

naked, but I certainly felt it. The scene was shot from the back. I was dressed up to my hips, and then I ripped off all my armour and threw a towel over myself before I turned around. But I was still horribly nervous about the scene, just because I wasn't used to it.

"I go in, turn around and I'm naked from the waist up. Octavius is speechless, and I'm like, 'Just spit it out. Come on!' He's so annoying, but then he starts talking to me about how I'm going to be Empress, so I'm thrilled. Then he turns his back and I'm annoyed - I want to go bathe and I can't stand him. I thought that scene was just so much fun. It wasn't necessary for the telling of the story, but it

was great for introducing the character. As soon as he leaves, Ares pops in on the couch and then he and I have a dialogue that's obviously more honest. I just loved it. It showed such an interesting dynamic. I was just bombed that that scene didn't make it.

"All the scripts are relatively last-minute," Wilkinson reveals, "and the producers are incredibly detailed about what they want. There's almost a weird dichotomy: they're written racier than they can be filmed, but when they're filmed, the visuals are almost more stunning than you can describe. I'm always eager and nervous to get a script, because you never know what you're going to have to do, and within a running storyline there are so many

**Left centre:** Wilkinson relishes playing the unpopular Livia in her debut appearance on *Xena*.

**Bottom left:** In *Motherhood*, Eve finds it impossible to come to terms with the terror she has wrought as Livia.

**Below:** Wilkinson savours a 20th Century cup of hot chocolate.

**"I thought Livia was a total spoiled brat, but she was intelligent and conniving."**

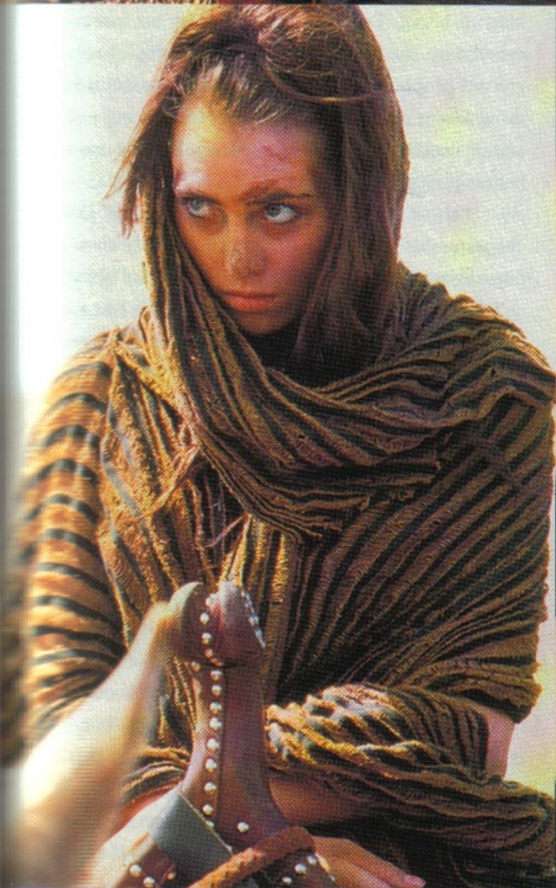


Photo by Ruth Thomas