabrielle and Eve stir slightly, Ares collapses to the ground. He is extremely weak, barely able to move. He looks up and sees the faint image of Xena coming toward him.

ARES (to himself, weakly):

You're coming for me...

Xena steps right over him, not even looking at him.

XENA (casually--almost sarcastically):

Thanks, Ares.

She helps Gabrielle up and they stand over him. Eve scrambles up as well but stays a little way behind Xena and Gabrielle.

XENA (begins to laugh, looking down at the weak and helpless Ares):

You are so pathetic, Ares, you know that? Your love...is a joke! It's really funny if you think about it. Did you really think that if you saved Gabrielle and Eve, you'd actually have a chance with me? So foolish. (she sounds incredulous; disgusted at what Ares did)

Ares looks at her, hurt and pain in his eyes. Gabrielle is grinning evilly.



Xena starts to kiss Gabrielle passionately and then they both begin to laugh.

XENA:

Yeah, I know why you did it. I know why you do everything. You trained me too well. You know what, Ares? You've failed. Now you're just a washed up, useless mortal that won't ever amount to anything in this world. But you want to know the best part, right?

ARES (numbly):

No.

GABRIELLE:

I do.

Xena ignores him.

XENA:

The best part is that the only memory of your (sarcastic) true love you'll have is the knowledge that everything you've done for me has been for *nothing*.

Gabrielle starts snickering. Ares looks at Xena--horrified, shocked, confused all at once. Xena sees him and starts laughing again.



GABRIELLE (through the laughter):

She's right, Ares. You've been trying to keep us apart ever since Xena and I met. Well, it didn't work; you should have realized that a long time ago. I'm the only one Xena is in love with. You mean *nothing* to her.



ARES (shakes head):

That isn't true...

GABRIELLE:

Oh, it is. She's told me. She hates you and I don't blame her after all the hurt you've caused her.

To tell you the truth, I agree with her. I hate you too. No one in their right mind would be able to *love* the God of War. Or should I say *ex* God of War?

Xena beckons Eve to come closer while Gabrielle speaks.

EVE:

I used to think that you were serious about the two of us, ruling the world, death and destruction... And then you go and betray me! Did you really think my mother would let you into her bed?! If I didn't follow Eli, I'd kill you on the spot--but this is even better. Now my mother's life is complete.

XENA:

That's right. (puts her arms around Eve and Gabrielle) I have my daughter and Gabrielle--four's a crowd, Ares.

Xena, Eve, and Gabrielle begin to cackle evilly. Gabrielle grabs Xena's head and starts to kiss her again while Eve continues to laugh. They completely ignore Ares who looks distraught.

CUT TO

Xena is still looking at the severed heads, still muttering accusations at her.

HEAD #3:

Are you scared to look at us, Xena?

Ares comes up behind her and begins to rub Xena's shoulders tenderly. Then, he starts kissing her neck.

ARES:

Forget them, Xena. Forget them. The only thing that is important now is that we're together and we will rule together.

He leans in closer to her, nuzzling her neck.

ARES (whisper in her ear):

Imagine it...two great armies going head to head, with you and me riding at the head of the victory. I know you want it.

XENA (shakes her head, anguished):

No.

She starts to walk away but Ares takes hold of her arm, spins her around and captures Xena's lips once again.

ARES:

And then, of course, there's our victory celebration...

The next scene is similar to Xena's dream in "Eternal Bonds". He fiercely kisses her neck, her face, then moves down. He lowers the straps of her leather tunic and he begins to slip it off her body, as he kisses the skin just above her breasts. Xena's head is arched back. It is clear that though she enjoys what Ares is doing, she knows that something is not right.

Ares straightens up and wraps his arms firmly around her waist; Xena is now pressed up against him. He looks deep into her eyes.

ARES:

I know you want me, Xena. I can see it in your eyes. It's that fire, the lust for power... You know what I can bring you. We could be equals on and off the battlefield. Join me, Xena.

He leans to kiss her again but this time, she is able to free herself from his grasp and walks away. Then in front of her appears a head, floating in the air.

HEAD #4:

Why do you fear what you are?

Xena's face soon turns from anguish to realization, the word "fear" echoing in her mind.

[FLASHBACK]

RAPHAEL:

The whole world is a bridge--a very *narrow* bridge. But the main thing to recall is just this: have no fear.

[END OF FLASHBACK]

XENA (confident; to the severed heads):

I'm not that way anymore.

She turns to the nightmare Ares.

XENA (firmly):

You're not that way anymore. I'm not afraid of you.

ARES:

Of course not, Xena. Don't be afraid of me. Don't be afraid of the darkness inside you. Embrace it.

Xena shakes her head and closes her eyes, remembering the past; clips from "Motherhood" show.

[FLASHBACK]

Ares is standing above the now revived Gabrielle and Eve. He is looking at the dying Athena.

ARES:

I gave up my immortality to save them.

CUT TO

Xena turns to Ares, who is looking at her almost tenderly but with a hint of uncertainty in his eyes.

[END OF FLASHBACK]

The nightmare Ares leans in to kiss her lips again, but she stops him, forcefully pushing him away.

XENA (firmly):
I'm not afraid of you.

We see that the nightmare Ares is weakening.

XENA:
I'm not afraid of you. I'm not afraid of you!

ARES:
No... No... (voice begins to falter and fade)

CUT TO

Ares is still lying on the ground. He looks at Xena who is kissing Gabrielle. Xena looks down at him for a moment.

XENA:
Do you fear your mortality, Ares? You *should*.

Ares begins to look around thoughtfully.

XENA:
It's a cruel world out there; you're not cut out to live in it. I bet you won't be able to survive your first night. So, you *should* be afraid. (she goes back to kissing Gabrielle)

ARES (quietly, to himself):
Fear...

[FLASHBACK]

RAPHAEL:
The whole world is a bridge--a very *narrow* bridge. But the main thing to recall is just this: have no fear.

[END OF FLASHBACK]

Ares still looks at Xena. She stops kissing Gabrielle and she looks quite annoyed by his staring.

XENA (snapping):
What are you looking at?

He closes his eyes, reliving the same flashback as Xena used, from "Motherhood".

[FLASHBACK]

Ares is standing in front of Xena warily, unsure of what her reaction would be.

XENA (in a caring voice):
Thank you.

He nods almost smiling.

[END OF FLASHBACK]

Ares opens his eyes. He stands up and walks up to Xena.

ARES:

You're not real. This whole thing isn't real.

She looks at Gabrielle who is grinning wickedly and then they both burst into laughter.

XENA (she starts to laugh again):
Oh, you think so, do you?

ARES:

Yeah. You know how I know? (Xena eyes him) Because you care. I know you do.

The nightmare Xena's laughter begins to fade.

ARES:

You care! I know you do.

XENA:

No...

ARES:

You care! I know you do.

Suddenly we see both the real Xena and Ares breaking out of their nightmares. They find themselves standing, facing each other. They don't know that they have escaped and keep repeating their phrases.

XENA (repeating):

I'm not afraid of you. I'm not afraid of you.

ARES (repeating):

You care! I know you do. You care! I know you do.

There is momentary uncomfortable silence as they realize that they're free from their fears and that the person in front of them is real--no longer the nightmare.

XENA (looking around, not wanting to look at Ares):

I...

ARES:

Let's go.

They look at each other; their expressions both show a hint of embarrassment.

XENA:

Yeah. We don't have the time to waste talking.

CUT TO

Xena walks up to a clearing in the fog and sees Gabrielle and Eve.

CUT TO

Inside Gabrielle's nightmare. She is in a generic tavern room, sparsely furnished with a bed, a table and a crib. She sees the crib and walks slowly over to it. Inside is a young baby, wrapped in a white blanket. Only her face is visible. She is smiling and waving her arms around.

A smile comes over Gabrielle's face.

GABRIELLE:

Hope...my baby.

She reaches into the cradle and picks up Hope, who immediately settles into her mother's arms with a satisfied gurgle. Gabrielle hugs her tightly. Hope's face is visible to us but not to Gabrielle. We watch them for a moment as Gabrielle sits down on the bed, nursing her daughter.



GABRIELLE:

I knew you weren't evil. Just like I told Xena, you're my child. You're not evil.

We see Hope's face suddenly change from a sweet baby to a monstrous demon. Her skin shrivels and turns red and her eyes become slits. Small triangular fangs appear between her lips. Gabrielle is still totally oblivious.

GABRIELLE:

I love you, Hope.

Hope makes a snarling noise as she breaks away from Gabrielle's arms. She becomes bigger and bigger as we watch, until she is only just smaller than Gabrielle herself. Her white blanket falls to the floor and we see her demonic form: she has red skin and is partly covered in gooey stuff, similar to the beginning of "Sacrifice II". It, however, is also red.

Gabrielle at first doesn't understand what is happening.

GABRIELLE (shouting):

Hope! Don't worry! I'll protect you!

She draws her sais.

Hope laughs, before speaking. She has a raspy, snake-like voice that Gabrielle can only just hear.



HOPE:

I think you'll have enough trouble protecting yourself. Mother.

Gabrielle is too shocked to speak. She drops her sais.

HOPE:

Yes, yes, it's me. Your beloved daughter. Did you miss me?

Gabrielle manages to find her voice.

GABRIELLE:

You're--you aren't my daughter!

HOPE:

Oh, but I am. It's ironic, really, don't you think?

GABRIELLE (weakly):

What?

HOPE:

That you're the one who gave me life. I existed before you knew me, Mother, before that day in that temple in Britannia. Father and I were waiting for the right one, the one to give me human form.

GABRIELLE:

You're not human, Hope.

HOPE (musing):

No, I'm not, am I? Do you know why that is? It's because you never loved me. Not once. Even when I was just a baby, you were always trying to get Xena (she spits the name out bitterly, as though it's a curse) involved too. It was never you and me. It was always you and her.

Hope is quite emotional by this time, almost human, but she abruptly calms herself down. Gabrielle is openly sobbing.

HOPE:

Anyway, back to the irony of the situation. You gave me life. I'm about to give you--

She pauses a moment and waits for Gabrielle to look at her. Her eyes and voice go ice-cold as she reaches out her arms and starts to choke Gabrielle.

HOPE:

--death.

They struggle as Hope grips Gabrielle's neck tighter and tighter, forcing Gabrielle down onto the floor. She kneels over her to watch her mother die. Gabrielle has other ideas though; she rolls over and over on the floor, finally breaking Hope's grip. She has ended up within arm's reach of one of her sais. She takes a few deep breaths before grabbing the sai and jumping back onto her feet.

Hope is at first admiring, but quickly becomes incensed that her mother is still living.

HOPE:

You're a lot better than you look, Mother. I hate that.

She charges towards Gabrielle, expecting to be able to knock her over again. Gabrielle reacts quickly though and steps to the side, allowing Hope to impale herself on the outstretched sai. She dies immediately.

Gabrielle falls to the ground, by her daughter, sobbing.

GABRIELLE:

My Hope, my baby. You're not evil; you can't be evil!

CUT TO

Xena appears out of the mist and sees Gabrielle writhing on the ground.

GABRIELLE:

You're not evil; you can't be evil! I won't let you be evil!

Xena runs to Gabrielle and starts shaking her.

XENA:

Gabrielle, face your fear! Hope is gone! She's not coming back! Face it!

Gabrielle shudders violently, before jerking awake.

GABRIELLE:

Xena?

XENA:

It's me, Gabrielle. It's me. It's over. You're all right.

She rocks Gabrielle gently, soothing her.

CUT TO

We see inside Eve's nightmare. The final fight sequence from "Eve":

LIVIA:

Attack!

Various fight clips are shown of Livia/Xena in the temple. Livia raises the chakram over Xena's throat.

XENA (whispering):

Eli, save my daughter. I couldn't. (looks at Livia) I love you.

As in the episode, a light shines through the roof of the temple.

Condensed baby Eve clips are shown from "Seeds of Faith", "God Fearing Child" and various other episodes...

XENA:

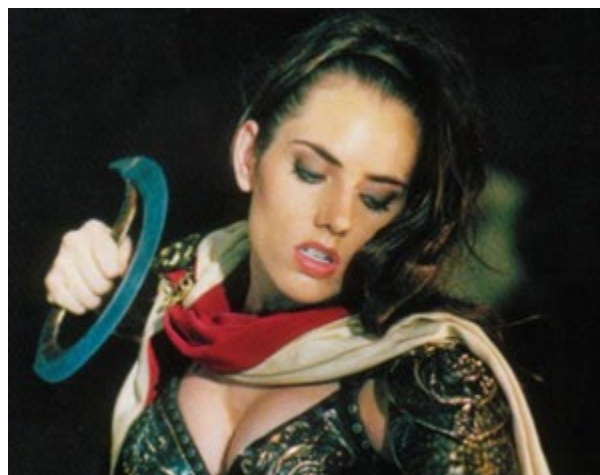
We're going to be together, now, Eve. You and me.

Xena is singing a lullaby.

As the light fades away, Eve looks at her mother. Xena is lying on the temple floor, vulnerable to attack. They share a long look.

LIVIA:

I know.



She slams the chakram down, killing Xena. There is no emotion in her face at all.

CUT TO

Hell. Eve is lying on the ground, moaning. Xena is trying to wake her up. Gabrielle is standing watching them.

XENA:

Eve! Wake up!

EVE (screaming out):

No! I didn't kill you! I didn't kill you! It didn't happen! I didn't kill you, Mother!

XENA (shaking Eve):

Come on, Eve, you can do it! I love you! You didn't kill me!

CUT TO

Inside Eve's nightmare. Now we are in Rome, watching Livia deliver a speech to a cheering crowd.

LIVIA:

So, as you can see, the Elijans have now been completely annihilated.

We pan across the crowd to see rows and rows of crosses stretching off into the distance, each with a crude, mocking fish emblem scratched into the wood.

LIVIA:

If any other members of this ungodly cult dare to show their faces in Rome's Empire again, they will suffer the same fate. Even now, I doubt they are getting what they so obviously deserve.

The crowd cheers again. Livia smiles coldly. She is completely evil, totally beyond redemption.

We zoom in on Livia's face and sound bites of her thoughts play. She smiles evilly all the while.

[LIVIA'S THOUGHTS]

XENA:

Eve! Wake up! You didn't kill me--I'm right here! Eve, face your fears! You're not Livia anymore!

[END LIVIA'S THOUGHTS]

CUT TO

Hell. Eve jerks awake and instantly seeks Xena's arms. They hug for a time.

GABRIELLE:

Well, I guess we know what that riddle Raphael gave us means now, that we had to escape from our greatest fears in order to move through Hell freely.

XENA (nods):

Let's find the gods and get out of here before anything else happens.

EVE:

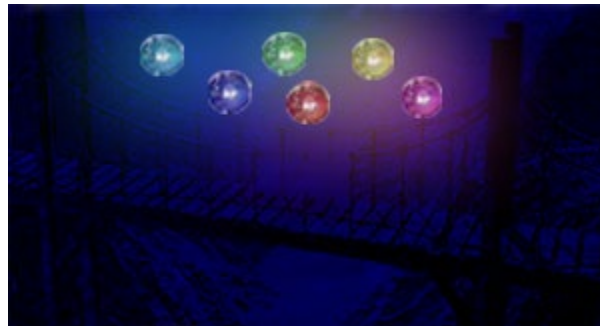
Good idea.

FADE OUT

ACT THREE

FADE IN

The four of them continue through the depths of Hell.



In front of them is a long, narrow rickety wooden rope bridge suspended over an abyss. There are little glass spheres floating in the air above them, like jars with fireflies inside; each one glowing with a different color--gold, green, blue, orange and others.

EVE (looking up):

They're too beautiful for this place; there's something not right about them.

GABRIELLE:

What are they?

ARES (realizing):

They're the gods, being held prisoner in these spheres.

GABRIELLE (understanding):

Because their worst fear is being helpless and confined.

XENA:

We need to get them down.

ARES:

Uh...how?

He is not impressed with the set-up.

Xena reaches up but the spheres immediately move far out of her reach. There is no question of getting them by hand. She steps onto the bridge, looking up and trying to figure out a way of reaching them.

Once she is a fair distance from the edge, Lucifer suddenly appears. Xena draws her sword.

LUCIFER:

Well...look who's here. The Warrior Princess, the blonde sidekick, the whiny brat and our pitiful excuse for a God of War.

ARES:

Thanks for the roll-call.

XENA:

I'm not in the mood for games, Lucifer. Get out of our way.

LUCIFER:

Not in the mood for games? (he laughs bitterly) You were ready to play games the last time we met; I seem to remember. I wouldn't trust my memory anymore though...it's not been the same since I was sent down here.

XENA:

You wouldn't believe me if I apologized, so I won't. Now cut the crap and move.

LUCIFER:

Now, why would I want to help you?

He draws his sword and lunges at Xena, who parries his blow. They fight. They are evenly matched; what advantage Xena has in skill is matched by Lucifer's demonic strength and sheer size.

As the bridge is so insecure, neither of them attempts any flips or jumps; the bridge would almost certainly collapse if they did.

LUCIFER:

I'm better than you expected, aren't I? I've kept up the standard down here--I've made it a better place.

XENA (not impressed; strikes at him):

Oh, really?



LUCIFER (blocks her):

Interesting thought, hm? That you sent someone to rule Hell who actually made it better? I can't

wait for you to finally run out of lives--and get you down here. I've got a place especially prepared for you.

From the cliff edge, Ares, Gabrielle and Eve are watching. On hearing Lucifer's final line, Ares roars forward onto the bridge, trying to shoot a lightning bolt at Lucifer. However, no gods have power in Hell, so it fails. Ares loses his balance and slips over the side of the bridge, barely managing to grab onto a trailing bit of rope.

XENA:

Ares!

Xena flips to Ares. As she lands, the bridge sways dangerously. Ares loses his grip briefly with one hand, but manages to take the arm Xena is offering him. He is still in danger though.

Lucifer strides across to them.

LUCIFER:

How sweet. Wouldn't it be unfair if dear War God here just happened to fall into the chasm?

Xena and Ares are both straining from the effort of not tumbling down.

XENA:

It's not gonna happen.

LUCIFER (sighing):

No, it wouldn't be very fair, would it? The same kind of fair as my kind cast down here because you couldn't bear to face what you'd done? No, I suppose not.

He pauses. We see the far side of the bridge for the first time: there are hundreds of winged demon-creatures pounced, ready to fly over and topple all four of them into the fiery pit.

LUCIFER:

Although, I'm the King of Hell. Why do I care what's fair and what isn't?

Gabrielle has also seen the demons.

GABRIELLE:

Wait!!

Surprisingly, everyone stops and looks at her.

GABRIELLE:

Lucifer, who do you hate more than anymore else in the world?

LUCIFER (nods towards Xena):

Her and you. Why?

GABRIELLE:

Hm, really? Guess that leaves Michael off the hook.

Lucifer immediately abandons Xena and Ares and goes over to Gabrielle. In the background we can see Xena helping Ares back onto the bridge.

LUCIFER (growling):

What about Michael? How dare you mention him to me?

Lucifer is instantly far more interested in what Gabrielle is saying, as soon as he hears that Michael is a part of it.

GABRIELLE:

What if I told you that we were fighting against Michael and the God of Love?

LUCIFER (nods towards Eve):

I wouldn't believe you.

GABRIELLE:

Lucifer...what would you give to see Michael and his little scheme stopped?

LUCIFER (scowling):

What do you want?

Xena and Ares appear from the bridge. Ares is not hurt, although he looks a little shaken.

XENA:

Safe passage to the gods. If we rescue them that puts a dent in Michael's plan. And, come on...what good are they doing you? I don't see a lot else down here--it must be inconvenient to have to keep making sure they're still here, right?

She is persuading Lucifer quickly--he is essentially convinced--although, unlike in "Heart of Darkness" there is nothing remotely sexual in the scene.

LUCIFER:

I'm the devil. Convenience isn't really part of the job description. (he sees their persuasive faces) Fine. Agreed. But only because I hate Michael more than I hate you. But not by much.

Out of Lucifer's view, Xena rolls her eyes.

ARES:

Great. Now how about you get rid of your pet bats over there and let us through?

Lucifer bristles at the reference to his incredibly dangerous, high skilled minions but does not comment. He waves his arm and they fade away back into the shadows.

LUCIFER:

They're gone. Now get out of my sight before I change my mind.

He disappears in a flicker of red light and as he does so, the spheres holding the gods move downwards just enough for Xena and Ares to reach them. They grab them, along with Eve and Gabrielle.

XENA (counts them):

Two of the gods are missing.

Gabrielle, Eve and Ares look at her.

EVE:

How can that be? They all had the same fears, didn't they? And they all died at the same time so they should all be here.

GABRIELLE:

No, they didn't. Zeus and Hera died when you were born. So...

EVE (realizing):

That means that they have progressed further into Hell...because they've been dead longer than the rest.

Xena crosses the bridge in front of them, Eve, Gabrielle, and Ares follow, holding onto the ropes on the side of the bridge, trying not to lose their balance. Once they've crossed, they start looking around.

ARES:

Now where?

Xena points to a narrow, twisted passage cut into the cliff.

XENA:

In there.

ARES:

Oh, joy.

He turns to Gabrielle and Eve.

ARES:

Hope neither of you is claustrophobic.

EVE:

Who knows, we might lose you...

XENA:

Come on, we have to go.

They enter the passage.

CUT TO

The other end of the passage. The four of them enter into a huge cavern, whose main focus is a swirling black vortex. Its center is an ominous shade of red. Zeus and Hera are floating perilously close to it, unconscious. Their bodies are flat and rigid.

GABRIELLE:

That would be...

EVE:

Not good.

ARES:

For once I agree with you.



XENA:

See the red part in the middle? That means they're almost gone--we don't have a lot of time.

GABRIELLE:

How come the rest of the gods are trapped but Zeus and Hera are totally unconscious?

EVE:

They're so deep inside their own nightmares that they have lost their sense of self, their sense of reality. There's no reason to hold them prisoner by force when their own mind will do just the same.

Ares looks at Xena, who is studying the two gods and the vortex.

ARES:

I've said it before and no doubt I'll say it again: what's the plan?

XENA:

We go save your parents. You two stay here and look after the rest of them. Don't let them out of your sight!

GABRIELLE:

Good luck.

EVE:

Yeah. Good luck.

Xena and Ares go towards the gods--Xena to Hera and Ares to Zeus--and enter into their nightmares.

CUT TO

Hera's nightmare. She sees herself as Io, the girl she persecuted for her affairs with Zeus. She's turned into a cow and there are giant gadflies stinging her. As she whips about in a frenzy, all she can see are eyes--hundreds of eyes, staring at her accusingly. Xena looks at Hera.

XENA:

Hera, this isn't who you are! You are the Goddess of Family. Stop tormenting yourself about your past. This is not your destiny--change yourself and change it.

CUT TO

Zeus' nightmare. He sees himself as Prometheus, suffering at the claws of the eagle that he himself had once set on the helpless Titan. He is naked from the waist up, covered only by a loincloth, and is bound by his wrists and ankles to a giant boulder. Ares speaks to his father.

ARES:

You're meant to be the King of the Gods. Prove it! There's no purpose in tormenting yourself over the past.

CUT TO

Hell. There is a flare of light and Xena and Ares are taken out of Hera and Zeus' nightmares. They look at Zeus and Hera, who have begun to shake. Within seconds Hera and Zeus are freed from their nightmares. They drop to the ground and the red area of the vortex totally disappears. The gods look around, bewildered.



XENA:

Let's go home, shall we?

Gabrielle and Eve look at Xena, then at Hera and Zeus.

GABRIELLE:

Yeah.

FADE OUT

ACT FOUR

FADE IN

All six of them approach the gates of Hell, Xena, Gabrielle, Eve and Ares holding the spheres of the other gods, Zeus and Hera behind them. They look disoriented.

There is a bright flash of light that beams down in front of them and Michael, Uriel and Raphael appear. They are all holding their swords.

MICHAEL:

Well, if it isn't the Salvation Army. Where do *you* think you're going? You're in Hell; once you've entered, you can never leave even if it isn't your time yet.

XENA:

Oh, really? And who's going to stop me? You? You know as well as I do that gods have no powers in the underworlds. And that *includes* angels.

RAPHAEL (trying to reason with her):

By defying us, you are putting yourself in a position that will permanently put you on the list for Hell when you die.

XENA:

What makes you think I won't end up here anyway?

GABRIELLE:

I thought you were on our side, Raphael, that you were different than those two?

RAPHAEL:

I serve God, Gabrielle, first and foremost. I will *not* disobey Him.

URIEL (anxious):

Oh, cut with the chitchat. Are we going to stop them or what?



All three archangels attack. Xena, Ares and Gabrielle give their spheres to Zeus, Hera, and Eve and then attack. It is a magnificent fight, but without the archangel's powers, they become like any other mortal.

Xena attacks Michael angrily. He swings and she counters it with her sword, pushing him backward. Before he has time to recover, Xena leaps into the air and kicks him in the face. She lands behind him and catches him as he loses his balance. She pulls her sword over his throat.

XENA (snarls):

Not so tough without your powers, huh?

MICHAEL:

You will not reach the surface with the gods! By doing so, they'll regain their powers.

XENA:

Exactly what I'm counting on!

CUT TO

Ares fighting Uriel.

URIEL:

You know, I would have thought the God of War would be able to fight better than you.

ARES (annoyed):

I'm just doing my bit to make it a fair fight. You're not exactly the sharpest tool in the shed, are you?

He kicks Ares in the side; he steps back before regaining his balance.

URIEL:

I'm better than you.

Ares lunges at Uriel with all his might, throwing him against the cave wall. His sword placed against Uriel's throat.

ARES:

Yeah. Like I said.

CUT TO

Eve, Zeus, and Hera watching the battle before them. Zeus looks at Eve.

ZEUS:

So you're Eve. (she looks at him) I saw you when you were first born and...I was going to kill you until...I died instead. You must hate me for what I tried to do.

EVE:

Michael may be corrupted but that doesn't mean Eli is. I've done worse things in my time--why should I be angry with you?

Zeus holds his hand out to her.

ZEUS:

You're a wise young woman.

Eve takes his hand.

EVE:

It runs in the family.

CUT TO

Gabrielle fighting Raphael. Raphael swings at Gabrielle, she catches the sword in her sais and pushes him back. He stops fighting for a moment.

RAPHAEL:

I'm sorry I have to do this, Gabrielle but...it's our duty to keep God in power. By restoring the pantheon, you will be disrupting the order of things.

GABRIELLE:

Them being in power and being alive are two different things, Raphael. Just because their reign is over doesn't mean they deserved that fate.

Raphael backs off for a moment and looks at Michael and Uriel who are still fighting Ares and Xena. They seem to be losing, Michael is backed into a corner, Xena's sword pointed at his throat and Uriel is on his back, Ares looking down at him, sword pointed.

MICHAEL (realizing defeat, snarls):

This isn't over, Xena. Make no mistake of that. God will always prevail.

Xena moves her sword away from his throat. He walks over to Uriel, who stands up and then they both walk over to Raphael. Michael and Uriel give all of them scornful looks.

URIEL:

We will return. Count on it.

XENA:

Oh, I am.

Raphael looks at Gabrielle, but there isn't hate in his eyes like there is in Michael and Uriel's. He looks at her thoughtfully before a light from above shoots down over the three archangels and engulfs them. They disappear.

Xena sighs and puts her sword in the scabbard at her back. She looks at Eve, Gabrielle, Ares, Zeus and Hera who walk up to her. She takes the spheres from Zeus and Hera, giving some to Ares and Gabrielle and then they head out through the gates.

CUT TO

The six of them are walking out of the cave. Just as they do so, Zeus and Hera, who are walking behind them, begin to glow brightly with a brilliant light. The four of them look back at the gods who are being covered with a light, wind whipping around them. It soon fades and the four of them can see that Zeus and Hera have been returned to their normal selves; their powers are back.

After moments of silence, Zeus walks up to Xena.

ZEUS:

Xena, I was wrong...for trying to kill Eve. I was too afraid of losing my powers and I was willing to do anything to keep that from happening.

XENA:

It might have been Michael's plan, but it was my daughter that suffered. It's her you need to apologize to.

ZEUS:

I already did.

Xena looks over at Eve, who nods in confirmation.

XENA:

If she forgives you, I'll try to do the same.

Zeus nods. He then looks over at Ares, who is watching him, emotionless.

ZEUS (walks up to him):

Son...

Ares waits for him to continue but realizes that he isn't going to and nods in understanding. Zeus walks over to Hera, takes her and in a spectacular burst of light, they disappear.

Xena watches as the light fades and then looks at the spheres she holds in her hands. Inside each one, a miniature form of the gods can be seen, scrapping at the glass and screaming, begging to be let out.

Xena looks at it for a moment and then lets go of it. It falls to the ground and shatters. From it, the god that had been trapped rises from it, still in the form of a shining firefly and flies up into the sky.

Ares, Gabrielle, and Eve do the same with their spheres. Ares, however, saves one with a golden aura. All four of them watch as the different colored lights fly into the sky, zigging and zagging through the air, shouting with joy until they are gone from sight.

Ares looks at the one sphere he has left.

ARES:

Oh, look...my dear sister.

He shakes it. Golden glittery stuff flies all over the place.

ARES:

It's snowing!

He watches for a moment longer before dropping it to the ground. A little golden firefly hops out, quickly growing to a full-sized Athena. She looks weak and thin and there is a hollowness in her eyes.

She steps closer to Ares--who is wary--and then, on an impulse, hugs him tightly. He looks over her shoulder at Xena, completely wrong footed. She nods at him, so he awkwardly pats his sister's back.

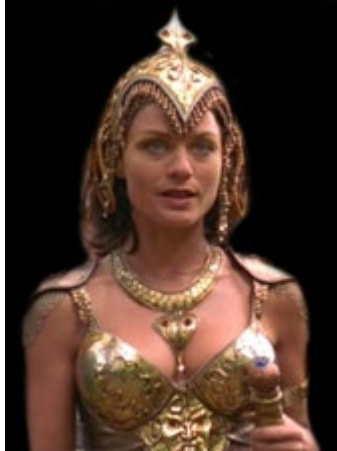
We see Athena's face. Her eyes are closed, but a few tears have run down her face. She is overcome by emotion.

They finally break apart.

ARES:

Guess that means you don't hate me at the moment, right?

Athena makes a noise partway between a laugh and a sob.



ATHENA:

Thank you, Ares. I mean that.

She takes Ares' hand in her own and they nod at each other before Athena disappears in a flicker of gold light.

EVE:

The gods are free. (she smiles) I hope they take advantage of their second chance at life and use it wisely.

GABRIELLE:

Yeah.

Gabrielle smiles at Eve and then looks over at Xena and Ares, who are looking at each other thoughtfully. Gabrielle puts her hand on Eve's shoulder and they turn and walk a short distance away, leaving Xena and Ares alone.

ARES (grins):

So, you're not afraid of me, huh? I must be slipping.

XENA:

Keep slipping, Ares--you're on the right track.

ARES:

So I was right. You *do* care.

There is a moment of silence.

XENA:

You *know* I do.

She gives him a half smile and he disappears. Xena heads back to Gabrielle and Eve.

CUT TO

GABRIELLE:

You know, something good happened while we were in there.

Xena and Eve both look at her, as if to say "duh." Gabrielle corrects herself.

GABRIELLE:

I mean aside from the obvious.

XENA:

And what would that be?

GABRIELLE:

I think I finally let go of Hope. You know, all these years, I thought that she was...well, the way she was--because I didn't love her enough. (she pauses, battling her emotions)

XENA:

But you did! You loved her so much...

GABRIELLE (swallows and nods):

I know that now. I guess I felt I'd failed her somehow. Failed myself. (more confidently) But I hadn't. (with tentative humor) I think I could be a good mother, as long as the child wasn't another murdering demon created to bring about the end of the world.

Eve looks down guiltily. Gabrielle sees her and realizes what she said.

GABRIELLE:

I'm sorry, Eve--I didn't mean that.

Eve walks on ahead of the other two.

GABRIELLE:

I didn't mean that like it sounded, Xena.

Xena looks at her for a moment and nods.

XENA:

I know. Let me go talk to her.

CUT TO

Eve and Xena walking. They don't speak for a long while. Eve eventually breaks the silence.

EVE:

I wouldn't have killed you in that temple, you know.

XENA:

I know. Gabrielle wasn't talking about you back then. She didn't mean it.

EVE:

I know she wasn't--but this whole thing happened because I was born.

Xena stops her and puts a hand on her face.

XENA:

No. It happened--and you were born--because of Michael and his God. Don't you blame yourself for his evil. You have enough to worry about with your own.

Eve nods thoughtfully.

EVE:

How do you live with it, Mother? How do you fight and still tell yourself you're doing the right thing?

XENA:

All you can do to make amends for your past is to do the right thing. There's no other option. For you, at the moment, your preaching is the best way to do that. For me it's stopping Michael from corrupting someone else's daughter.

EVE:

You don't think I should fight like you and Gabrielle?

XENA:

I think you will, when you're ready.

EVE:

Maybe.

XENA:

Do you want to go back and walk with Gabrielle again?

EVE:

Yeah...let's go.

CUT TO

Eve, Xena and Gabrielle walking.

GABRIELLE:

Xena, you really think Michael and the other archangels will be back? With the gods back, what would be the point? (chuckles) It's not like they're going to get you to kill them again.

XENA:

I don't know. But we'll be ready for them if they do.

EVE:

We always are.

XENA (nods, puts her hand around Eve; smiles):
That's right.

Gabrielle puts her hand around Xena and they walk along the steps of the temple until they are out of view as we:

FADE OUT

THE END

*[None of Lucifer's winged demons were harmed during the production of this motion picture.
However, several were mildly traumatized by being labeled "pet bats".]*