



**"Livia"**  
(written by Chris Manheim)

**SD:** Livia was a real person. Was it meant to be a reference to the real Livia of Rome? And we should let anyone know who's reading this article and hasn't seen the episode that Xena named her daughter Eve and Augustus renamed her Livia to keep the gods from finding out she was still alive. You can keep track of it by thinking when she's bad, she's Livia. When she becomes good, she's Eve.

**Chris:** No, I picked the name for personal reasons. Because of the TV miniseries *I, Claudius*. The woman who lasted through the entire series pulling everyone's strings was Livia. In *The Sopranos*, the woman behind the scenes, Tony's mother, is also named Livia. It seems to be a popular choice for strong-willed women.

**SD:** Livia made for an interesting villain in that she was Xena's daughter. In the discussions you were part of, was there any talk of her staying evil?

**Chris:** There may have been earlier, but from the beginning of the discussions I was involved in, the plan was that the end of the fifth season would be three against the gods - Xena, Gabrielle and Eve. However, the storyline changed when it was decided Gabrielle and Eve would be injured during the showdown. There wasn't going to be any cliffhanger about whether Xena could turn her evil daughter to good. You would know by

the end of the season that Livia had come to reconcile herself as Eve. And that she would be fighting with Xena and Gabrielle.

**SD:** I've heard fight scenes are expensive. Is that what caused the change from three against the gods to just Xena?

**Chris:** Yes. We couldn't have a big blow-out in some canyon. It had to be an interior fight.

**SD:** Did you do any reading about the real Augustus?

**Chris:** It didn't really play a part in this story which was focused on Xena and Eve. I do know he was a fairly judicious emperor and that worked in with the story we were telling.

**SD:** I noticed a scene in the shooting draft of the script that had Augustus trying to stop Livia from slaughtering Eli's followers.

**Chris:** It was cut for time. The director's cut came in 16 minutes over. There was a lot they needed to take out from the last two acts. We had to give up a bridging scene from the party where Xena got rid of Ares and went looking for Livia. I believe some Gabrielle/Jeric scenes were cut too.

**SD:** Who's Jeric?

**Chris:** That was my original name for Virgil. When I started thinking of the character of Joxer's son, I called him Jeric because Joxer's brothers were named Jace and Jet. I figured there was this "J" thing happening in Joxer's family. (laughs) So when Joxer had his first son, he had to

honor the tradition and have his name begin with a "J." I also made him a long-form poet. Then someone in one of the story meetings said, "Wouldn't it be cool if he was Virgil?" It didn't matter to me if we changed the name and I don't know if I ever explained to anyone why I named him Jeric to begin with.

**SD:** William Gregory (Greg) Lee did a terrific job with Virgil. He had such a sweetness about him and that was something I always felt with Joxer. I loved the scene in "Motherhood" where Xena, Gabrielle and Eve ride to Joxer's home after Livia has killed Joxer. He did a fantastic job portraying Virgil's heartbreak over the death of his father.

**Chris:** I really wanted Greg for the part. I kept saying, "This is the guy!"

**SD:** Was there anyone else in the running?

**Chris:** When I started to write the script, I kept begging the casting people to just show me some faces. I needed a face to put with the character. They showed me a photo of another actor and I began to see Virgil in my mind. I would have been happy with that actor, but then I saw Greg and he was perfect. The other guy would have taken the character in a different direction.

**SD:** What would have been different about him?

**Chris:** He would have had the sweet dumbness of Joxer. Greg is sharper. And, because Virgil is also Meg's son, I wanted him to be a bit more like Lucy.