

Adrienne Wilkinson, Not Just 'Xena's Girl'

by Tony Bray



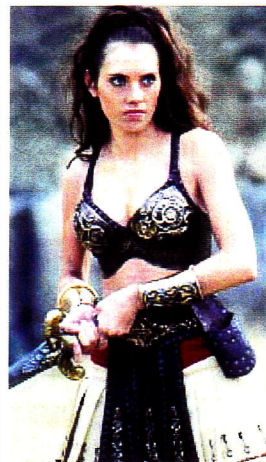
How does one interview someone who entered the planet via the "immaculate conception" path; someone who carried a sword as a mean, bloodthirsty warrior capable of laying waste to entire villages; someone who not only wanted to kill her own mother, but tried numerous times to do the deed? You interview them with extreme caution and with a fast car waiting in the alley— motor running, of course. Appropriately armed, I entered my interview with Adrienne Wilkinson. She just finished a fantastic run on "Xena: Warrior Princess" as Xena's daughter Eve, the lovely child who turned into the fierce warrior known as Livia. The 23-year-old actress turned out to be a modern creature with the soul and intellect of someone much older. She is the first human I've met in over twenty years who can talk about Harold Robbins' "The Adventurers" with authority, agreeing with me that the fantastic action read of over 700 pages was mutilated on the screen with Yugoslav heartthrob Bekim Fehmiu playing Dax Xenos like he would have appeared if he were doing a guest spot on "Pee-wee's Playhouse". Adrienne even admitted that she has a Dostoevsky classic on her bookshelf.

How does a Missouri girl get to Hollywood at 19?

"Well, a bit foolishly. I am not the "little girl that had the big dream of being an actress" by any means. I actually had scholarships set for college. I was a senior in high school— 17— and was just completely set to do the whole college thing. I could have graduated early. Instead I did a half day of school for my senior year. I only went until noon. Having extra time, I started getting involved more in extracurricular stuff. I joined a theater group. I just loved it. Fell head over heels in love the acting. By the end of the first semester, I had decided that I wanted to try acting as a career. It was just something I was desperate to do. To the horror of my family, I decided to move to California after I graduated— right before I turned 18. I was trying to get settled and figure out exactly what I wanted to do; school or the acting thing. When I turned nineteen, I started working on acting full time. It's a crazy little journey, but it's so much fun, such a wonderful and challenging adventure. I always thought that if I didn't at least try, I'd always regret it."

The show "Xena" has provided you with your best role thus far. The last episode aired in the middle of June. It was a bit sad, but really great to see the show end on such a high note.

"I love a challenge, and I want to take jobs that I know I will love, and that will inspire me creatively. I'm sure that my experiences on Xena only heightened that desire and that my expectations are even higher now. I have to say I wasn't very familiar with the show "Xena" when I booked the job. I was originally most excited about the location because it was filmed in New Zealand. It's incredibly beautiful there. The country is what I like to call 'God's little experiment', He [God] tried everything there first, then incorporated it all elsewhere. There are snow-capped mountains right next to beaches, lush forests, it amazing."



You didn't know how big "Xena" was worldwide?

"I had absolutely no idea! I was certainly familiar with the imagery, but I wasn't a fan of the show at that point. It wasn't something I made a point of watching each week. And it turned out to be the greatest adventure I've ever had as a person! Those beautiful hand-made costumes each and every week, the unbelievably gorgeous locations, it was by far the most challenging thing I've ever done. Every week, you're learning a whole new type of stunt sequence to do, challenging yourself in ways that you wouldn't in everyday life. I remember talking to my agency when I was finished and just saying how shocking it was that the job had been such a blessing. The job itself had so many interesting details that went along with it. I had no idea that my character would change or that I would essentially have different roles to play; that I would be challenged in different ways in every episode. Each new script was like getting a present. With most shows you can, to a certain extent, guess what things are going to happen to your character and what the line of your plot is with that character. But on "Xena", the shows changed countries, and storylines every couple of episodes. Everything changed so fast! They were literally rewriting mythology and religions. That's such a huge playing field! You can bounce around a lot with that."