

Xena: Warrior Princess

"Last Chance"
production #V1422
episode 20

by

Melissa Good

Renaissance Pictures
100 Universal City Plaza
Universal City, CA 91608
(818) 777-0088

SECOND DRAFT
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TEASER

FADE IN:

INT. SAPPHO'S WORKROOM - DAY

SAPPHO (Renee) and MORAI (Lucy) are trying to design a new ending for their show "Love Bites." Sappho sits in a plush chair at a writing desk. Morai sits on a pillow at her feet.

SAPPHO

I know, I'll have me carried on stage by four hunky dancing guys.

MORAI

We did that last time.

SAPPHO

Well, what if the guys were naked?

MORAI

Tried that, too. Remember that guy who lost his...

SAPPHO

All right, all right...What if they were naked and riding on donkeys?

MORAI

Last time we did that, all we ended up with was free fertilizer and a bill for talcum powder.

SAPPHO

You're squashing my muse, Morai.

MORAI

Why do you always blame me for your writer's block?

SAPPHO

It's not a block! How many times do I have to say that? I'm just not being inspired.

(beat; pointedly)

By anything or anyone.

MORAI

What's that supposed to mean?

Aphrodite POPS IN, looking all goddess-like and impressive.

APHRODITE

Hello, my happy little children!

Sappho jumps up and glares at her.

SAPPHO

You! Where have you been?

APHRODITE

Are you talking to me? Me?
Aphrodite, the Goddess of Love?
Whom you worship? Listen, babe, I
need a favor.

SAPPHO

Worship you? I've been burning
offerings, giving sacrifices...I
haven't had a decent idea in
months!

MORAI

See? I said you had writer's
block. Blame me, why don't you?
Blame everyone but yourself!

SAPPHO

I told you not to call it that!

Morai gets up and walks out. Sappho throws her quill in
disgust on the floor, then storms out after Morai. Aphrodite
ZAPS the quill from the floor and looks at it thoughtfully.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAMPFIRE - SUNSET/TWILIGHT

It's a beautiful, peaceful scene. XENA and GABRIELLE have
their bedroll spread out. Gabrielle has her quill and
parchment out, and she's writing. Xena is sitting next to her,
peering over her shoulder. A blanket covers both of them.

GABRIELLE

I haven't done this in a long
time. I think I'm out of practice.

XENA

Nah. It's like cutting off heads.
You never forget.

GABRIELLE

That's very inspiring, Xena.
Thanks.

XENA
Just trying to be helpful.

GABRIELLE
It would be more helpful if you
sang this for me.

XENA
If you put that other part first,
it would sound better.

GABRIELLE
(amused exasperation)
Xena, do you have to be in charge
of everything? Just sing it, will
you?

Xena rolls her eyes, but SINGS a few words of the song "Last
Dance" to Gabrielle to humor her. It's a very touching,
intimate moment. Aphrodite POPS IN and wrecks it.

APHRODITE
Hey, guys! Nice jam session.

XENA
It was.

APHRODITE
How would you two like a nice,
groovy vacation in the killer
party spot of the Aegean?

Xena and Gabrielle look interested, but Xena's suspicious.

XENA
What's the catch?

APHRODITE
Xena, Xena, Xena. You're such a
cynic. It's not a catch, just this
little problem I'm trying to work
out.

Xena and Gabrielle look at each other.

XENA
How little?

As Aphrodite talks, we see a FLASHBACK to SENHEL and AVAIN
walking hand in hand through a garden.

APHRODITE (V.O.)
Remember that walk on the mortal
side I did? I'd been trying to get
my son Senhel together with this
really cool chick. They're destined
for each other, a real soulmate
kinda thing, y'know?

BACK TO SCENE:

Xena and Gabrielle exchange smiles.

APHRODITE
But while I was gone, it got ugly.

A FLASHBACK of Avain grabbing Senhel and attempting to ravish
him.

APHRODITE (V.O.)
Senhel's like this real sensitive
dude, and he got turned off big
time.

A FLASHBACK of Senhel and Avain parting. Avain is distraught.

BACK TO SCENE:

GABRIELLE
That's terrible.

APHRODITE
You got that right. I think he
just needs a good push in the right direction.
I had his girlfriend talk him into taking a
vacation on Lesbos.

A FLASHBACK of Avain kidnapping Senhel on horseback and
riding off with him, yelling and kicking.

BACK TO SCENE:

GABRIELLE
That's not a push. That's a
catapult toss.

APHRODITE
Right! I figured I was home free,
since I laid a zap on Sappho eons
ago that made her music so groovy,
just hearing it made people fall in
love.

XENA

So what's the problem?

APHRODITE

It broke. It's a no brainer fix. I just need you guys to fill in and take Sappho and Morai's place until I can patch things up.

GABRIELLE

Won't anyone notice we're not them?

Aphrodite smirks.

APHRODITE

Just leave it to me. I'll get you the right duds, you'll pass no problem. So, you'll do it, right?

Xena and Gabrielle look at each other.

GABRIELLE

It's a good cause, Xena, if they're soulmates.

Xena rolls her eyes but grudgingly nods.

APHRODITE

I knew I could count on you guys. There's just one leetttle thing I forgot to mention. They have this unique kinda relationship going.

XENA

Can't be anymore unique than the one we've got.

EXT. BOAT - TRAVELING - MORNING - ESTABLISHING

EXT. LESBOS DOCK - GANGPLANK - MORNING

Gab leads Xena off the boat, dressed in a "Mistress of Love" outfit. Xena has on a "Love Slave" outfit and collar, with a leash attached, firmly held in Gab's hand. Xena's expression says it all. It's a good thing Aphrodite's immortal again, because she's going to be paying for this one for a long, long time.

FADE OUT:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. MARKETPLACE - DAY

Xena and Gabrielle walk through the market towards Sappho's playhouse. The market is colorful and very active. PEOPLE greet Gabrielle as Sappho, hugging and air kissing her, but they ignore Xena or push her aside.

XENA

Popular gal.

GABRIELLE

Yeah. So it seems. Hello...thank you! Hello...

Gabrielle sidesteps around someone and almost chokes Xena. Xena grabs her collar.

GABRIELLE

Sorry. Hey, you know, that's not a bad look on you, Xena. Maybe you should pick up a couple.

XENA

I just hope I don't meet anyone I know. I might have to kill them.

GABRIELLE

C'mon, Xena. Where's all that warrior self-discipline you're always bragging about? Your ability to focus? Hmm?

Several MEN come up, bowing to Gabrielle and shoving Xena aside. One of them pulls Gabrielle into an embrace, then pats Xena on the butt and walks on. Xena growls.

GABRIELLE

Focus, Xena. Focus.

XENA

Focus my...

Gabrielle puts a hand over Xena's mouth.

GABRIELLE

Don't give anyone ideas.

INT. SAPPHO'S PLAYHOUSE - DAY

Xena and Gabrielle enter. The playhouse is a riot of MUSIC, color, DANCERS, sexy MEN and WOMEN. They swarm over Gabrielle and air kiss with her, fawning shamelessly. Gabrielle drops the leash. Xena starts twirling it as she watches. The STAGE MANAGER hurries in and they all sit down at Sappho's feet.

STAGE MANAGER

The great Sappho has returned.
The Stage Manager looks at Xena, who is standing next to Gabrielle. He points at Xena.

STAGE MANAGER

And some of us have forgotten how
to show respect. On your knees!

Everyone stares at Xena. Gabrielle tugs on Xena's costume and she very reluctantly kneels. Just then, SENHEL and AVAIN enter. Senhel is very stiff and prim. Avain is a babe.

AVAIN

Hello? Sorry to interrupt, but
we're looking for Sappho.

The Players circle around them curiously and herd them over towards Gab and Xena.

GABRIELLE

You must be Avain and Senhel.
Glad to meet you.

STAGE MANAGER

Ahh...some new patrons for our
great poetess! Welcome! Come in,
sit down, take a load off...

GABRIELLE

No, these are guests who are here to
see the show tomorrow night.

The Players all look at each other and whisper. The Stage Manager draws Gabrielle to one side and whispers to her.

STAGE MANAGER

The show? It's not finished.

XENA

Guess we'll just have to improvise.

STAGE MANAGER

Nobody asked you to talk. Listen, Sappho...

AVAIN

Oh, thank you. We'd love to see the show. We've heard of your songs and poetry.

GABRIELLE

You have? Oh, right...of course. Well, I guess we'd better start working on getting ready then.

STAGE MANAGER

You heard the lady. Let's get rehearsing!

Everyone goes in different directions. The Dancers surround Senhel and Avain and practice around them.

The Stage Manager approaches Gabrielle and lowers his voice.

STAGE MANAGER

I hope you got that ending worked out, or this is going to be the flop of the century.

(then)

Spiros, I need to talk to her greatness for a minute, can I get you to walk the dog for me, kid?

The Stage Manager gives Xena's leash to SPIROS, a hunky dancer.

STAGE MANAGER

That's a doll. Take her for a walk and a bath, would ya?

Spiros dances out, leading Xena.

INT. SAPPHO'S WORKROOM/EXT. WORKROOM - DAY

The door opens and Xena is pushed inside, the door closed behind her. For a moment, she stands in the center of this room with her eyes closed and it's totally quiet. Then her eyes open, and she snarls and lets loose, DESTROYING the nearest piece of furniture into matchsticks. Then she rips off the collar and lead and balls them up, going to the window and throwing them violently.

OUTSIDE:

They whip around like the chakram and circle the necks of TWO MEN, bringing them together into an embrace which causes them to fall into the water. This causes a domino effect that creates chaos ending in a mass of wet, angry PEOPLE.

INSIDE:

XENA

Now that's focus.

Xena smirks, and in a better humor, prowls around the room and flings an inner door open. We can see a much nicer room beyond it. Xena enters and slams the door behind her.

EXT. CANOE ON THE RIVER - AFTERNOON

Sappho is sprawled across the bow of the canoe. It is overly full of their gear, needed for a long camping trip. Morai is paddling ineptly.

MORAI

I've been thinking.

SAPPHO

Again? Didn't I warn you about that? You'll go blind if you keep it up.

MORAI

I've been working really hard lately, and I'd really like it if I could get some credit for it.

SAPPHO

Haven't we had this discussion already?

MORAI

I know, but...

SAPPHO

Don't you think I deserve the credit I get?

MORAI

Y...yes, of course you do.

SAPPHO

So to give you some, I'd have to give up some of mine, right?

MORAI

I'm sorry. I was only going to ask you to put my name in the program.

SAPPHO

Did you finish that song yet? The finale you promised me?

MORAI

N...no. I haven't. I'm stuck on this last verse, and I just can't seem to--

SAPPHO

Ah! So! I entrust you with my reputation, and you can't even finish a simple song, and yet you want my credit?

MORAI

You couldn't finish it either.

A bee buzzes around Morai's head. Morai waves it off.

SAPPHO

That's not the point. Do you want me to look bad? C'mon, Morai.

MORAI

No, I don't. I'll try to finish it.

Sappho lays back in a pose of concentration. The bee gets more persistent. Morai starts to wave wildly at it.

SAPPHO

I do feel a lot more relaxed. Maybe old Aphrodite was right about us taking a vacation together.

Morai swipes at the bee with her paddle with such force she overbalances and turns the canoe over, dumping both her and Sappho into the water with all their gear.

INT. SAPPHO'S BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

Gabrielle enters and shoves the door closed in the face of several babbling PEOPLE intent on following her. Gabrielle turns around and spots Xena soaking in the huge, heart-shaped tub in the middle of Sappho's quarters.

GABRIELLE

Hi. See you made yourself at home.

Xena glares at her. Gabrielle walks over and gives Xena a neck massage.

GABRIELLE

Sorry about that. I don't think they meant any harm, Xena. It's just a taste of how they do things here.

XENA

Taste's lousy if you ask me.

Gabrielle gets undressed as she talks.

GABRIELLE

Look, I realize how hard it is for you to play second fiddle...

XENA

That has nothing to do with it.

Gabrielle enters the tub and floats over to where Xena is. She's amused.

GABRIELLE

The great Warrior Princess having to act like my servant? It has everything to do with it. Xena. I've known you too long.

XENA

Yeah? You seem to be enjoying yourself.

GABRIELLE

But if our positions were reversed, it would be fine, wouldn't it?

Xena hesitates, sensing something serious in Gabrielle's tone. Before she can answer, Aphrodite APPEARS right in the tub, dousing both of them. PINK BUBBLES APPEAR as well.

APHRODITE

Now this is style. You guys are doing great.

GABRIELLE

Not according to Xena.

Xena rolls her eyes.

APHRODITE
Ooo...are we grumpy?

XENA
No. I just don't like being
treated like a pet monkey.

GABRIELLE
You'd look cute with a tail. C'mon,
Xena. Lighten up. This is
for a good cause, remember?

APHRODITE
Boy, I forgot how touchy that
warrior pride is.

Gabrielle starts laughing at Xena's expression.

XENA
Pride has nothing to do with it!

Gabrielle pats Xena's cheek affectionately.

XENA
Gabrielle...

Gabrielle and Aphrodite laugh. Xena swamps them with bath
water.

EXT. SAPPHO'S GARDEN - NIGHT

Sappho and Morai walk through the garden, soaking wet.

MORAI
I really didn't mean to do that.

SAPPHO
Just...be quiet and let me drip in
peace.

INT. SAPPHO'S BANQUET ROOM - NIGHT

Gabrielle sits on Sappho's large throne chair, Xena is on a
stack of pillows next to her. There is lots of
entertainment: DANCING GIRLS, DANCING GUYS, MUSIC, etc.
Senhel and Avain sit next to them.

SENHEL

You write about the beauty of love. I understand that, Sappho. I just can't see what it has to do with all this.

Senhel indicates the writhing and sensuality going on.

GABRIELLE

Love has a lot of different faces.

SENHEL

Love should be a spiritual goal. My mother's approach is all wrong. It should inspire people with its beauty.

Xena has been watching the Dancers, pegging them with grapes. Now she listens as Gabrielle begins to speak.

GABRIELLE

But that's not what love is. Love is something real that can hurt you, and it takes a lot of hard work and sacrifice to keep it alive.

SENHEL

You make it sound like some sort of strange torture.

GABRIELLE

It can be. It takes guts to love someone. But it's worth it.

Gab turns to see Xena watching her. Senhel looks at them very thoughtfully.

SENHEL

What an interesting concept. I'll have to think about that.

The Stage Manager takes a seat on Sappho's throne, brushing Xena's arm off the side of it.

STAGE MANAGER

Don't want to dent the fabric.

XENA

Then you should get your ass off it.

STAGE MANAGER
Better be good or you won't get
spanked before bedtime.

Xena's eyes narrow.

GABRIELLE
You really don't want to do that.

STAGE MANAGER
Ahh...all bark and no bite.

Xena goes to answer. Gabrielle quickly pops a treat into her
mouth. Xena closes her teeth on Gabrielle's fingers.

GABRIELLE
All bite, no warning.

Xena releases Gabrielle.

STAGE MANAGER
Maybe you should commission a
muzzle.

XENA
Maybe you should commission a
crypt.

Xena gets up and dusts her clothing off.

XENA
I'm going to go find a bone. Have
fun.

Xena stalks out. Gabrielle watches her leave.

INT. SAPPHO'S WORKROOM - NIGHT

Gab enters. Morai is sitting at her writing desk. Gab thinks
this is Xena.

GABRIELLE
Did you really have to do that?

MORAI
I said I was sorry.

GABRIELLE
No, you didn't...Oh, never mind.
Just forget it.

MORAI

Okay. Can I sing you a song, or
do you want to get in bed?

Gabrielle realizes something's not right here.

INT. SAPPHO'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Xena enters, dressed in her leathers. Sappho is inside,
dressed in very sexy lingerie, brushing her hair in the
mirror.

XENA

Hey...

SAPPHO

All right. All right already, I
forgive you. Now come here and
kiss me.

Xena is startled by the bold request.

XENA

What?

SAPPHO

You heard me. Get over here.

Sappho turns and looks at Xena. She crooks a finger at her.

SAPPHO

Oooo...leather. You are
definitely forgiven. Is it my
birthday? C'mere.

Xena realizes there's something not right here.

INT. SAPPHO'S WORKROOM - MOMENTS LATER

GABRIELLE

What are you doing?

MORAI

Taking your boots off. Hey,
listen. I thought of a new poem
while we were walking. Can I tell
it to you?

GABRIELLE

A poem?

MORAI

Yeah.

Gabrielle covers Morai's mouth and kneels next to her.

GABRIELLE

Okay. Where did you get the herbane, and how much did you take?

INT. SAPPHO'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME

Xena is being slowly pursued around the room.

XENA

Wait a minute...

SAPPHO

Wait? You show up in my boudoir barefoot in leather and you want me to wait? On your knees!

Sappho leaps for Xena. Xena evades her and escapes out the door, totally rattled.

INT. SAPPHO'S WORKROOM - MOMENTS LATER

MORAI

Why do you think I'm drunk?

GABRIELLE

You're stealing my boots and reciting poetry.

MORAI

But I'm a poet!

GABRIELLE

You're not a poet.

Morai stares at her, then bursts into tears and races out of the room. Gabrielle gives chase, unsure of what is going on.

INT. SAPPHO'S HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Morai enters the hallway, being chased by a confused Gabrielle. Xena enters the hallway, being chased by an amorous Sappho. They all round a corner and literally collide with each other and land on their butts in a big pile. They stare at each other in shock.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. SAPPHO'S BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT

Xena and Gabrielle stand facing Sappho and Morai. Sappho is watching them in fascination. Sappho approaches Gabrielle and peers at her.

SAPPHO

Wild. Absolutely wild. I can't believe my eyes. Who are you again?

GABRIELLE Gabrielle.

I'm a...traveler.

Sappho walks over and examines Xena.

SAPPHO

A traveler. Uh-huh. And what's your name, tiger?

XENA

Xena.

SAPPHO

Xena. I like that. What are you?

XENA

I have many skills.

SAPPHO

Oh, I bet you do. Hey, Morai, look. You with a backbone and attitude. This could be interesting.

XENA

Not for long. We're leaving.

SAPPHO

Aw. In the middle of the night? C'mon, sleep over. It's a big bed.

GABRIELLE

No, thanks. Xena's very restless at night.

SAPPHO

Does she steal the pillows?

GABRIELLE
No, she strangles them.

Xena and Gabrielle leave. Sappho watches them go, very intrigued.

SAPPHO
Isn't this a kick, Morai?

MORAI
Yeah. In the head.

SAPPHO
Aw, c'mon. Our lives needed a little shaking up, didn't they?

Morai looks disturbed.

INT. SAPPHO'S WORKROOM - VERY LATE NIGHT

Xena and Gabrielle enter. They are both thinking about the doubles.

GABRIELLE
That was weird.

XENA
Yeah.

Gabrielle looks at the shattered furniture.

GABRIELLE
Wonder what happened to that?

XENA
Termites.

Gabrielle looks at the mess, looks knowingly at Xena, then smiles. Xena shrugs sheepishly. They put down their sleeping rugs on Sappho's plush, huge workbench and lay down together for some pillow talk.

GABRIELLE
I knew right away it wasn't you.

XENA
Oh yeah, me too.

GABRIELLE
I mean, you offering to recite poetry to me...dead giveaway there.

XENA
Oh yeah, right.

They are both silent for a beat.

GABRIELLE
So how'd you know it wasn't me?

XENA
(beat)
Um...I just knew.

Gabrielle looks at Xena. Xena shrugs.

GABRIELLE
Guess we know each other pretty well, huh?

XENA
Yeah. We should, after all this time.

They're both quiet for a beat.

GABRIELLE
That's good, right?

Xena looks at Gabrielle and smiles.

XENA
Yeah.

INT. SAPPHO'S PLAYHOUSE - STAGE - MORNING

Sappho is writing. She writes, then scratches out, then writes. Finally, she balls up her parchment and tosses it. Aphrodite catches the ball as she POPS IN.

APHRODITE
Hey, babe! How goes it?

SAPPHO
About as well as a one-legged dog does in a footrace. The best I can come up with today is a dirty limerick that ends with the word duck.

APHRODITE
Grody.

SAPPHO

You said you'd give me my muse back
if I agreed to do this, so where is
it?

APHRODITE

It'll come back. Give it time.

SAPPHO

You sure? I look inside for that
fire, and it's not there anymore. I
just don't feel it.

APHRODITE

Hang tight. Maybe you just need
a little fresh inspiration.

Aphrodite POPS OUT. Sappho looks depressed.

SAPPHO

Yeah. I need something.

INT. SAPPHO'S WORKROOM - MORNING

Xena is reading a list of "Sappho's Rules" on the wall.
Gabrielle is writing something.

XENA

I can't believe this. I'm gonna
go find Sappho and talk to her
about how she treats people.

Xena stalks out. Gabrielle looks up from her writing,
bemused.

GABRIELLE

Does anyone else see the irony
here?

The door reopens and Morai enters. She stops, and looks at
Gabrielle uncertainly.

MORAI

I thought you were leaving.

GABRIELLE

We are. Listen, sorry about the
mix-up last night, saying you
weren't a poet.

Morai enters, more friendly now. Gabrielle starts packing her bag.

MORAI

It's okay. I mean, how could you know there were two of us? How often does that happen?

GABRIELLE

Well...actually...

Morai looks in Gab's bag.

MORAI

You're light travelers, huh?

GABRIELLE

We move around a lot, so yeah, just the essentials. Soap, underwear, pins for Xena's armor...

Morai hands Gabrielle a toothbrush. Gabrielle puts it in the bag.

MORAI

Is that your writing? Can I see it? Oh, you make that letter backwards just like I do.

GABRIELLE

Um...sure. It's just a story I was working on...Are those your poems over there?

MORAI

Wow! I really like this! Those are mine, yeah, wanna see them? I just finished one yesterday.

GABRIELLE

Sure. Sure, I'd love to. You really like that? I thought it was a little dark, myself.

Morai steers Gabrielle towards the workbench.

INT. SAPPHO'S PLAYHOUSE - STAGE - MORNING

Sappho is practicing a scene with a fencing foil and is shadow fencing with a covered set piece. Xena enters and watches for a moment. Sappho spots her and stops.

XENA

I think you've got a problem.

SAPPHO

You're right. I do. This tree is a lousy opponent.

Sappho swaggers over to where Xena is standing. She salutes Xena with her epee and starts to fence around her.

XENA

Wasn't what I meant.

Sappho's foil gets closer. Xena backs out of the way.

SAPPHO

What's on your mind then, Xena?

Don't mind if I practice while we talk, do you?

Sappho is slowly pursuing Xena around the stage, prowling after her. Xena is not amused.

XENA

Better watch that thing. It could get you in trouble.

SAPPHO

Yeah? I live for trouble.

Sappho executes some fast moves very close to Xena and ends up with the tip of her foil inches from Xena's face. Xena doesn't even flinch.

SAPPHO

I think I'm in the mood for a real challenge.

Xena glances at the foil, then with a quick move, takes it from Sappho's hand, and with the tip, slashes her name on the set piece then whips the foil across the stage, burying it several inches into a piece of wood.

XENA

I think you're outclassed.

Sappho is delighted. She gets nose to nose with Xena.

SAPPHO

I like you, Xena. You're my kinda gal.

INT. SAPPHO'S WORKROOM - DAY

Morai and Gabrielle kick back in the big work chair, drinking wine and doing some bardic bonding.

GABRIELLE

You write all the songs for Sappho's shows? I thought she did.

MORAI

Yeah. But Sappho says everyone comes to the show because of her, so I can't get any credit for it.

GABRIELLE

That's not right. You're equal partners.

MORAI

She's the star, she's the big shot, she's the important one. I'm just a...

GABRIELLE

Sidekick.

MORAI

Sort of. Sometimes I wonder why she keeps me around.

Gabrielle looks at Morai with compassion and understanding, having been there and done that herself.

GABRIELLE

Because you're an important part of her life. You've got to stand up for yourself, Morai. I had to learn to do that.

MORAI

Wanna give me some pointers?

They clink glasses and smile.

INT. SAPPHO'S PLAYHOUSE - STAGE/OFF-STAGE - DAY

Sappho is showing Xena around the stage. Morai walks up in the background and listens, unseen. Gab stands behind her.

XENA

So this is all yours, huh?

SAPPHO

Sure. It's my house, my show, my people...why?

XENA

Then why do you let them treat your partner like a dog?

SAPPHO

Who, Morai? Oh. She's just a nobody I found out in the market one day. She loves the abuse.

Morai reacts.

XENA

Thought you two were closer than that.

SAPPHO

Nah. Oh, we were, but it's just gotten old lately.

Morai is devastated. A tear rolls down her face.

XENA

Did you ever think of talking it over with her?

SAPPHO

Talk? Not my style. Hey, life goes on, right? Speaking of which...

Sappho moves closer. Gabrielle and Morai move onto the stage. Sappho sees them and backs off.

SAPPHO

Hey, I was wondering when you'd show up for rehearsal.

MORAI

So you could take advantage of me?
If you're so great, you do the show yourself.

Morai storms out RIGHT THROUGH APHRODITE POPPING IN.
Aphrodite shudders as she's walked through.

APHRODITE
Ew! I hate that! What's up with
her?

SAPPHO
She just quit.

APHRODITE
What? Well, go after her! The
show's about to start! You've got
to get her back!

Sappho looks at Xena.

SAPPHO
Maybe I don't.

END OF ACT TWO

FADE OUT:

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. SAPPHO'S PLAYHOUSE - STAGE - THAT EVENING
MUSIC is playing. The Players are warming up, the AUDIENCE is starting to enter and mill around. Excitement is building for the opening of Sappho's new show.

INT. SAPPHO'S PLAYHOUSE - BACKSTAGE - CONTINUOUS

Xena pulls Gabrielle to one side.

XENA

What a mess. See if you can find
Morai and talk her into coming back.

GABRIELLE

All right. But I think Sappho would
rather I didn't.

XENA

What are you talking about?

Gabrielle gives Xena a knowing look.

GABRIELLE

I think she's found a new interest.

XENA

C'mon, Gabrielle. She just wants
this show to work, that's all.

GABRIELLE

If you say so.

Xena appears worried as she watches Gabrielle leave.

INT. SAPPHO'S PLAYHOUSE - DRESSING AREA - A LITTLE LATER

Workers dress Sappho and Xena in their costumes. Sappho's attitude towards Xena is now much sweeter.

SAPPHO

Thanks for stepping in on such short
notice. I really appreciate it.

XENA

Don't thank me until it's over. You may not like the results.

Sappho walks over and carefully pins a small flower on Xena's costume. She adjusts Xena's costume.

SAPPHO

I'm sure you'll be just fine.

Xena is stunned, but Aphrodite waltzes over, breaking up their little moment.

APHRODITE

Here I am, rarin' to go! What's my part in this thing?

SAPPHO

Your part?

APHRODITE

Like, of course. I am one bundle of Goddess of Looove talent, babe. So where are you gonna put me?

SAPPHO

You know, I think I've got just the place for you.

INT. SAPPHO'S PLAYHOUSE - STAGE - A LITTLE LATER

The show starts. Aphrodite as Titania comes out, carried by BEARERS, as the butterfly pasty-wearing Queen of Love. She sprinkles love powder everywhere, to the tune of "Hot Stuff". She speaks over the MUSIC.

APHRODITE

We have here two couples who show off so many flavors of lllloooooovvee...

Aphrodite points at Xena and Sappho alternately in different places as the SPOTLIGHT hits them as the four different characters.

APHRODITE

We have Hermia...who loves Lysia...

Sappho/Hermia and Xena/Lysia come out as "I Love the Nightlife"
PLAYS.

XENA/SAPPHO (AS LYSIA/HERMIA)

(singing)

"Whoa, I love the nightlife. I've
got to boogie, on the disco...I love the nightlife, I
got to boogie, on the disco..."

Xena upstages Sappho and forces her back. Sappho whispers to
Xena.

SAPPHO

I'm not used to being chased.

XENA

So improvise or get used to it.

The music SEGUES to "Don't Talk About Love Tonight" as Xena
enters as Demetrius, and Sappho enters as Hermia.

APHRODITE

And we have Demetrius...who also
loves Hermia...but she doesn't love
him...

SAPPHO (AS HERMIA)

(singing; to
Demetrius)

"Please don't talk about love
tonight. Please don't talk about
sweet love. Please don't talk
about being true, and all the
trouble we been through. Please
don't talk about all the plans we
had of fixing this broken
romance..."

Sappho/Hermia breaks from Xena/Demetrius and heads onto the
dance floor in search of someone...

SAPPHO (AS HERMIA)

(singing)

"I want to go where the people
dance. I want some action. I want to live
action. I've got so much to give, I want to
give it, I want to get some too..."

Xena/Demetrius captures Sappho/Hermia and traps her.

SAPPHO
(whispers)
You're playing this all wrong!

XENA
Depends on your point of view.

The music SEGUES to "Don't Leave Me This Way".

XENA (AS DEMETRIUS)
(singing)
"Don't leave me this way. I can't
survive, I can't stay alive
without your love. Oh, baby..."

Sappho/Hermia is unmoved.

XENA (AS DEMETRIUS)
(singing)
"Don't leave me this way. I can't
exist, I'll surely miss your tender
kiss. Don't leave me this way..."

Sappho/Hermia escapes Xena/Demetrius' clutches, and
they DISAPPEAR, to REAPPEAR as Hermia and Lysia.

XENA/SAPPHO (AS LYSIA/HERMIA)
(singing)
"Ahhhhhh. Baby! My heart is full
of love and DESIRE FOR YOU! Now come on down
and do what you GOTTA DO! You started this
fire down IN MY SOUL! Now can't you see it's
burning OUT OF CONTROL! So come on, satisfy
the NEED IN ME!
'Cause only your sweet loving can
SET ME FREE!"

Sappho/Hermia and Xena/Lysia break apart. Xena/Lysia
VANISHES, replaced by Xena/Demetrius.

XENA (AS DEMETRIUS)
(singing)
"Don't, doncha leave me this way.
Don't you understand, I'm at your command.
Oh baby, please. Please don't leave me this
way."

Sappho/Hermia runs away from Xena/Demetrius. Sappho
REAPPEARS as HELENA.

APHRODITE

Last and least...poor little
Helena...she loves Demetrius but he
doesn't love her! Let's see where
they all end up!

SAPPHO (AS HELENA)

(singing)

"Don't leave me this way. I can't
survive, I can't stay alive without
your love. Baby, don't leave me
this way."

Xena/Demetrius spurns Sappho/Helena, who chases Demetrius
offstage. Xena and Sappho reappear as Lysia and Hermia.
They turn it on.

XENA/SAPPHO (AS LYSIA/HERMIA) (singing)

"Ahhhhhh, baby, I, my heart is
full of love and DESIRE FOR YOU! So come on down and
do what you GOTTA DO! You started this fire down IN
MY SOUL! Now can't you see it's burning OUT OF
CONTROL! So come on, satisfy the NEED IN ME! 'Cause
only your good loving can SET ME FREE!"

Sappho/Hermia and Xena/Lysia end up the song in each other's
arms. They both seem to be enjoying the music, and each
other.

INT. SAPPHO'S PLAYHOUSE - AUDIENCE/STAGE - NIGHT

Senhel and Avain watch the play. Senhel looks thoughtful.
Aphrodite is watching them and looks encouraged. She gives
Sappho and Xena a big thumbs up.

INT. SAPPHO'S PLAYHOUSE - STAGE - CONTINUOUS

A slower romantic, fairy, INSTRUMENTAL PIECE is going on.
Sappho and Xena dance together, a very sensual dance. The
FAIRIES swirl around them. Aphrodite APPEARS, sprinkling pixie
dust.

SAPPHO

See? I said you'd do just fine.

Xena looks up at Senhel, then back.

XENA

Think it's working?

Sappho doesn't look away from Xena's eyes.

SAPPHO
Yes, I do.

Sappho goes to kiss Xena. Xena moves away, as though it were part of the dance.

SAPPHO
We could make this a permanent partnership.

XENA
I already have one of those.

SAPPHO
I think I can make you a better offer.

Sappho leans over Xena confidently.

SAPPHO
So. What do you say?

XENA
You're not my type.

Xena slips away from Sappho. It's obvious she's turned her down flat. The lights go DIM and everyone becomes still.

INT. SAPPHO'S PLAYHOUSE - AUDIENCE - CONTINUOUS

Senhel sits back with a sour look. He brushes Avain's hand off his leg. Aphrodite curses and POPS OUT.

INT. SAPPHO'S PLAYHOUSE - STAGE/AUDIENCE - CONTINUOUS

Music for "I Believe in Miracles" starts up. Xena as Demetrius and Sappho as Helena appear. Xena/Demetrius stalks Sappho/Helena. Xena is really taunting Sappho.

XENA (AS DEMETRIUS)
(singing)
"I believe in miracles. Where you from, you sexy thing?. Sexy thing, you. I believe in miracles, since you came along, you sexy thing!"

Sappho/Helena retreats, confused. Xena/Demetrius pursues her.

Sappho/Helena runs away, colliding with Xena/Lysia on the other side of the stage.

XENA (AS LYSIA)

(singing)

"Where did you come from, baby?
How did you know I needed you?
How did you know I needed you so
badly. How did you know I'd given
my heart gladly. Yesterday, I was
one of the lonely people, now you're
lying close to me, making love to
me."

Sappho/Helena breaks away from Xena/Lysia, running frantically and crashing back into:

XENA (AS DEMETRIUS)

(singing)

"I believe in miracles. Where you
from, you sexy thing? Sexy thing, you. I believe in
miracles since you came along, you sexy thing."

Sappho/Helena runs from the stage. She is confused and upset, not sure if Xena is mocking her or serious. The Crowd gets uneasy. Xena/Lysia is left on stage.

XENA (AS LYSIA)

(singing)

"Kiss me, you sexy thing. Touch
me, baby! You sexy thing! I love the way you
touch me, darling, you sexy thing! It's sextasy,
you sexy thing!"

Sappho appears as Hermia, Lysia's lover whom Xena/Lysia now ignores. The music MIXES into a reprise of "Don't Leave Me This Way". Sappho's giving it one more try.

SAPPHO (AS HERMIA)

(singing)

"Don't leave me this way. I can't
survive, I can't stay alive
without your love. Oh baby..."

Xena/Lysia just walks away. Sappho/Hermia sits down, distraught. Aphrodite drifts past, sprinkling dust over everything and especially Xena.

APHRODITE

(whispers)

This is so, like not working!

Xena looks at her.

APHRODITE

C'mon, Xena! Look at those poor kids!

Xena looks at Senhel and Avain. Avain is crying. Xena sighs.

XENA

Sometimes I really miss being a warlord.

The lights GO DOWN as they all go offstage.

INT. SAPPHO'S GARDEN - NIGHT

Gabrielle walks through the garden. She spots Morai near a reflecting pool, throwing pebbles into it. Gab sits down next to Morai. Morai has been crying.

MORAI

Loving someone's not all it's cracked up to be, is it?

GABRIELLE

It has its trials, sure.

Morai throws pebbles and causes ripples in the water.

GABRIELLE

But trials like this change you, and that can be a good thing. Like those rocks change the water. The ripples go away, but the pebbles are always in there, always changing what's under the surface.

MORAI

Are there a lot of pebbles inside you, Gabrielle?

GABRIELLE

Mm-hmm. It's a wonder I don't rattle when I walk.

Morai smiles, despite her tears.

MORAI

I wish I could be like you.

Gabrielle puts an arm around Morai.

GABRIELLE

No, you don't. Give Sappho another chance, Morai. Don't give up on her so fast.

MORAI

How can you say that? You heard what she said to Xena.

GABRIELLE

Sure. But I know that sometimes people say things they don't really mean, and love's something that's worth fighting for.

MORAI

I'm not good at fighting. I think Xena would pulverize me.

(beat; looks at Gab)

I think you would pulverize me.

GABRIELLE

C'mon. Come back with me, and you'll see. She needs you, Morai. I can feel it.

Reluctantly, Morai takes Gab's hand and lets Gab lead her away.

INT. SAPPHO'S PLAYHOUSE - BACKSTAGE - CONTINUOUS

Xena and Sappho change for the next number. Sappho is frustrated and pissed. They are both sweating and tired. Aphrodite POPS IN, also pissed.

SAPPHO

What was that? The way you're singing them, those songs have as much meaning as a Roman haiku.

XENA

They're not my songs, so get off my back!

APHRODITE

Xena! Think of those poor kids out there! What is up with you?

XENA

Y'know, I've had about enough of this...

SAPPHO

Wait.

(beat)

She's right. It's not her fault.
The magic's gone, Aphrodite. The
songs just don't work anymore. I'm
sorry.

Sappho sits down on a trunk, exhausted and discouraged.

XENA

All right. Look. We've got one
more chance at it, so let's just
go do it and make it work.

SAPPHO

What makes you think it will?

XENA

Because I said so.

Sappho gets up and wipes her face. Sappho and Xena go back
onstage. Aphrodite looks worried.

INT. SAPPHO'S PLAYHOUSE - STAGE - NIGHT

Xena and Sappho enter as Lysia and Hermia. Xena/Lysia takes
command as the MUSIC for "Whatever the Replacement for This
is" starts.

XENA (AS LYSIA)

(singing)

Song lyrics for a song that I
don't know the title for yet, and won't know
until we pick a replacement for "Best of My Love"
which is stuck in rear view window hell.

Sappho responds to the sexual energy Xena is putting out.

SAPPHO (AS HERMIA)

(singing)

Whatever the other lyrics are for
this song, which is probably sexual in nature and
requires a hot dance number that has the two singers
crawling all over each other in hot pursuit.

Sappho/Hermia and Xena/Lysia connect and set the stage on
fire, crawling all over each other in a passionate display.
Xena/Lysia throws Sappho/Hermia on her back on a set piece and
straddles her, ready for conquest.

INT. SAPPHO'S PLAYHOUSE - AUDIENCE/STAGE - CONTINUOUS

Gabrielle and Morai enter and stop in shock as Xena pins Sappho to the set piece and ravishes her.

MORAI

Looks like you were wrong,
Gabrielle.

Hold on Gabrielle's face, as we:

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. SAPPHO'S PLAYHOUSE - STAGE/AUDIENCE - CONTINUING

Xena/Lysia is about to give Sappho/Hermia the kiss of her life. She looks up to see Senhel watching her with wide eyes, and she grins, then goes back to her task. Sappho is crawling all over Xena, and just as their lips are about to meet, Xena glances over as though she got poked with a stick and finds

GABRIELLE

looking at her. Their eyes lock. Xena sees the hurt in Gab's face and the magic is broken. Sappho spots Gab and Morai over Xena's shoulder.

Morai has had enough. She pushes past Gabrielle, who tries to hold her back

GABRIELLE

It's not what it looks like.

MORAI

Then you need glasses.

Morai enters the stage and confronts Sappho as the MUSIC for "I Will Survive" begins.

MORAI

(singing)

"First, I was afraid. I was petrified, thinking I could never live without you by my side. But then I spent so many nights thinking how you did me wrong. And I grew strong and I learned how to get along..."

Sappho is shocked at being confronted, and outwardly angry, but inwardly pathetically glad Morai came back.

SAPPHO

(singing)

"And so you're back from outer space...just walked in to find you here with that look upon your face. I shoulda changed that stupid lock. I shoulda made you leave your key. If I'd a known for just one second you'd be back to bother me."

Sappho walks over to Morai, and they circle each other like fighting cats.

SAPPHO

(singing)

"Go on now, go walk out the door.
Just turn around now, cause you're
not welcome anymore."

MORAI

(singing)

"Was I ever? You're better off with
the one you love best. Yourself."

Morai storms out. Gabrielle chases after her. Sappho stares, realizing too late how much she really does love Morai. Quickly, the MUSIC starts up into "Knock on Wood". The Players come onstage to sing. The mood is frantic.

SAPPHO

(singing)

"I don't wanna lose you, this good
thing that I've got, 'cause if I did I would surely,
surely lose a lot. 'Cause your love is better than
any love I know. It's like thunder, lightning, the
way you love me is frightening...YOU BETTER KNOCK ON
WOOD!"

It's obvious Sappho's singing to Morai. Morai is fighting through the Crowd and refuses to turn. Gabrielle catches up to her.

GABRIELLE

Morai, wait.

Morai turns and grabs hold of Gabrielle's shoulders.

MORAI

Gabrielle. Come with me. We
could be great partners -- you understand me, and
I understand
you. Let's go.

Gabrielle is stunned, and for a moment, we wonder if she's tempted.

Xena wonders too, and now joins Sappho in singing.

XENA/SAPPHO

(singing)

"I'm not superstitious about ya,
but I can't take no chance. You got
me spinning, baby. You know that
I'm in a trance...Coz our love is
better than any love I know. It's
like thunder... lightning! The way
you love me is frightening...YOU
BETTER KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK...ON WOOD.
BABY!"

The Players join them. Everyone is dancing.

PLAYERS AND ALL (singing)

"You better knock knock knock on
wood! You better knock knock knock
on wood! You better knock knock
knock on wood!"

The song ends. The Crowd claps politely. They look up at
Senhel, who is getting up to leave without a backward glance.
Avain sits, sobbing. It's all a failure.

XENA

Hold it!

Everyone pushes for the exits. Xena picks up a piece of set
dressing and lets it loose. It FLIES AROUND the playhouse
slamming the doors shut, ending up slamming the door right in
Senhel's face with a loud BANG. Everyone jumps.

AVAIN

Eek!

SENHEL

What's the meaning of this!

The Audience grumbles.

XENA

Show's not over yet.

SENHEL

I've seen enough. There's no love
here, no feeling. Nothing to
uplift the spirit...

Xena starts to sing "Last Dance".

XENA
(singing)
"It's a last dance, the last
chance for love."

Gabrielle reacts, as she recognizes her song, the one she was working on in the Teaser. She turns back towards Xena.

XENA
(singing)
"Yes, its my last chance for
romance tonight."

Gabrielle walks onstage, her eyes locked with Xena's.

XENA
(singing)
"I need you by me, beside me, to
guide me."

Gabrielle takes Xena's hands.

XENA
(singing)
"To hold me, to scold me, 'cause
when I'm bad, I'm so so bad..."

Xena stops singing and just looks at Gabrielle, and they both smile at the truth of the words. Then they hug each other warmly and part. Xena looks up at Senhel. He is completely unmoved. Everyone else is entranced.

XENA
Tough sell.

Xena and Gabrielle look at each other, then they kiss with deep and sincere passion. As they kiss, the Audience starts leaning forward, more and more until Senhel topples over the railing and lands on the ground. Xena and Gabrielle come up for air and look at him.

XENA
That's a first.

GABRIELLE
Cut off the flow of blood to his
brain, I guess.

The Audience laughs, the MUSIC starts up. Avain is frantically fanning Senhel. Finally, she kisses him. He wakes up and kisses her back. Aphrodite fans herself. Everyone dances.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SAPPHO'S PLAYHOUSE - THE NEXT MORNING

Xena and Gabrielle walk away from the playhouse. Sappho and Morai stand with their arms around each other, waving goodbye. Xena and Gabrielle pass a small hut and the door opens. Avain and Senhel stumble out, kissing each other, oblivious to everything. Xena and Gabrielle detour around them.

XENA

This is one for the scrolls.

GABRIELLE

I'm glad we did it though. Think everyone learned a thing or two?

Xena seems thoughtful.

XENA

Maybe. So...where to next?

Gabrielle looks at Xena in surprise, then smiles.

GABRIELLE

Let me think about that. What's that you got there?

Xena has a folded bit of parchment. She unfolds it.

XENA

It's a...poem. I guess Sappho must have left it for me.

(beat; reads)

Huh. Didn't think she knew me that well.

Gabrielle gives Xena a pat on the back.

GABRIELLE

She doesn't.

Xena stops in surprise as Gabrielle keeps walking, then she laughs and catches up as they walk off into the Crowd.

FADE OUT:

THE END