

# SONS & DAUGHTERS



Above: William Gregory Lee and Adrienne Wilkinson.  
Photography Ruth Thomas

Right: Adrienne Wilkinson as Eve.

Xena's got a couple of newbies onboard! **William Gregory Lee** and **Adrienne Wilkinson** talk to **Paul Simpson** and **Ruth Thomas**

**T**OWARDS THE END OF THE FIFTH SEASON, THE producers of *Xena: Warrior Princess* made a radical change to the show, transporting their two heroines, Xena and Gabrielle, forward in time 25 years. Some of their old friends, such as Salmoneus, had disappeared; others, like Ted Raimi's Joxer, had grown old. The most startling change was in Xena's baby daughter, Eve, who had now become the evil Livia, while the two warriors were surprised to find that their old comrade-in-arms Joxer had a son, Virgil.

Although they took very different paths before making their journey to New Zealand to star as the next generation of the mythological heroes, Adrienne Wilkinson and William Gregory Lee found that for the next few months, they would stand side by side through whatever the production – and the country – could throw at them. Wilkinson had fallen into acting when her high school portrait photographer mentioned that he was casting a movie locally, and had discovered that she loved it. Lee, on the other hand, had always known that he wanted to act, and had never been deterred from his pursuit of the goal, despite the usual pitfalls that strew any actor's way.

Catching up with them in a Mexican restaurant in Studio City a few weeks after production wrapped on *Xena's* final season, there is a clear chemistry between the pair which could easily have been used for a relationship on screen, if the producers had opted to take that route. It's the day after transmission of the final episode of *Dark Angel*, in which Lee plays Zack, the protector of the X-5s, who has given his life to save Max. It was his commitment to that series that meant that he wasn't able to make as many appearances on *Xena* as he would have liked.

Both Wilkinson and Lee enjoyed their experiences in New Zealand, although they were nervous when they started. "I have to say that I will forever be so grateful that you were there the first week," Wilkinson points out. "We virtually had no scenes together, so we didn't work together much, but we were having the same adventure and learning

experience for the whole of that first month or so when we were there. We were just helping each other through it, figuring the whole thing out. We had to remember who we were, who, and who belonged with who.

"The first day that we were there, we thought we were going to fire us," she continues. "We both thought it was so terrible that they were going to ship us off straight back to America. Neither of us knew how we made it through the day. We just didn't feel like we'd cut it at all. The first day, my costume was outrageous. It took two hours and 45 minutes to put it on. I got on set, and my first scene was a love scene, making out with Kevin Smith as Joxer. There were pieces of my costume falling off! I didn't know what to do, and I didn't know if anyone had noticed, so we just kept going."

Lee had a more pressing problem – having another actor for one part, when he arrived in New Zealand, he discovered that he was playing someone completely different. "When I read the sides I read, I thought I was going to be a Roman warrior," he explains. "Before I knew it, I was playing Raimi's son."

That caused a whole other raft of problems, and Wilkinson seems to adopt the now-expected on-set role of "prankster". "Oh my god, trying to work with Ted," she exclaims. "He is this master of improvisation. The camera's swinging the camera round and he's doing close ups and he'll do a little twitch with his nose. So I'm laughing and that they have to call cut, and I'm carrying the camera. What a riot."

"Normally your stories were about Ted ruining things because you were cracking up so much," Wilkinson says.

Unsurprisingly, neither actor felt happy at the time of attending a party for the cast that was taking place one evening. "We didn't know anyone," Wilkinson says. "It had only worked one day. I had only worked for one day and a half! We decided that we would both go if the other one did, and we saw [producer] Rob Tapert there."

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