



Like mother, like daughter. Eve follows in Xena's (Lucy Lawless) footsteps as both warrior and woman seeking redemption.

Photo: Ken George

made a mark on her. In fact, ask her for a favorite episode, and there are no easy answers.

"I like them all. I've had magical experiences on every single episode," she says. "But my favorite to play was 'Eve.' I really felt into the character, and I loved what she was going through. I loved the stuff with Gabrielle in the tent and the scene with Ares when they're no longer intimate and she is confronting him, but they're both smart enough to realize they can still use each other. The only depressing part is poor Ted."

It's in "Eve" that the aged Joxer (Ted Raimi) meets his end. "Ted playing Joxer is such a huge character. We all wish we could have given him more focus in the episode as his final alive show. I have mixed emotions about the whole thing," she observes in regard to Joxer's death. "As a person, I love Ted; he's one of the funniest people I've ever worked with in my whole life. I didn't get to work with him very much, but when I did, he was generous and wonderful. That particular [death] scene was hilarious because, of course, it's Ted, but we were filming during the summer and Ted was wearing so much makeup and it was so hot that the makeup was always melting. Also, he couldn't see very well since he couldn't wear his contacts with that makeup. So Ted's running toward me and I'm supposed to turn around on my cue and stab him. And the poor guy, I turn around and he tripped four feet before he got to me. I wasn't sure at first if Ted was doing it as a joke or not, but it was really funny and hard to get through that episode being mean."

Wilkinson also finds it hard having to deal with Gabrielle (Renée O'Connor) in the show. "It's funny, there always seems to be some little thing in the script, some uncon-

scious thing, when Gabrielle and I aren't 100 percent close, where there's always still *something* there," she says of the strain between Eve and Gabrielle created by Joxer's death. Wilkinson finds it "funny, because Renée and I do not feel that at all. We don't believe that we should *still* be dealing with that storyline, we think we should be fine with it by now or we would have *already* done something else about it.

"I truly believe that Xena and Gabrielle have forgiven Eve. I don't think she was killing Joxer to irritate Xena; there was a good reason why she did it, but I don't think that was her original plan. It was the worst thing to do, yet it was sort of a matter of circumstances that led to her redemption."

With that one swift sword thrust, Wilkinson also took her fateful turn into *Xena* fan lore. "And there's another thing, that Ted and I talked about, where I've inherited many of the people who didn't like Joxer, and for the *same* reason: Joxer was the third wheel, always in the way and coming in at the wrong moments. Many people see Eve that way—as a threat to the relationship or just as a problem that Xena must deal with.

"It's really odd," she admits, "because on the set we don't see it at all. I have a wonderful relationship with Lucy. We love working on the mother-daughter stuff; we both wish that could be explored more, so it's not something I ever would have been aware of had I not checked out the forum one day."

Wilkinson relates her one day—one hour actually—on-line, logging onto a *Xena* website and experiencing first-hand what people think all about Eve. "I visited a net forum and was absolutely *crushed* by everything. It's amazing to me that people love the character so much, but I can't take responsibility for that—I mean, it's the writing, the fight choreography, the costume. But I do get 100 percent of the responsibility when people are *unhappy*, when they're desperately searching for ways to get rid of my character. I just couldn't imagine that Eve offends them so much. It really shocked me."

Sister Hood

What *Xena* has done, according to Wilkinson, is create an amazing environment, where work isn't a four-letter word. "Acting on the show has been such an amazing experience," she says. "Every time I go, I hate leaving. I'm surprised all over again at how wonderful it really is.

"*Xena's* a hard show to film—so much to do in such a small amount of time. It's

almost impossible every week, and yet everybody works together to make it happen. There aren't any ego trips."

And that includes the stars. "Lucy is so helpful. She's always bringing treats to the set to help everybody, especially on the hard days. She has her little one there and her daughter visits occasionally. It's really laid-back. Lucy is hilarious, very spicy, just fun to be around. She's so on the ball; Lucy shows up knowing exactly what she wants and needs. She does exactly what they need to get the shot. She can also advise you how to make it work, 'cause there are things you do, especially in an action scene, that feel ridiculous but look great on film. So you might not do them because you just feel ridiculous," Wilkinson laughs. "And she helps you out with all that.

"Renée is definitely quieter but, in my opinion, just as ornery and funny. Renée is one of the most generous actresses I've ever worked with. She's there for you 100 percent every take. By the time you've done the rehearsals, the master shot and the coverage for everybody, you've probably done it 30 times and Renée gives 100 percent every time. That's something you can't say for very many people. She's always working to



In Wilkinson's view, Livia's intelligence made her a perfect match for Ares (Kevin Smith).