

SHIPPER SEASON SEVEN



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Logline

Eve must confront her past and her heritage when she returns to the Amazon lands with Xena and Gabrielle. Meanwhile, under attack by a barbarian tribe, the Amazons have to make a decision that some of them find difficult to accept.

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TEASER

FADE IN

A desolate land, not many trees in sight. Ones that can be seen are dying and are bare without leaves. The ground is rocky and swirls of dust are seen blowing in the air, the sun beating down intensely. On one patch of this land is what looks like a makeshift tent village, with scattered fires burning amidst the tents. As the camera moves around the village we see men dressed in animal skins, with necklaces and bracelets made from the fangs of animals. Their hair is long and matted; many of them have long, scraggly beards. Some of them are eating by the campfires, others practicing sword moves. Some women, who look just as scruffy as the men, are scurrying around with crying babies in their arms.

The camera continues to move around the camp until it begins to focus on the largest tent, closing in on it.

CUT TO

Inside the tent we find a man sitting on a large chair decorated with deer antlers and bones. He is dressed quite a bit nicer than the other men we've seen, his long brown hair is more combed, pulled back into a ponytail and he has only a small goatee on his chin. It is clear that he is the leader of this group.

He is surveying a map that lies on a table in front of him. Occasionally he sips wine from a goblet on the table. He seems to be lost in thought.

One of the warriors enters the tent. The man in the chair looks up, and the other man bows.

WARRIOR:

My lord Euric... (looks up) ...you summoned me?

EURIC:

It is time. Gather the rest of the men...we're heading out at first light.

WARRIOR:

Yes, my lord.

Euric gestures to him to leave; the warrior bows once more and then leaves. Grinning, Euric takes another sip from the goblet and then goes back to looking at the map. The camera moves in so that we can see the map and we find that it is a map of Greece, a circle around a city in the farthest north corner of Greece labeled as Themiscyra.

EURIC (grins):

Greece is a big place to conquer--but you gotta start somewhere. This little town should be a cinch.

Euric chuckles and takes a dagger that is lying next to the map and rams it into the map, right where the town is circled.



CUT TO

A campsite. It's morning. Xena, Gabrielle, and Eve, are sitting around a burnt-out fire.

EVE:

You still haven't told me where we're headed.

XENA (reluctantly):

I'm not sure you're going to like this, Eve. We're on our way to Themiscyra.

EVE (shocked):

But that's...that's the capital city of the Amazons.

GABRIELLE (solemnly):

Yes. The Amazon tribes are gathering there right now, to discuss some new threat that they may be facing. I don't know what it is yet, but I must attend--they *are* my people.

XENA:

We want you to come with us, Eve.

EVE (nervously):

You really think I should? The last time I went to the Amazons in peace, they wanted me dead... I know they pardoned me for my crimes, but I doubt they'll be happy to see my face again. (pause) I don't want to cause any more trouble. (sadly) There's nothing there for me.

Gabrielle looks down at the ground and then at Xena who gives her a "go on" look.

GABRIELLE:

Eve...there's something that Xena and I have to tell you. Something from your past that you don't know about.

Eve looks nervously but curiously at Gabrielle, then at her mother.

GABRIELLE:

When you were young, we traveled to a land far to the north and there, you were initiated...into the ranks of the Northern Amazons. I gave you my Rite of Caste.

[FLASHBACK]



...Baby Eve being baptized into the tribe of the Northern Amazons--"Lifeblood"...

[END OF FLASHBACK]



EVE (in shock):
I'm an Amazon?

GABRIELLE:
Not just an Amazon...an Amazon Princess.

Close-up on Eve's face, full of guilt and horror.

CUT TO

Xena, Eve and Gabrielle, on horseback, are on a hill overlooking Themiscyra.

XENA (to Eve):
You don't have to go if you don't want to. We can go on without you, and you can wait for us.
(looks down then back at her daughter) I can understand how hard this--

EVE:

Mother (looks at Xena), I have to face them sooner or later. (looks at both Xena and Gabrielle) I wish you'd told me sooner... In a way, it makes it all the worse--knowing that the Amazons I killed were my sisters. Maybe not by blood, but they were my people. Maybe they'll be all the more determined to seek revenge when they found out...that they were betrayed by one of their own. (she pauses to think, her face grim) But that's why I have to go...

Xena puts a comforting hand on her daughter's shoulder.

XENA:

Don't be so hard on yourself.

EVE:

Is that what you tell yourself, Mother?

XENA (looks down):

Eve, what you...the person you used to be...did to the Amazons was horrible. I know you can never get over it. But your being an Amazon doesn't make it any worse...you didn't know.

EVE (nods half-heartedly):

Do you think they will ever really understand that I am not who I used to be? That I am truly sorry?

GABRIELLE (lovingly):

I'm sure they will, Eve.

EVE:

You think they'll ever accept me as an Amazon?

GABRIELLE:

You *are* an Amazon. No one can take that away from you.

EVE (sighs):

Except myself.

Xena, her face outwardly unemotional, nudges Argo in the side and starts riding down the hill, with Gabrielle at her side. Eve rides a few paces behind them, looking troubled, as we:

FADE OUT

ACT ONE

FADE IN

Inside the Amazon city of Themiscyra, which has a rather rural look with small houses and horses grazing. The camera follows Xena, Gabrielle and Eve, panning over groups of Amazons practicing their fighting skills of fighting with staffs and swords, and others practicing archery. Finally the camera closes in on a large group of Amazons on a city square, gathered around a wooden platform where

Varia is standing. Xena, Gabrielle and Eve dismount and start walking through the crowd of Amazons.

VARIA:

We may not know who they are, whether they are friend or foe, or with what purpose they are coming--but we *must* be prepared for their arrival. We can't take any chances.

Varia glances down at the group to see Gabrielle and Xena standing there.

VARIA (smiles a little uncertainly):

Xena, Gabrielle. I wasn't expecting to see you he--

She stops short when she sees Eve standing several paces behind Xena. Varia's eyes narrow in anger.

VARIA:

What's she doing here?

All the Amazons turn to stare at Eve. A murmur runs through the crowd.

AMAZON (off-camera):

It's the Bitch of Rome!

The murmur grows louder. Eve looks intensely uncomfortable.

Gabrielle walks up the steps of the platform to face Varia.

GABRIELLE:

Varia, you yourself admitted that she's not the same person anymore. Livia, the Bitch of Rome, is dead. This is Eve.

VARIA:

We were willing to pardon her crimes. That doesn't mean we are going to welcome her in our midst!

GABRIELLE:

If anyone has a right to be in your midst, it's Eve.

VARIA (puzzled):

What do you mean by that?



GABRIELLE:

When she was a baby, I gave her my Rite of Caste. Therefore, by tradition, she is an Amazon Princess. (Varia's face changes; many Amazons gasp) We are here to take care of some unfinished business, to complete her initiation into the Amazon Nation.

VARIA (raising her voice):

No! I will *not* permit her to enter our nation, no matter what happened when she was a child!

GABRIELLE (sternly):

You forget that you have no more authority in this tribe, Varia. After your betrayal, you are no longer the Queen--*I* am.



VARIA (shakes her head):

No! It isn't just your decision to make. Ask our sisters if *they* believe she has a right to join the tribe!

Murmurs of protest erupt throughout the crowd of Amazons.

EVE (still standing at the back of the crowd, makes an effort to speak up):

May I speak? (her voice is drowned out in the general murmur and she speaks louder) May I speak? (a hush falls over the crowd as Eve, followed by Xena, starts to walk toward the platform) Varia...Amazons...I don't dare to call you sisters yet, but perhaps I will, some day.

AMAZON #1:

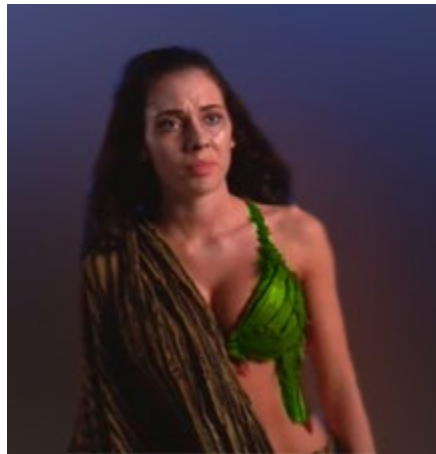
No!

AMAZON #2:

Never!

AMAZON #3:

Let her speak!



EVE (starts mounting the platform):

Many of you know who I was. I know that I can never erase what I have done to the Amazons; the guilt will stay with me for the rest of my life. Only this morning, I learned that Gabrielle gave me her Rite of Caste when I was just a baby. That means I have been an Amazon Princess...and to me, that makes my guilt even greater. (she stands on the platform, standing next to Gabrielle, and turns to face the crowd) I didn't just slaughter the Amazons--I slaughtered my own sisters. I know many of you may never be able to forgive me...but perhaps, if I claim my place as an Amazon, I can prove to you that I am different now--and at least try to make amends, make up for the wrongs I have done to you.

Gabrielle puts a hand on Eve's shoulder and looks encouragingly at Eve, then turns to Varia.

GABRIELLE:

She means it, Varia. I know she does.

Eve comes closer to Varia and faces her.

EVE:

I'm sorry, Varia...for everything. Please give me a chance.

Varia sighs and says nothing. The other Amazons are now completely silent, glancing at each uncertainly.

GABRIELLE (to the crowd):

Those of you who believe that Eve shouldn't be initiated into the tribe, say no.

Only a few voices shout "no."

GABRIELLE (to Varia):

It sounds like most of our sisters want to give Eve a chance. (Varia nods, her mouth rigid) The ceremony will be tonight, when the moon is full. (looks at the other Amazons) Trust me, you *have* made the right choice.

VARIA (displeased):

I hope so.

A brief silence.

GABRIELLE:

Varia, we have heard that the Amazon nation faces a new threat. What's happening?

VARIA:

There have been rumors of an army of some sort headed for Themiscyra.

XENA:

Who are they? Persians, Romans--

VARIA (shakes head):

No. They come from the north--but from what our scouts report, they aren't like anyone we have encountered before. No one has any idea who they are. It may not even be an army; some say they are just wandering tribes passing through. But we must be prepared for anything.

Gabrielle and Xena look at each other.

GABRIELLE:

If they want a fight, they'll get a fight.

CUT TO

Night. Eve is standing in a dark room, staring out the window at the brightly shining moon. Gabrielle peers in the doorway.

GABRIELLE (quietly):

Eve? We're ready.

Gabrielle walks up to her. She is wearing the fine brown leather armor, gauntlets and boots that she had gotten from Messene when they had been there to defeat the gvirve. There are patterns in bronze all over it and the back has the metallic design of a gvirve.

EVE (smiles a little):

You look good.

GABRIELLE (grins):

Who says leather doesn't suit me?

Eve smiles and then looks a little nervously at her.

EVE:

Gabrielle, I know I said I was ready to do this, but now I'm not so sure. The hate I saw in Varia's eyes today... She hates me, despises me from deep in her heart...and my becoming an Amazon won't ever erase that.

GABRIELLE (reassuring):

It'll be okay, Eve. Trust me.

Gabrielle smiles at her slightly and then leads her outside.

CUT TO

Outside, Amazons stand in a circle, holding torches. A bowl filled with water stands on a tripod in the center of the circle. Eve walks up with Gabrielle, still looking a little nervous.

GABRIELLE:

Sorry your mother couldn't come, but it's Amazons only.

EVE:

It's all right. (she looks down at her hands that shake slightly, and sighs) I wish I'd stop shaking.

GABRIELLE:

It's perfectly all right to be nervous at your initiation, you know. Every Amazon is.

EVE:

You know I'm not every Amazon...

GABRIELLE:

You'll be fine. (smiles)

They stop in the middle of the area, surrounded by the Amazons holding torches. Gabrielle walks to the tripod, takes the bowl and stands in front of Eve. Eve glances at the Amazons around her, whose faces are emotionless. Then she kneels and bows her head.

GABRIELLE:

Every Amazon must be baptized into the tribe before they can take their rightful place. Eve, you were baptized as a baby to receive my Rite of Caste; now I bestow upon you the bond of sisterhood with these and all other Amazons. Do you pledge to honor and be loyal to your sisters?

EVE (not very confidently):

I do.

Gabrielle pours the bowl's contents onto Eve's head, the water running down Eve's face.

GABRIELLE:

Then be born into our tribe as an Amazon Princess and be forgiven for your past misdeeds.

The Amazons are silent as Eve is initiated, but when Gabrielle glances over at them, they break into a half-hearted, subdued cheer. A little timidly, Eve looks up at Gabrielle. Smiling, Gabrielle puts her hand on Eve's shoulder.

The camera moves to the back of the Amazon crowd away from the light of the torches to show Varia, her face full of bitterness and anger. She huffs quietly and walks away.

CUT TO

Sunrise. Euric, mounted on a gray scruffy-looking horse, is positioned on a hill overlooking Themiscyra. His army is behind him, a small number of horsemen followed by many warriors on foot.

EURIC (grins):

This is Themiscyra? I expected it to be bigger. Well, this makes our task easier, doesn't it?

Euric looks behind at his warriors, who nod and laugh in agreement. Euric chuckles and starts down the hill, the warriors following.

CUT TO

Gabrielle is in a room, working on a scroll. There is a knock on the door.

GABRIELLE:

Come in!

An Amazon enters and bows before Gabrielle, then looks up at her.

AMAZON:

My Queen, the scouts posted on the outskirts of the town have seen an army moving this way. They will be here soon.

Gabrielle puts the scrolls down on a table.

GABRIELLE:

Thank you, Antiope. Alert the others.

Antiope nods and leaves.

CUT TO

Outside view of a house. Amazons are in preparation for the army's arrival, armed with bows and arrows, swords, staffs and other weapons. Gabrielle comes out of the house and sees Antiope talking to Varia and another Amazon, a beautiful woman about thirty-five years old, with long golden hair and green eyes. Gabrielle walks up to them.

ANTIOPE (to Gabrielle):

The Amazons are ready, my Queen.

GABRIELLE:

Good.

Gabrielle glances over at the Amazon standing next to Varia and notices a pendant around her neck, similar to the one that Varia wore when she was queen.

GABRIELLE (a little surprised):

You're a queen.

VARIA:

Gabrielle, this is Meroe--yes, Queen Meroe. The only Greek Amazon queen alive today, besides yourself. Meroe, this is Queen Gabrielle.

MEROE:

An honor to meet you. (wistfully and a little bitterly) It's about time we met; ours are the last two Amazon tribes left in all of Greece.

GABRIELLE (lowers her eyes sadly, then looks back at Varia, Antiope and Meroe):

Now remember, when this army arrives, we are *not* going to attack. We will go out and greet them in peace, and do everything we can do avoid a confrontation. We have no idea how powerful they are, and we can't risk losing any more of our sisters.

MEROE:

You are right.

VARIA (doubtfully):

In peace? We've spent days preparing to fight.

GABRIELLE:

Of course we'll fight if we have to. We just have to find out first who they are and what they want. You yourself said they might just be wandering tribes on their way somewhere. (pause) We (gestures toward the women around her) will go out and meet this army, if it is an army, while the rest of the Amazons stay back in the town, ready to fight in case we need reinforcements.

Just as she finishes, Xena and Eve walk up. When Meroe sees Eve, she gets a strange look on her face, as if she can't place where she has seen Eve before. Eve, too, catches a glimpse of Meroe and gets a look of recognition and regret, but she doesn't say a word. Xena notices this and frowns slightly.

EVE (softly):

I'd like to come with you too.

Varia has an angry look in her eyes again and opens her mouth to protest, but before she has a chance to say anything, Gabrielle shoots her a look, almost a glare, and Varia keeps silent.

XENA (puts a hand on Eve's shoulder):

Are you sure? It could turn into a battle.

EVE:

I need to do this, Mother. If I'm going to be an Amazon Princess, I'd better start acting like one.

XENA:

All right. I'm sure you can take care of yourself.

She and Eve smile at each other.

GABRIELLE:

Well, we'd better get going, then.

Gabrielle, Eve, Varia, Meroe, Antiope, and Xena start to walk to the town gates.

GIRL'S VOICE (off-camera):

Mother!

The camera pans back to show a girl, perhaps thirteen or fourteen years old, running toward them. She runs up to Meroe, wraps her arms around the queen for a moment, and then backs away. She bears a striking resemblance to Meroe.

MEROE:

Klymene, what is it?



KLYMENE:

I want to come with you, Mother. I can help.

Xena and Gabrielle glance at each other, smiling a little. Eve looks away.

MEROE (strokes Klymene's face):

I'm sorry, but you can't. It could be too dangerous...you're still a child.

KLYMENE (insistent):

Mother, I'm an Amazon too--I know I can help. (almost pleading) Please?

Meroe shakes her head but finally relents.

MEROE:

All right. (thinks for a moment) I know just how you can help, too. You can come with us and stay behind when we meet this army, and then if there's any trouble you can run back to the town and get reinforcements, okay?

KLYMENE:

Okay.

MEROE (smiles):

That's my girl.

GABRIELLE:

Come on, Meroe, let's go.

Meroe proudly pats Klymene on the head. Then Varia, Antiope, Xena, Eve, Gabrielle, Meroe, and Klymene head toward the gates. As the camera pulls back, we see that Meroe is walking with a slight limp. Eve sees this too, and there is once again an expression of uncertainty and regret on her face.

CUT TO

The seven women walking through the forest just outside the town, which can still be seen behind them. Through the trees, they can see a clearing and an army of men advancing. We get glimpses of the men's faces. They are grubby and bearded, wearing animal skins, carrying clubs and short swords. Most are on foot.

Xena and Gabrielle glance at each other.

XENA (grimly):

They are from the northern Barbarian tribes.

GABRIELLE:

And they don't look very friendly.

The two of them look at Varia, Meroe, Antiope, and Eve, who seem worried as well. Meroe looks at Klymene and kneels down to her.

MEROE:

Klymene, stay here in the shrubbery so that they don't see you. If things start to look like trouble--run for help.

KLYMENE (nods):

I will. Good luck, Mother.

Meroe kisses her on the forehead. Then the women all exchange silent looks and start walking toward the army. Klymene follows her mother with a loving look.

CUT TO

Euric watches as the group of Amazons comes near.

EURIC (chortles):

This must be the welcoming committee.

When the Amazons come close, Gabrielle steps forward.

GABRIELLE:

We greet you in peace. We hope that you come in peace, too.

EURIC (laughs):

Peace? (gestures toward his men) Does this look to you like we're here to do some sightseeing?

His men burst out laughing.

GABRIELLE:

Who are you?

EURIC (haughtily):

I am Euric of the Ostrogoths. Someday, the whole world will tremble at the sound of my name!



XENA:

Especially after the women of this town send you running for your life.

EURIC:

You think a bunch of women can fight me and my men? That'll be the day.

ANTIOPE:

We aren't just women.

MEROE:

We're Amazons.

VARIA (sneers):

Our only problem with fighting men is that they make it too easy.

CUT TO

Klymene, hidden in the shrubbery, stares intently at Euric, her mother, and the other women, then dashes back toward the town gates.

CUT TO

Euric chuckles again and raises his hand, signaling his men to attack. They rush forward and the Amazons draw their weapons, but then Eve stands in front of the other women, stopping them in their tracks. The Ostrogoth warriors look back at Euric and he raises his hand, stopping them for a moment.

EVE:

What do you intend to gain by conquering this town? There is no great wealth here. And there are no subjects to rule, because the Amazons (she looks away guiltily for a moment, then continues) would rather die than submit to the rule of a conqueror.

EURIC:

Those who won't submit will be destroyed. Themiscyra is only my first stop on the way to conquering all Greece.

XENA:

You're biting off more than you can chew, Euric. Ever heard of the Persians? They tried to conquer Greece, more than once--and do you know what happened to them? Believe me, nothing good.

EURIC (glares at Xena):

Do these women take orders from you? Are you their leader?

XENA:

No.

GABRIELLE:

Meroe and I (points to Meroe) are the reigning queens of these tribes.

EURIC:

Then you'd better order your people to surrender right now.

GABRIELLE:

Why? Just because you've ordered *your* people to attack us for no reason?

EURIC:

I *have* a reason...it's not my fault if you don't like it.

He's about to bring down his hand in a signal to attack, but Eve holds her arm in a supplicant gesture.

EVE:

Please! We don't have to shed any blood here.

EURIC:

Oh, we don't have to. But we (points to his men with a sweeping gesture) want to. Unless, of course, you'd rather surrender your miserable town now.

With another gesture, he signals to his army to move forward again. Just as the Ostrogoths charge, Xena's ululating battle-cry--A-yi-yi-yi-yi-yi!--pierces the air, making the warriors flinch and stop. Before they can recover from the surprise, Xena leaps in the air, flips and with a powerful kick knocks Euric off his horse. Then she throws her chakram, cutting down several of his horsemen. The Ostrogoths charge again and the women fight them, retreating to the edge of the meadow and using the trees for cover. Eve stands to the side.

Euric gets up and runs toward Gabrielle, sword raised. She quickly draws her sais just in time to deflect his blow, stopping it and pushing him backwards.

EURIC (grins):

Not bad for a girl.

GABRIELLE:

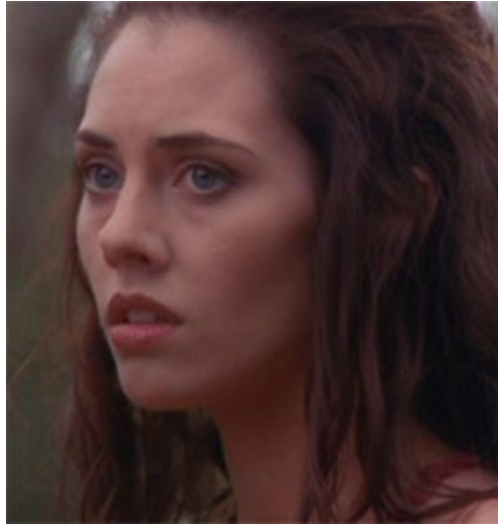
Not bad for a fool.

Euric swings again but Gabrielle does a flip worthy of Xena, landing behind him, and kicks him in the back. He quickly turns around and charges her again.

CUT TO

Xena and the Amazons fighting Euric's men. Despite their skills, particularly Xena, they are having a difficult time containing the onslaught of the Ostrogoths, since they are vastly outnumbered.

CUT TO



Eve watching from the sidelines; her face reflects an internal battle of her own.

CUT TO

Dozens of Amazons running toward the battlefield where the sound of swords and the grunts and cries of the combatants can be heard. Klymene runs behind them. The Amazons rush onto the clearing to help Gabrielle and the others but Klymene stays back.

Scanning the battlefield, Klymene finds Meroe fighting hard against one of the men. It is clear that her bad leg is hampering her movements. Nevertheless, she swings at her attacker and wounds him badly, her sword slashing across his side. He stumbles and starts falling but is able to make one more jab with his sword, piercing Meroe's chest. A horrified Klymene watches her mother fall to the ground.

KLYMENE (screaming):
Mother!!!

Klymene runs over to her mother as fast as she can. She kneels over her mother, weeping. Meroe, gasping for breath, slowly puts her arm around her daughter.

KLYMENE (crying):
Mother...don't die. Please don't die. I love you.

Meroe struggles for breath and opens her mouth but can't say anything. Klymene breaks into sobs and hugs her mother tightly. Meroe dies in her arms.

The camera pulls back to show the warrior who killed Meroe getting back to his feet and picking up his sword. He is swaying a little, the wound in his side bleeding, but he can still stand. He looks at Klymene, who is wailing over her dead mother, and his hand clutches the hilt of his sword.

The camera pulls further back for a wide shot, and we see that Eve is watching the warrior who is standing over Klymene, whom no one else seems to notice--everyone is too preoccupied with the battle. Eve's eyes widen with fear. Finally, with the look of someone making a fateful decision, she steps out from behind the tree and runs out into the clearing, picking up the sword of a dead warrior from the ground.



She charges toward the warrior who is now raising his sword above Klymene. Just as he is about to kill the girl, his eyes bulge as Eve's sword goes through him from the back, the bloody blade coming out of his chest. Klymene is still oblivious, crying over her mother.

Xena, who has just dispatched the man she was fighting, turns and sees Eve, just as the warrior collapses, dead. Eve's face is filled with anguish, and Xena momentarily looks horrified. Meanwhile, Gabrielle, who is still fighting Euric, sees Xena's expression and then follows her gaze to see Eve standing over the dead man as we:

FADE OUT

ACT TWO

FADE IN

A close-up of Gabrielle's face as she watches Xena walk over to Eve. A moment's distraction is enough for Euric to attack. Recovering her focus, Gabrielle quickly turns, and the sword aimed at her abdomen stabs her in the hip instead. With a cry of pain, Gabrielle falls to the ground. Euric slashes at her again; she manages to dodge the blow but the blade slashes her left arm.

Xena rushes over toward Gabrielle, her face anguished, and gives Euric a powerful kick in the stomach that sends him flying through the air and then landing on his back, with a thud and a groan. Meanwhile, Xena kneels next to Gabrielle.

XENA:

Gabrielle...

GABRIELLE (tries to smile bravely but winces with pain):

I'll be all right. You should worry about Euric...you can think about me later.

Xena starts inspecting her wound. Meanwhile, the camera pans over to Euric, who is getting up, a little shaken. He sees that the Amazons are beating his men, many of whom are unconscious, wounded, or dead on the ground. The look on his face is a mix of rage and fury. He whistles and as his horse runs up to him, he jumps in the saddle.

EURIC (yells):

Retreat! (the Ostrogoth warriors start retreating back into the woods on the other side of the clearing. Euric looks at Xena and snarls) This isn't over.

XENA (lip curled in a sneer):

That's what they all say.

Once Euric and his men are gone, a cheer goes up in the ranks of the Amazons. As it dies down, a cry is heard.

AMAZON:

Queen Meroe! Queen Meroe is dead!

There are gasps and cries of "No, no!" The camera pans over to show Eve consoling Klymene, who is still clinging to her mother's body, sobbing.

ANTIOPE (approaches Xena and Gabrielle):

Queen Gabrielle--you're hurt!

XENA (looks up at her):

It's deeper than I thought. We have to get it treated right away.

Antiope and Varia carefully lift Gabrielle and carry her toward the town. Xena goes over to Eve and Klymene.

XENA (gently):

Klymene...we have to take your mother's body back to town so she can have a proper funeral.

KLYMENE (screams):

She's not dead, she's not dead!

XENA:

Klymene...she will always love you. That doesn't change just because she died.

She nods to Eve, who gently takes Klymene by the shoulders and leads her aside. Two Amazons from Meroe's tribe pick up the body and carry it.

CUT TO

Inside the same house where we saw Gabrielle before. Gabrielle is lying on a cot. Antiope is tending to the wound in her side, rubbing an ointment into it and then applying a bandage. Gabrielle's arm is bandaged as well. Xena and Eve are standing by the bed, with Varia and several other Amazons standing a short distance away and a listless-looking Klymene sitting on a chair, lost in her sorrow.

ANTIOPE:

You should be fine in a week or so--those wounds aren't too severe. But if you are to recover, Gabrielle, you can't fight right now.

AMAZON #1:

Then who will lead us into battle when they come back?

GABRIELLE:

Myopi...if I can't lead the Amazons, then an Amazon Princess will have to do it.

She turns to Eve, who looks shocked.

EVE:

Me?

GABRIELLE:

Yes, Eve. You have to take charge of this tribe while I am recovering.

VARIA:

Eve?! No. (shouts) No! It was bad enough to have her join the Amazon nation, but to have her lead us...I will *not* take orders from her!

MYOPI:

Varia's right. Too many of our sisters died because of her. We can't have her leading us--not even for a few days.

Words of agreement come from all the Amazons. Antiope looks down silently. Eve struggles to maintain her self-control, while Xena's face is expressionless.

GABRIELLE:

Listen to me. The people have agreed to accept Eve as an Amazon princess. Then treat her as one; with the respect she is due.

VARIA (glares at Eve):

I did not agree to accept her as an Amazon princess. I will never forget that she was Livia of Rome!

A close-up of Klymene's face. At the mention of Livia, her melancholy expression suddenly changes to a shocked, terrified, and finally angry one. She leaps to her feet and runs out. Xena follows Klymene with her eyes and then turns back to the other Amazons.



GABRIELLE:

Varia, you know why you no longer have the authority in this tribe. I am the Queen, and it is up to me to name my replacement. We could take it to the council, of course...but is that how you want to spend precious time that we don't have, when Euric and his army could attack again at any moment?

The Amazons exchange hesitant looks. Varia is scowling.

MYOPI (uncertain):

You're right, Gabrielle.

GABRIELLE:

Eve has the skill and the mind of a great warrior. Once, when she had lost her true path, she used those skills against the Amazons. Maybe now, she can make amends by using them to help her people.

Eve bows her head in silence.

AMAZON #2:

It's difficult for many of us to accept, Queen Gabrielle. But we won't disrespect you. If you believe it's for the best, we will follow Eve.

Varia shakes her head and storms out. Gabrielle looks after her, worried, then turns to the other Amazons.

GABRIELLE:

You can leave now--Xena and Eve can look after me. Thank you, Antiope.

ANTIOPE:

My Queen.

She takes a bow and leaves, followed by Myopi and the other Amazons. Xena sits down on the edge of the bed and takes Gabrielle's hand, stroking it gently.

EVE (takes a deep breath):

I'm not so sure about this... Do you really believe that this is what I should be doing--leading the Amazons...fighting again? I killed today to save that girl's life. I didn't have much time to think about it--I just saw that the man was about to kill her, and I acted out of instinct.

XENA:

Eve, remember--I told you that you'd know when the time was right for you to fight again.

EVE:

Go out there and kill again... Can I ever allow myself to hold a sword again, knowing all the evil I did as a warrior?

XENA (after a pause):

Eve, when I first decided to change my life and atone for the things I had done, I was going to bury my armor and my weapons--give up fighting forever. Then I realized that people needed me...people who would be killed or enslaved unless I helped them, unless I used my skills as a warrior. I couldn't stand by and let it happen. So I went back to fighting for them, fighting for justice--against people who were...everything that I had been. That was the path I chose, and it's not an easy one. I don't know if it's your path as well. That's for you to decide.

EVE (nods slowly):

The Amazons need me right now...helping them is more important than preserving my peace of mind. I think this *is* the right time.

Xena and Gabrielle exchange a proud but anxious look; then, Xena gets up.

XENA:

I have to go out and take care of...something else. I'll be back soon.

Xena walks out.

EVE (sits down on the edge of the bed):

Do you really think Varia will accept my leadership?

GABRIELLE:

She'd better. She's an Amazon, Eve, and an Amazon must obey the will of her tribe--even one as stubborn as Varia. Besides, maybe now she will see you for who you really are.

Eve nods, not very hopefully.

CUT TO

A square at dusk. Some Amazons are building a funeral pyre while Klymene stands watching them, tears rolling down her cheeks. Xena comes up behind her and stands still for a few moments, then puts a hand on the girl's shoulder. Klymene turns and looks at Xena, her eyes full of anguish.

KLYEMENE (quietly):

All that's left of my mother will be consumed on that pyre...

XENA (kneels down and takes the girl's hands, looking into her eyes):

Not all, Klymene. Her spirit, her deeds...that's always going to stay with you, as a part of you. Her legacy as an Amazon Queen...that will live on as long as there is an Amazon nation.

Klymene nods, tears filling her eyes again, squeezing Xena's hands.

XENA:

Klymene, why did you run away before? I saw how you looked when Varia mentioned Livia...

Klymene flinches, and her face grows harsh and bitter.

KLYMENE:

Livia...I guess she calls herself Eve now, right? And that makes everything all right? Well, she's the reason my mother died!

XENA (shocked):

What? Eve didn't kill your mother--one of Euric's men did! And he would have killed you, too, if Eve hadn't been there!

KLYMENE (crying again):

Well, if Livia hadn't been there, that man would have never defeated my mother!

XENA:

What do you mean?

KLYMENE (passionate):

Mother led the united Amazon Nations against the Romans a few years back, when Livia attacked us. I was just a child then, but I remember it well. My mother defeated Livia in a battle that lasted five days straight. She was one of the best fighters the Amazons had ever known. Then, after the Roman army retreated and the tribes went home, Livia came back with reinforcements and attacked again, taking them by surprise. That's when she destroyed most of them. Once again, Mother led the Amazons into battle...

[FLASHBACK]

An army of Amazon is lined up on top of a hill. They look tired, many seem to have recent wounds--they still have bandages on their arms and legs. They are led by Queen Meroe, riding a beautiful black horse.

Roman soldiers are lined up across the field at the bottom of the hill; they look much better prepared than the Amazons. Livia is at the front of the line atop a white horse, a look of excitement and arrogant triumph on her face.

MEROE (screams as she lowers her sword):

For the Amazon Nation!!!

The Amazons charge down the hill, Meroe leading them. Livia smirks and raises her sword. She turns to one of her commanders.

LIVIA:

I don't want to see an Amazon left standing after we're done.

OFFICER:

Yes, Livia. (salutes)

LIVIA (brings down her sword):
For the glory of Rome!

The Romans charge forward, Livia is leading them. The two armies clash and start the battle.

Both Meroe and Livia race all over the battlefield dishing out destruction, slashing and cutting down the enemy left, right and center. Finally, Livia catches eye of Meroe in the middle of the battlefield just as she slashes the neck of a Roman soldier, nearly severing his head.

LIVIA:
Queen Meroe!

Meroe turns to see her enemy in the midst of all this chaos, a gleeful smirk on her face.

MEROE:
Livia, Champion of Rome. It's about time we met again.

She charges at Livia and their swords clash. They fight on horseback; then, a fierce collision knocks them both out of the saddle. They leap to their feet and clash again in a dazzling dance of kicks, spins, and sword thrusts. Livia is gaining the upper hand; she knocks Meroe's sword out of her hand and kicks her, knocking her down. She stands over her, smirking.

LIVIA:
So you're the best the Amazons have to offer. No wonder you're an endangered species.

With a powerful kick, Meroe knocks Livia's sword; then she scrambles to her feet and executes a high jump, kicking Livia in the head. Livia staggers.

MEROE:
A hint for you, Livia-- (slams Livia's head into her knee) never underestimate (kicks Livia in the stomach) an Amazon Queen. (throws Livia to the ground)

She picks up her sword and prepares to run Livia through but Livia kicks out her feet from under her and knocks her down, then scrambles to her feet and kicks the sword out of her hand.

LIVIA:
And a hint for you, Amazon... (Meroe starts to rise but Livia kicks her in the face, knocking her down again) *Never* (kicks Meroe for emphasis) start something (kicks her again) you're not going to finish.

Meroe staggers up; this time Livia kicks her in the knee and Meroe falls, her face distorted in pain.



Livia picks up her sword and is about to stab the Amazon Queen, who lies on the ground moaning. Just then, she is rushed by several Amazons who force her to retreat.

AMAZON:
Queen!

The Amazons help up Meroe but as soon as she tries to stand, she collapses with a groan. Two Amazons help her rise to her feet; she gets her arms around their shoulders, one foot trailing uselessly. One of the Amazons brings over Meroe's horse and helps Meroe get in the saddle. She winces with pain.

[END OF FLASHBACK]

KLYMENE:

Even injured, my mother was able to inspire the Amazons, and they drove off Livia and the Romans. But Mother was never the same after that. Her broken knee never healed completely. (she looks Xena directly in the eye, bitterly) So yes, Xena, it *is* Eve's fault that my mother died today. I know she was ten times the fighter that man was! If she hadn't been injured then, she'd still be alive.

XENA:

I'm sorry, Klymene... (she strokes the girl's hair) Just remember, Eve isn't the same person as Livia...

KLYMENE (angrily):

She looks the same. She has the same body. She remembers everything Livia did. How is she not the same person?

XENA:

Yes, she remembers everything Livia did. And she'll spend the rest of her life trying to make amends for it. She saved your life today.

KLYMENE:

That doesn't make up for what she did to my mother.

XENA:

No. But it's a start.

Xena stands up and walks away, leaving Klymene in thought.

CUT TO

Inside the house, Eve has just finished putting on an Amazon outfit very similar to the one that Gabrielle wore in "The Quest." Just as she straps a traditional Amazon sword to her back, Xena walks in and smiles when she sees Eve.

XENA:

See, you already look like an Amazon.

EVE (smiles sadly):

I'm not sure Varia will be convinced. (after a pause, almost in a whisper) I'm not sure *I'm* convinced...maybe I'm just dressing the part.

XENA:

You'll be fine. Just trust yourself. (Eve nods; pause) Eve--you met Meroe in the past, didn't you?

Eve looks at Xena with regret, reliving a painful memory.

EVE (quietly):

Yes.

XENA:

Klymene told me what happened...she blames you for her mother's death.

EVE (saddened):

With good reason. Meroe was such a great warrior...and she was crippled when I broke her knee. (looks down) It's strange--every time I think I've left the past behind me, something brings it back to haunt me. (she looks up at Xena, tears welling in her eyes. There is bitterness in her voice) I shouldn't have come here.



XENA:

Eve, Eve... (puts an arm around Eve) I know what it's like to try to get away from your past and have it come after you. What I've learned is that I can't run away from it, and neither can you. We can only try to live it down. It's part of who we are now...and perhaps in some way, we're better for it. (wipes away Eve's tears) You should talk to Klymene, Eve. I tried, but I think it would be better if it

came from you. (Eve nods) Good. I'm glad you're going to lead the Amazons against Euric, Eve. It will help them see who you truly are now. (pats her on the shoulder) Are you okay?

EVE (smiles through tears):
Yes.

XENA:
That's my girl. Come on, they're about to light Meroe's funeral pyre. We should be there.

CUT TO

The square. It is night now, but it is almost as bright as daylight because of the torches held by the Amazons. Meroe's body lies on top of the still-unlit funeral pyre. The Amazons stand in a circle. The tearful Klymene is in the front row of the circle; so is Eve, at some distance from her. Xena stands further behind. Myopi approaches Eve and hands her a torch.

MYOPI (in an expressionless tone):
As our princess and our leader, you should light the Queen's funeral pyre.

Eve glances at Klymene, who flinches visibly and lowers her eyes. Eve takes the torch and hesitates for a moment, then walks over to Klymene.

EVE (hands the torch to Klymene):
Do you want to light it, Klymene?

Klymene gives her a long stare, then nods and takes the torch. She goes over to the pyre and lights it. As the flames shoot up, engulfing the body, the mournful lone voice of an Amazon picks up the funeral dirge.

KLYMENE (whispers):
Good-bye, Mother.

A close-up on Eve's face as she gazes sadly on the funeral pyre and on the weeping Klymene.

CUT TO

A dimly lit room. Varia, Antiope, and Myopi are sitting in a circle on mats on the floor.

VARIA:
I'm telling you, we can't let that bitch lead us. (off the other Amazons' unhappy expressions, angrily) Why should we follow her?!

MYOPI:
Because she is a Princess of the Amazons...and we have to respect that, no matter how we feel about it.

VARIA:
But she killed thousands of our sisters! It was because of her that the Amazons of Greece are a pitiful remnant of the nation they once were. (pause) I say we get Eve out of the way so that I can lead the Amazons until Gabrielle is well.

ANTIOPE (uncertainly):

You?

VARIA:

Yes, me. I was Marga's second in command. I deserve that title. I lost it because I made a mistake--but was my offense really more unforgivable than hers?

MYOPI (after a pause):

So how exactly do you plan to get Eve out of the way?

VARIA:

I know where she's sleeping. We go in, knock her out so she doesn't wake up, tie her up and take her out of the town. There's a secret passage through the wall--we can get past the sentries that way. I know the surrounding woods pretty well; there's a cave, not half an hour's walk from the city walls, where no one will ever find her.

MYOPI (shocked):

You mean to let her die in that cave?



VARIA:

Don't forget that she was sentenced to death by our people. I pardoned her. Now I'm taking it back. I pardoned Eve, the Messenger of Peace--not Eve, the interloper who set herself up as the princess of a nation she has slaughtered.

ANTIOPE:

And what do you plan to do about Xena? You think maybe she won't notice that her daughter's missing? This is insane.

VARIA (slyly):

No, it's perfect. You see, Xena will believe, along with everyone else, that her daughter has been taken by the barbarians.

MYOPI (puzzled):

Why would she believe that?

VARIA (triumphantly):

Because of this. (she lifts something in her hand--it's a Ostrogoth's necklace, made out of animal

fangs) I took this off one of the dead men out there. We drop it by Eve's bed--that should be enough of a clue. (silence) Well?

ANTIOPE:

Varia, she's one of our sisters now... If we do this--how are we different from Livia?

VARIA (passionately):

This is about justice for our sisters! (looking at Antiope) Including your *real* sister. (Antiope looks at her sadly) Remember what happened to her?

Antiope blinks, remembering the past.

[FLASHBACK]

Livia, in her Roman general's outfit, is atop a horse, a gleeful smirk on her face.

LIVIA:

Let this be an example to anyone else who wants to resist me.

Pan over to a young woman in an Amazon outfit who struggles on the ground, her hands tied to the saddle of Livia's horse. Then the camera pulls back for a wide shot of a devastated Amazon village. Huts are burning, dead bodies of Amazons (and some Roman soldiers) are strewn all over the ground; other Amazons are tied up with the Romans guarding them at the point of their spears.

Livia jerks the reins on the horse and screams at the top of her lungs, galloping off with the young Amazon being dragged behind. The camera follows Livia for a few moments and then moves over to the bodies on the ground. Zoom in on the face of one of the women. It is Antiope, who is only wounded. She lies still, her eyes open and filled with tears.

[END OF FLASHBACK]

ANTIOPE (angrily, her eyes brimming with tears):

All right...let's do it.

VARIA:

Good. I knew I'd get you to see it my way. (looks expectantly at Myopi)

MYOPI (takes a deep breath):

I can't do it, Varia. I'm not going to betray a sister.

VARIA (angrily):

Then I expect you'll betray me and go and tell *Eve* (contemptuously stresses the word) all about it.

MYOPI (shakes her head, almost regretfully):

I won't help you...but I won't stand in your way, either. It's your choice.

VARIA:

My choice is made.

A close-up on Varia's face as we:

FADE OUT

ACT THREE

FADE IN

Gabrielle in her room, lying in bed. Eve walks in. Seeing her outfit, Gabrielle smiles.

GABRIELLE:

Look at you--you're quite the Amazon now.

EVE (shakes her head):

The Amazons still don't trust me, Gabrielle. I can feel it.

GABRIELLE:

Eve, there's nothing to worry about. You're one of them. Amazons are loyal to their sisters.

A sad, regretful look crosses Eve's face as her eyes meet Gabrielle's; Gabrielle sighs and averts her eyes.

EVE (quietly):

I hope you're right. (changing the subject) I thought Mother was with you?

GABRIELLE:

She said she was going to try to sneak into Euric's camp and see what they're up to.

There is a knock on the door and an Amazon peers inside.

AMAZON:

Queen Gabrielle, sorry to disturb you... Princess Eve--Xena is here with some important news.

CUT TO

Outside, in the torchlight, Xena is standing with Varia, Antiope, Myopi, and a few other Amazons. Eve comes up to them.

XENA:

Eve. I overheard Euric talking to one of his men. He plans to attack the town tomorrow night, just after nightfall, thinking he will take us by surprise. We'd better be ready. I got a good look at the size of his camp--he must have nearly twice as many men as there are Amazons here.

EVE (nods and speaks with sudden, quiet authority):

Then we'll have a surprise for them. I have an idea what to do...but for now, I think we should all get some rest.

The Amazons bid each other good night and disperse. As they leave, Varia and Antiope exchange quick glances; Varia gives Eve a lingering look, and Myopi catches this and glances at Varia and Antiope, then walks away.

XENA (with a proud, warm smile, gives Eve a friendly poke in the arm):

You know, I think you're a natural at this Amazon stuff...just like Gabrielle. (Eve nods) Good night, Eve.

EVE:

Good night, Mother.

Xena walks away. The camera follows Eve as she goes into one of the cabins, puts down her sword and sits down on the bed to take off her boots. She puts out the lamp on the bedside table.

CUT TO

It is pitch black out. All of the houses are dark except for one, with a light in the window. The camera moves inside, on Varia and Antiope making preparations; Varia is rolling up a sturdy rope while Antiope takes a piece of cloth. Varia picks up the animal-fang necklace.

VARIA:

Now is the best time if we're going to do this.

Antiope nods, though she still seems somewhat reluctant. They leave the cabin.

CUT TO

Outside, Antiope and Varia are creeping stealthily through the streets.

CUT TO

Inside Eve's room. Antiope stays behind, holding the coiled rope, while Varia creeps toward Eve, who stirs in her sleep. Quickly, she stuffs a cloth into Eve's mouth. Eve's eyes fly wide open but she can't cry out. Varia punches her in the face to knock her out.

The camera pans over to Antiope, who winces.

VARIA (whispers):

Hand me the rope.

ANTIOPE (regretfully):

I'm sorry, Varia...I just can't go along with this. This isn't right. I can't help you anymore.

VARIA (in an exasperated whisper):

Fine, then. Go. I'll do it myself. I shouldn't have asked for anyone's help anyway.

Antiope drops the rope on the floor, gives Varia a hesitant and almost apologetic look, and walks out. Varia snorts contemptuously and starts tying up Eve.

CUT TO

A close up of Eve slowly opening her eyes. She is gagged, her hands and feet securely tied, lying on the floor of a small cave, its entrance partly covered with grass, roots and vines. There is a sudden flash of light and Varia's face is seen in the entrance of the cave; she is holding a lantern that partly illuminates her face. She is smirking with satisfaction. Eve's eyes show initial shock, and then resignation, almost as if she expected something like this to happen.

VARIA:

Enjoy your new quarters, Eve, Amazon Princess--or should I say Livia, Bitch of Rome. (she chuckles as Eve makes a muffled sound.) Sorry, you're going to have to speak more clearly. You know, when you tried to take control of the Amazons, you just went too far. I couldn't let that happen. Well, now, I'm going to beat Euric--and who knows, I just might get my title back.

Eve makes more muffled sounds.

VARIA (chuckles):

You're so pathetic. Right now, it's hard to believe you used to be Livia.

She chuckles again, puts out the lantern and leaves. Eve struggles against her bonds but it's no use. The camera moves out of the cave and follows Varia as she walks back toward the town through the woods.

CUT TO

Eve lying in the cave exhausted, her eyes closed, not struggling anymore. Two hands reach into the cave and pull her out. Terrified, she opens her eyes, struggling and making muffled sounds as the unseen person puts her down on the ground. Her gag is suddenly gone and she bursts out coughing, still unable to speak. The camera pulls back to show Ares kneeling over Eve. As Eve sees him, her eyes widen in surprise.

EVE:

What are you doing here?

ARES (rolls his eyes):

A social visit.

He waves a hand, and the ropes that bind Eve fall off her. She sits up, rubbing her arms, stiff from being tied up. Ares stands up, looking at her impassively. After a moment, Eve stands up too, and looks at him with slight astonishment.

EVE:

I never expected you to help me.

ARES (dryly):

Occasionally, I like to surprise people.

EVE:

Just doing Mother another favor?

ARES:

Who knows, maybe I think you're the right person to lead the Amazons.

EVE (disbelieving):

The Amazons? But Varia had your favor in the past... (Ares rolls his eyes) Besides, you never cared about the Amazons--last time you were involved with them, all you wanted was to get them into a war. Why would you care about them now? (eyes Ares suspiciously) Wait...is this because you want to see me fight again?

ARES:

Isn't that something. I get you out of a jam and you're going to stand here questioning my motives. (grins) Well, I suppose if you assumed that I did it out of the goodness of my heart, then I'd *really* start to worry.

He starts to disappear.

EVE:

Ares--wait.

ARES (materializes fully, impatient):

What?

EVE:

Thank you for helping me...and the Amazons.

ARES (looks away):

See, now you're embarrassing me.



EVE:

And Ares... (he looks at her) There's something I've been meaning to tell you. (pauses) Back when you gave up your immortality to save my life--I didn't know how to deal with that because-- (her voice breaks off and she looks away). Well, anyway, I want to thank you now. It's taken me long enough.

Ares nods and then disappears. Eve shakes her head and walks back to the town.

CUT TO

Varia walking into her room. Suddenly, the dark room is illuminated by a glowing light that seems to come from nowhere. Close-up on the shocked look on Varia's face. The light fades to reveal the ghostly figure of Marga.

VARIA (stunned and tearful):
Marga...?

MARGA:
Yes, Varia. It's me.

VARIA:
I've missed you.

MARGA:
And I you...but you've disappointed me, Varia.

VARIA:
Disappointed? Why?

MARGA:
You haven't turned out to be the Amazon that I always hoped you'd become. I thought you were destined for great things when you succeeded me, Varia--but you haven't fulfilled that promise. (Varia looks shocked) Look at the things you've done. If it hadn't been for Xena, you would have gotten the Amazons involved in a destructive war with the Romans. Then you betrayed Xena and Gabrielle when they fought Bellerophon.

VARIA:
Marga, I did it all for the good of the Amazon nation...



MARGA (sternly):
Are you sure it wasn't just for your petty ambition? (Varia lowers her eyes) And now, out of ambition and vengeance, you have plotted to kill one of your sisters...

VARIA:
You mean Eve? She shouldn't be an Amazon! She doesn't deserve to be one!

MARGA:
Do *you*, Varia?



VARIA (appalled):
You don't mean that...

MARGA:
You were given a second chance, and look how you're choosing to use it--by killing a woman who is doing her best to help the Amazons.

VARIA (angry):
She slaughtered the Amazons!

MARGA:
Killing her won't bring them back...but letting her help the Amazons now can save other lives. She is trying to make amends--you should give *her* a second chance, too. (pause) Sometimes I feel that I've let you down, Varia.

VARIA:
Let me down? How?

MARGA:
Maybe if I had not died, if I had been around to guide you, you would have grown into the Amazon, and the woman, that I always dreamed you could be.

VARIA (shaking her head):
It's not your fault.

MARGA:
If not mine, then whose? Varia, you can't continue like this. All you're going to do is hurt yourself and others... Live up to your promise, Varia. Don't let pride, stubbornness, and anger get in the way.

A mix of conflicting emotions flashes across Varia's face. Then her eyes soften and she looks at Marga with sadness and shame.

VARIA (voice almost breaking):
I'm sorry, Marga. I'm sorry I disappointed you.

MARGA:
Varia--you still have time to correct your mistake. Go on. Perhaps someday you'll make me proud.

The glow of light forms around her figure again and she is gone. Varia drops her head in shame, then looks up and walks briskly out of the house.

CUT TO

Gabrielle, sleeping. A hand touches her shoulder.

GABRIELLE (opens her eyes):

Xena?

The camera pans over to Antiope standing by Gabrielle's bedside.

ANTIOPE:

Queen Gabrielle, it's me. I need to speak to you.

GABRIELLE:

What's going on?

ANTIOPE:

I'm sorry, my Queen...I should have stopped her, but...

GABRIELLE:

Stopped whom?

ANTIOPE (lowers her eyes):

Varia. She...she kidnapped Eve so she could get her out of the way and lead the Amazons herself.

GABRIELLE (shocked):

What?

ANTIOPE (kneels):

I'm sorry, my Queen...I didn't stop her when I could have...worse, I actually promised her my help.

GABRIELLE:

Oh, Antiope--why?

ANTIOPE:

My sister, Ossil, died at Livia's hands years ago...Varia appealed to my thirst for revenge. I was weak.

GABRIELLE:

It's all right, Antiope. You did the right thing telling me. Where is Varia now? And where did she take Eve?

ANTIOPE:

She said something about taking her to a cave in the woods, about half an hour's walk from the city walls... She's probably back by now.

GABRIELLE:

Go and wake Xena right away.

CUT TO

Varia stands outside the cave, a bewildered look at her face as she looks at the ropes lying on the grass. Then she shakes her head and starts walking back toward the city walls. The camera pulls back to reveal a shadowy figure following her.

CUT TO

Outside Varia's cabin. Antiope, Myopi, and several other Amazons with lanterns in their hands stand by the doors. The sky is beginning to turn light. Xena comes out of the cabin. She looks worried but focused.

XENA:

She's not here. We have no time to lose--let's go out into the woods and look for that cave.

KLYMENE (off-camera):

I think I might know where it is.

Everyone turns to look at her. The camera pans over to Klymene, whose face is a little haggard from crying, but has a look of determination.

XENA:

What do you know, Klymene?

KLYMENE (a little reluctantly):

The other day, my friend Sarika and I were playing in the woods, about half an hour's walk from the city gates, and Sarika's puppy ran into a cave--we had to go in there and get it. It's a cave in the side of a hill--its entrance is covered with tree roots and vines so you can barely see it...

XENA:

Will you lead us there?

Klymene nods. Xena comes over to her and hugs her.

XENA:

Klymene...I know you're angry at Eve. It was very brave of you to put it behind you... You acted like a true Amazon today.

KLYMENE (sniffles a little):

I'm going to save my anger for the *real* enemy.

XENA:

Good for you. Now let's go find my daughter.

CUT TO

Gabrielle sitting up in bed. The door is cautiously pushed open and Varia comes in. Her eyes meet Gabrielle's.

GABRIELLE (bitterly):

What's the matter, Varia? Want to get me out of the way, too?

VARIA (shocked and ashamed):

You know about--

GABRIELLE:

Yes, I do. Antiope gave you away.

VARIA:

Gabrielle, I'm sorry...I was wrong. I see that now. I have been wrong so many times... Can you forgive me?

GABRIELLE (brusquely):

Varia, the important thing right now is to rescue Eve. Xena and the others have gone out looking for her... Where is she?

VARIA:

I don't know.

GABRIELLE (angrily):

Varia, you ask my forgiveness and then you continue to play games!

VARIA (defensively):

I am not playing games! Gabrielle...after I left Eve in the cave... (she lowers her eyes) something happened and I realized what a terrible thing I had done. So I went back there--I wanted to free her, I swear. But she wasn't there. The rope with which I tied her was lying on the grass...

GABRIELLE:

Maybe she freed herself somehow?

VARIA:

That's impossible!

They exchange puzzled looks.

CUT TO

The city gates. As Xena, Klymene, Antiope and the other Amazons approach, a sentry posted on a platform at the top of the gate cries out.

SENTRY:

Someone is coming toward the gates!

Xena and the others stop.

ANTIOPE:

One of the barbarians?

SENTRY:

No, it looks like one of us...an Amazon...

XENA:

Varia?

SENTRY:

Eve! It's Eve!

Xena and the others breathe a sigh of relief. Several Amazons rush to open the gates. Eve walks in, looking exhausted and with some scrapes and dirt on her, but unhurt. The gates are closed again.

XENA:

Eve! (she rushes to hug her daughter.) Eve, are you all right?

EVE:

Yes.

As mother and daughter hug, the camera pans over to a sad-looking Klymene, who lowers her eyes.

XENA:

What happened? How did you get out?

EVE:

I... (she hesitates)

Suddenly, there is a murmur among the Amazons. Xena whips around to see Varia standing very stiff and still, a guilty yet somewhat defiant expression on her face.

XENA (narrows her eyes angrily):

Varia. Trying to kill my daughter is a habit you just can't break, can you? (Varia lowers her eyes silently) Well? What do you have to say for yourself?

GABRIELLE (off-camera):

Xena!

The camera pans over to show Gabrielle hobbling toward them, supported by two Amazons.

XENA:

Gabrielle! What are you doing up?

GABRIELLE:

I just wanted to tell you that Varia did try to make things right. She came to me to confess what she did. She told me that she went back to rescue Eve, but when she got to the cave, Eve wasn't there. (to Eve) I'm so glad to see you're all right.

VARIA:

I'm sorry, Eve. I betrayed you and my sisters... And I betrayed you too, Xena, after everything you've done for us. (to Gabrielle) I'll accept whatever punishment you choose for me.

EVE:

Varia... (softly) ...I know what it's like to be blinded by ambition and rage. If anyone has a right to judge you, it's not me. I forgive you...and I hope you find it in your heart to forgive *me*, as well.

Varia and Eve clasp hands, then lock forearms in the traditional Amazon salute.

VARIA:

To a strong Amazon nation.

EVE:

To a strong Amazon nation.

Xena gazes proudly at her daughter, tears welling in her eyes as we:

FADE OUT

ACT FOUR

FADE IN

Gabrielle is in her room sitting up in bed, trying to write in a scroll propped up on her knee. Her quill slips and she makes a face in frustration. The door opens; she looks up and sees Eve.

EVE:

How are you feeling?

GABRIELLE (winces a little):

Trying to write in a position that obviously wasn't meant for it.

EVE:

What are you writing?

GABRIELLE (smiles):

The story of how a certain young woman became an Amazon...



EVE:

I'm so glad you brought me here, Gabrielle. I've been looking for my own path, and maybe I have finally found it. I have spent years talking to people about loving each other, but these women have shown me what love really is. They stand together like true sisters--bound by a loyalty that can even overcome (sighs) old grudges and old hatreds. (quietly) I'm proud to be a part of their family.

GABRIELLE:

You think everything will be all right now between you and Varia?

EVE:

I'm sure it will be...Varia was misguided but she means well.

GABRIELLE:

And you're ready to fight Euric?

EVE (thoughtfully):

I think I am. I don't want to kill, Gabrielle. I wish we could all live according to Eli's teachings. But I have been watching you and Mother, and I know that as long as there are people in the world who seek to harm others, sometimes the only answer is to fight--and sometimes people must die.

A close-up on Gabrielle as she nods, her own face clouding over with sadness.

CUT TO

The main town square at dusk. Eve is standing on the platform where Varia stood before, the armed Amazons lined up before her. Xena is also standing in the crowd.

EVE:

Amazons! Euric's army plans to attack after nightfall and take Themiscyra by storm. They outnumber us; our only advantage lies in surprise. What we're going to do is hide in the woods outside the city walls and attack them from the flanks and the rear as they try to break down the gates. (an approving murmur goes up among the Amazons) We'll also post archers on the walls and in the trees. Two of you will stay behind to protect Gabrielle, just in case some of Euric's men manage to get into the city. (pauses) Are you ready to fight!

VOICES IN THE CROWD:

We are! -- Yes, Princess Eve! -- We're ready to follow you into battle!

Xena smiles proudly.

EVE:

All right. Let's get to it, then.

KLYMENE (off screen):

Wait.

Klymene walks up to the front of the crowd, stopping by the platform.

KLYMENE:

I know that I haven't reached fighting age yet--but I want to help. I want to go into battle with you.

EVE:

Klymene, you're not...

KLYMENE:

Euric's men killed my mother. This is my only chance to avenge her death. (pleading) Eve, I'm a really good archer. Anyone will tell you that.

AMAZON:

It's true--she's better than most grown-ups.

EVE:

All right. (sighs) You can join us.

Eve steps down from the platform and the Amazons head toward the gates.

CUT TO

Outside the gates. It is night; the stars shine brightly, giving everything an eerie glow. The camera pans over the Amazons hidden in the trees, then to other women who are at the top of the wall on lookout, armed with bows and arrows.

The camera pans down to show four Ostrogoth warriors creeping silently through the streets of Themiscyra and up to the gates.

CUT TO

Eve, waiting in ambush with the other Amazons. There is a strange sound, like a short cry followed by another.

VARIA (startled):

What was that?

CUT TO

An Amazon falling from the wall, a dagger buried in her side, and landing with a thud on the ground on the other side of the wall.

ANTIOPE:

Did you hear that?

Eve nods, an intensely focused look on her face.

There is another creaking sound. The camera zooms in on the gate as it is opened just a little.

XENA (grimly):

They're inside. Let's get them.

Several Amazons push the gates wide open and rush in. Inside, they find the four Ostrogoth warriors, who look shocked. The Amazons attack them. In short order two of them are dead and the other two are pinned to the ground.

EVE:

How did you get in?

The men are silent, breathing hard.

XENA (upper lip curls up in a snarl):

Well, I guess it's showtime.

She hauls one of the Ostrogoths to his feet and jabs him in the side of the neck. He falls on his knees, gasping and clutching at his neck.

XENA (with a gleeful smile):

Having trouble breathing? I don't think you're familiar with this routine, so let me simplify this. I won't try to explain how it works, but you'll be dead in thirty seconds unless you tell me how you got in.

OSTROGOTH (wheezing):

Okay...okay...secret...entrance...

XENA (jabs him in the neck, taking off the pinch):

What secret entrance? Where?

OSTROGOTH (coughs):

Last night, one of our scouts...spotted an Amazon in the woods and...followed her...he saw her get in through a secret entrance in the wall...

Xena turns very grim and glances at Varia, who lowers her eyes guiltily.

VARIA:

This is all my fault...

A high, whooping sound comes from outside the walls that sounds like a bird.

EVE:

It's the signal--they're coming. Come on--we can't waste time sorting out whose fault it was. The important thing is to repel this attack.

The two captured Ostrogoths are quickly tied up and gagged. The women go out of the gates to return to their hiding place, while one of them stays behind to lock the gates.

Euric's army emerges from the woods, coming down the road toward the gates at full speed. As they get near, the Amazons attack. The Amazons on the ground fight with all the force that they can muster while others, on the walls and in the trees, rain down arrows on Euric's men. A close-up on Euric's face; he is shocked.

CUT TO

Gabrielle in her bed; a young, red-headed Amazon is changing the bandage on her arm while another, a dark-haired woman, stands guard by the door. The sounds of the battle can be heard in the distance. Gabrielle looks up, a somewhat concerned look on her face.

RED-HEADED AMAZON:

Are you worried, my Queen?

GABRIELLE:

No, I know Eve can handle it.

There is a sound at the door.

RED-HEADED AMAZON (startled, to the Amazon by the door):

Oterpe, did you hear that?

CUT TO

The Amazons battling Euric's men. Some Amazons fall, but many more of Euric's men are killed. Myopi and Antiope are wounded but still able to fight. Xena is striking down the Ostrogoths left and right. Eve is a superb fighter, almost as good as Xena, and she uses her skills to her best advantage, though she doesn't use her sword much, instead knocking out her enemies with kicks and hand moves.

Suddenly Eve stops and looks around, a thoughtful look on her face. Varia, who is nearby, catches her odd expression.

VARIA:

What's wrong?

EVE:

I was thinking...what if some of them use that secret entrance to get to Gabrielle?

VARIA:

Do you want to alert Xena?

Eve scans the battle scene looking for Xena and sees her at a distance, fighting several men.

EVE:

There's no time--let's go!

Eve and Varia rush through the gates.

CUT TO

The street in front of Gabrielle's cabin. Eve and Varia come running only to see the body of the dark-haired Amazon who was standing guard at Gabrielle's door being thrown out of the house. Then three Ostrogoth warriors come out, two of them dragging Gabrielle. She tries to struggle but she is too weak, and one of the men has a sword to her throat.

With a fierce cry, Eve leaps in the air--a dazzling jump worthy of Xena herself--and kicks down the man holding the sword to Gabrielle's throat. Meanwhile, Varia tackles the second man holding Gabrielle. Gabrielle sinks to the ground, barely conscious. While Eve and Varia fight the three men, the camera pans upward to a fourth Ostrogoth, armed with a bow and arrow, who is positioned on the roof of the cabin and is taking aim at Gabrielle. He releases the arrow.



Varia, who has just killed the Ostrogoth she was fighting, hears the whistle of the arrow and looks up to see the arrow flying straight at Gabrielle. She throws herself in front of the arrow and tries to catch it, but she is not quick enough and the arrow pierces her chest. Eve, who has just knocked out the remaining Ostrogoth, turns around.

EVE (shocked):
Varia!

She looks up and sees the man on the roof, steadying another arrow. Eve rushes over to Varia and grabs the dagger from her belt. She throws it at the man with the bow, killing him instantly.

Gabrielle sits up and cradles Varia's head in her lap.

GABRIELLE:
Varia...you saved my life...

VARIA (hoarsely):
It was the least I could do...

EVE (bends over Varia):
Varia...

VARIA (coughs, blood appearing on her lips):
Eve...I'm glad we got a chance to fight side by side... (her eyes begin to dim) Marga...maybe you can be proud of me now...

Varia dies.

Two Amazons come running.

AMAZON:
We thought you might need help--

EVE (points toward Varia, sadly):

It's too late for her. (the Amazons look shocked) Stay here and look after Gabrielle. I'm needed on the battlefield.

The Amazons pick up Gabrielle and lead her back inside the house while Eve runs toward the gates.

CUT TO

The battle raging outside the gates. Under the onslaught of the Amazons, Euric's men are wavering and ready to retreat; many of them are running.

EURIC (now on foot):

Fight, you cowards! Are you going to run from a bunch of women?

EVE (off-camera):

We told you we're not just women--we're Amazons.

Euric spins around to see Eve smirking at him, a dangerous glint in her eye. Snarling, he attacks her and they fight in a dazzling array of sword moves. Finally, distracting Euric with a thrust of her sword, Eve kicks the sword out of his hand and then brings him down with another kick. As Euric sprawls on his back, Eve holds her sword to his throat. Breathing hard, Eve raises her eyes and sees Xena looking at her.

EVE (to Euric):

I'm willing to spare your miserable life--as long as you never show your face here, or anywhere in Greece, again. You got that?

Panting, Euric nods. Eve takes the sword away from his throat and he gets up.

EURIC (stands up):

We retreat!

He grabs the bridle of a rider less horse running aimlessly through the battlefield, mounts in the saddle, and starts to ride away. Just then, an arrow whizzes through the air and strikes him in the back. He gives a short, raspy cry and falls to the ground, dead. Gasping, Eve and the other Amazons turn around. The camera pans over and to Klymene, who is lowering her bow.

EVE:

Klymene...I promised to spare his life if he retreated.

KLYMENE (a harsh look on her face):

My mother had to be avenged. Now, she is.

A close-up on Eve, a sad and troubled look on her face as the Amazons around her cheer at their victory.

CUT TO

The town square at dusk. Several funeral pyres are burning, their flames shooting up to the evening sky. Eve, Gabrielle (leaning on Antiope's shoulder), Myopi, and other Amazons are standing at the

front of the circle of Amazons surrounding the pyres, to the mournful tune of the Amazon burial song being sung by two voices in the background. Xena stands behind Gabrielle and Eve.

EVE (sadly):

Perhaps I could have gotten to know Varia as a friend...that will never happen now.

GABRIELLE:

Eve, Varia died like a true Amazon--fighting for her sisters.

ANTIOPE (to Eve):

You, too, are a true Amazon now. It was an honor to fight by your side, Eve. I'm glad we made the decision to accept you into the Amazon Nation.

Eve nods silently. Klymene comes up to her.

KLYMENE (hesitantly):

Eve...I wanted to thank you for saving my life the other day. If my mother were still alive... (pauses, blinking away tears) ...she would see that you are not the same woman she fought years ago. I think she would have liked you.

Eve smiles with tears in her eyes and hugs Klymene.

CUT TO

Xena, Gabrielle, and Eve walking down the street together, Gabrielle leaning on Xena and Eve.

EVE (thoughtfully):

I was thinking about that girl...I understand why she did what she did, but it frightens me. At such a young age, her heart is already consumed by rage and revenge...

GABRIELLE:

Maybe you could teach her a way beyond that rage, Eve.

EVE:

You mean, if I stay here?

GABRIELLE:

Yeah.

EVE:

I was thinking about that...

GABRIELLE:

It might be good for you, too, Eve. You might even learn more about who you really are. (smiles) Besides, you'll keep me company.

EVE:

You?



GABRIELLE:

I was thinking of staying for a while and taking my tribe back to their land when they are ready to go. I sometimes feel like I've let them down...I've neglected them after the battle with Bellerophon, when Varia was deposed as Queen and they were left without a firm leader. I really haven't fulfilled my promise to them.

XENA:

So, I guess this means I'm on my own for a while, huh?

GABRIELLE:

Unless you'd prefer to stay here with us...

XENA (shakes head):

Nah. You know I'm not the Amazon type.

GABRIELLE (mischievously):

Well, somehow I have a feeling that right now, you won't mind being on your own quite so much.

XENA:

What's that supposed to mean?

GABRIELLE:

I mean--you won't *really* be on your own.

XENA (quickly):

I don't know what you're... (pauses) Oh *all right*. I do know what you're talking about.

There is a light chuckle between them. Then, Xena looks at Eve.

XENA:

Eve, you never did tell us how you got out of that cave.

EVE (smiles):

I...had help from someone.

XENA (puzzled):

Whom?

EVE (a faint smile crosses her lips for a moment):
I'm not sure he would want you to know.

GABRIELLE (grins):
Oh--so it was a *he*!

Gabrielle and Xena exchange an amused look, and the three women continue to walk down the street. The camera pulls up for an overhead shot of the town, with the funeral pyres still burning on the square, as we:

FADE OUT

THE END

[Ares had a lot of time off during the production of this motion picture.]