

not certain the season will end with him dead, but certainly the gods will be defeated.

**SD:** Well, you can work it out next year.

**Rob:** Next year, I'm going to do something totally different. The plan is to leave Greece and do more traveling.

**SD:** Which direction?

**Rob:** Germany.

**SD:** You've got stories in mind you want to tell?

**Rob:** Yeah. There's something I've always wanted to do — it's not "A Day In The Life," because that episode is incredibly story-driven. I want to do the regular activities of Xena and Gabrielle traveling. Like water rafting. Things like that.

**SD:** That's what people seemed to have missed most this past season. The two of them together. Season three had a built-in rift with Xena and Gabrielle lying to each other. In season four, there was a philosophical rift.

They weren't fighting, but they seemed to be walking parallel to each other. With Lucy being pregnant in season five, it simply wasn't possible to have them together on screen for many of the episodes.

**Rob:** Certainly in the third season we went out of our way to show the consequences of lying to each other. Little white lies turned into log-gerheads. That to me is good tragedy. But I disagree with people who thought they were apart in season four.

I thought we showed they were perfect mates and were going on a journey that one goes through in life with your partner. They were both trying to discover who they are. They gave each other the freedom and support to do this.

This season has absolutely been a failure in terms of missed opportunities.

**SD:** Do you have a more personal investment in Xena because this was a character you always wanted to do — a character you helped invent?

**Rob:** Yes. I love the bloody show! And

no one is more disappointed that this season, for example, the two China episodes, which I felt should have been great, were disasters. They were done during a time of transition of the staff of the show and we tried to shore up the second one, but it didn't work.

A pregnant Xena facing the decision that the only way she could protect herself is to kill 100,000 people is a great emotional moment. And nothing was made of it. That was the whole story. Xena saying, "Gabrielle, I can't kill all these people and bring somebody into this world and not have it affect my child." That was the story and it got lost and changed into things that didn't matter.



**SD:** I was stunned when there wasn't any discussion about turning the army into stone. I realize it was based on that story about the archeologists finding the buried stone army, but that's something Evil Xena would have done. Not the Xena of today.

**Rob:** I think if those two episodes had been better, it would have changed a lot. They were just two letdowns. "Back In The Bottle" was one of the weakest shows we've ever done.

It's what Lucy and Renee have said. Even when you're fighting, you

need to find the heart of the characters. The heart of the scene that protects the love between the characters. And that didn't happen this season. We had that in the third and fourth seasons.

**SD:** Xena would never kill 100,000 people without blinking.

**Rob:** Right.

**SD:** They need to talk things out more.

**Rob:** You know what, I want to finish Xena on a high note. I feel confident in the sixth season that those who are disillusioned, if they watch what we do next year, will be rewarded.

I think some fans are going to be unhappy with "Kindred Spirits" because we show the Amazons sans nobility. But they're juveniles, kids, and

they're leaderless. But that episode has my favorite moment of the year so far. It's very simple. Xena sitting down reading Gabrielle's scrolls. It's a small moment, but every time I see it I go, "A w w w." (chuckle)

**SD:** When did you decide to have Xena do that?

**Rob:** We knew it from the time we filmed "Ides." We said there's got to be an episode this year where Xena sits down and reads the scrolls.

**SD:** It was confusing to see Renee and Ted bickering the way they used to in "Married With Fishsticks" after the relationship between Gabrielle and Joxer had been rather neatly wrapped up in "Eternal

Bonds." Even though they were playing different characters, it was disconcerting to see Ted as Hagar the Lech and Gabrielle/Crustacea mistreating him.

**Rob:** Hardcore fans will know we filmed "Fishsticks" before "Eternal."

**SD:** I heard there was a kiss between the dying Joxer and Gabrielle in "Eternal" that was cut.

**Rob:** Right, we cut that. I was at the readthrough and I said, "She can't kiss him! You know what a betrayal that would be to everything you've said?" And Renee said, "Oh, thank you."

GABRIELLE: "HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT ABOUT SETTLING DOWN?"  
XENA: "LIKE WHEN I'M TOO OLD TO DO KICKS AND STUFF?"  
(*"KINDRED SPIRITS"*)