

Xena's name. Xena talks Caligula into killing himself, saying that way he'd take his place among the pantheon of gods.

Later, Xena says she feels "dirty" and that Caligula was "damaged," not "evil." Aphrodite doesn't like being mortal. Xena, Gabrielle, Eve, Ares, and Aphrodite all leave together.

HISTORICAL NOTE: Caligula (A.D. 12-41) was the emperor of Rome from 37-41. A tyrannical ruler, he declared himself a god. He was assassinated by his guard and succeeded by Claudius.

MYTHOLOGY NOTE: Aphrodite, the goddess of love, is one of the twelve Olympians. By some accounts she is a daughter of Zeus. She has a love affair with Ares.

COMMENTS: Alexis Arquette has the unenviable position of playing Caligula—after John Hurt's perfect performance as the deranged emperor in the television mini-series *I, Claudius* (see *Spectrum* 25), what are subsequent actors to do? Of course, the writers have given the Caligula of Xena's world an interesting twist: he really is a god! This is not only an interesting turn, but it makes Arquette's job easier. He has less of an internal struggle to present on the screen. This Caligula is a broader, simpler character. Though it's hard to forget Hurt's work while watching this episode, Arquette does admirable work here.

The god of Eli (or, according to Xena, Eli himself) removes Xena's power to kill gods in this episode as retaliation for her attempting to kill Michael. It's just as well; that plot had just about run its course, and the series should not end with her having that power. Furthermore, just how and why she had the power to begin with (given to her in the fifth season finale "Motherhood") was never given a satisfactory answer. It created some great stories, to be sure, including "Motherhood," in which Xena kills most of the Athenian gods. But it is time to move on.

Eve finally pops up again, having been gone since "Who's Gurkhan" with no explanation until now. Our guess is that the actress, Adrienne Wilkinson, was signed (or available) for only so many episodes. Whatever the case, the writers should have let viewers know before now what had happened to the character.

As for the episode itself, it's okay—the idea is better than the result. (It probably sounded great at the story conference.) Michael's actions don't make much sense—he wanted Caligula to kill Eve *why*? He is about to kill Aphrodite to keep Caligula from kissing her one last time and becoming a god; Michael can't think of any *other* way to keep that from happening? (We can, so Michael should be able to; after all, he's an *angel*!)

Alexandra Tydings makes a welcome return as Aphrodite—her first appearance since "Motherhood." Her transformation to mortality is an interesting twist, and as usual Tydings is fun to watch.

The end-credits disclaimer: "Gabrielle's undercover disguise was severely harmed during the making of this motion picture."

RATING: ★★★

13. YOU ARE THERE

First televised February 2001

Special guest star Michael Hurst (Nigel); guest starring Adrienne Wilkinson (Eve),

Alexandra Tydings (Aphrodite), Renato Bartolomei (Beowulf), and Alexander Petersons (Odin); with Alexis Arquette (Caligula) and Kevin Smith (Ares); **Written by Chris Black; Directed by John Laing; Edited by Tim Batt**

Xena and Gabrielle visit Beowulf—they need to see Odin. Valkyries appear and remind them that the way to Valhalla is to die a hero's death. They fight while Beowulf returns to his drink. Outside Nigel, a modern-day reporter, sees the Valkyries being tossed out of the tavern. He tries to interview Xena.

Nigel tapes the intro to his interview with Xena and Gabrielle. As the interview begins, he asks why Xena has returned to the north. He also asks about her previous deeds there and her betrayal of Odin. He wonders if she's there to kill Odin and take his throne. Xena ends the interview. The reporter talks to Charon, Boatman of the Dead, who admits that Xena has been good for business. Nigel interviews Caligula, who says that Xena kills for the thrill of it. Odin says that Xena wants the golden apples so that she can become a goddess and return Ares to Olympus; after all, Xena and Ares do have "a thing."

Nigel finds Gabrielle by a pond and asks if Xena is Ares' "love slave." She hits him and walks away. He then interviews Ares, who denies Xena has plans to be his queen. Nigel hears something inside—it turns out to be Xena. They throw him out. In Heaven, Michael tells Nigel he doesn't trust Xena.

In Hell, Lucifer doesn't trust Xena, either. Nigel interviews Eve. He asks about Xena and Ares; Eve gets angry and responds with a profanity-laden screed.

In the studio, Gabrielle tells Nigel that Xena wants the golden apples so that she can save the world. Nigel shows clips of Xena and Ares kissing. Gabrielle says that she doesn't love Xena. Xena appears. He asks if Xena's in love with Gabrielle. She puts the pinch on him and tells him that the world has lost love. At a Norse tavern, Nigel interviews a bordello madam, and Ares shows up.

In a cave, a mysterious woman tells Nigel that he's following the wrong story—he needs to follow the love. Nigel interviews Aphrodite. The world's love is gone. Soon, Nigel and Aphrodite meet up with Gabrielle and Beowulf outside Odin's castle. Xena is inside, fighting Odin. Soon, Xena emerges. She's defeated Odin and has the apples. She gives Ares a bite; he has his godhood back. Ares tries to get Xena to take a bite, but she gives the apple to Aphrodite instead. Love returns to the world. Xena gives the remaining apples to Odin for safekeeping. Ares still can't get Xena to eat, so he and Aphrodite leave. Odin wonders how Xena got through his defenses. She says she cheated—she had help from Grinhilda (the mysterious woman in the cave). Later, Nigel interviews Grinhilda and Xena, who says if she sent Aphrodite back to Olympus without Ares, it would have thrown the world out of balance. Eve apologizes to Nigel. Ares says Xena sent him back to help redeem her evil past. Nigel asks Xena and Gabrielle if they're lovers. But the camera's battery dies before Xena can respond.

COMMENTS: "You Are There" is based on the 1953-57 television program of the same name hosted by Walter Cronkite in which newsmen reported from various historical events as they were being re-enacted. Ironically, with Xena's disregard for "linear time" (as it's called in the disclaimer at the end), there hardly needs to be any explanation for how Nigel suddenly drops in on the show. Though commercials made this episode look like it would have Xena and the gang traveling to their future, it's just as likely that Nigel travels to the past—to the extent that "past" and "future" have any meaning in this series. Xena meets individuals through-

