

**"I'm always eager and nervous to get a script, because you never know what you're going to have to do."**

be the one; you're just perfect.' Then a couple of days after that I met the producers, and that's when they put me on hold for the show. But it wasn't until a week later that they called me to confirm. I was on pins and needles for a week!"

It wasn't until after Wilkinson had been cast in the show that she was told she was to play Xena's daughter in a three-episode arc. "I had no idea," she remembers. "I think if I had known I would have been far more nervous. It was maybe the first week of February when they told me, and I left about a week later. It was unbelievably overwhelming! I had to learn so many new things, and I loved every second of it."

So how did she feel about having to work in a strange country? "It was just something else to deal with in that I didn't have my home to go to and I didn't have my friends to call. It was an exciting show, but I was in a country I'd never been in. It wasn't that it was extraordinarily different, and the people were very welcoming, but it was still a different place, with a cast that I had never worked with before. More intimidating was the fact that they'd worked together for so long. Just walking into that was very nerve-wracking. It was actually great—they're just like a family. They're so down-to-earth and welcoming."

"At the beginning of every year I make a list of the things I want to accomplish. I hadn't even looked at it until just a few weeks ago, and I found I'd written something to the effect of, 'I always want to work in a nurturing environment that is challenging and makes me a better person.' I thought, 'Oh my gosh, did that ever come true!'"

Wilkinson's role as Livia/Eve was certainly challenging, and the actress enjoyed being put through her paces by the show's producers. Just a few of the things she's had to do on the show include, "Being dragged by a four wheeler; sitting in front of a wind machine for hours; playing with a spider; being in the ocean... Individually they're not scary things," she says, "but because you've never done them before, that makes them scary."

"Being from the mid-West I had never been out on the ocean in a boat. I went on lakes almost every summer of my life, but never an ocean. That happened during my last trip down there, and all I could think was, 'I'm going to be sick. Something horrible is going to happen. I'm going to

fall overboard. It's going to be awful!' But it was the best experience of my life! They were just so sweet and amazing."

Wilkinson's experience of acting alongside an Avondale spider for an episode of Xena's sixth season was one she won't forget in a hurry. "The spider was scary just because you think it's going to be scary," she says in retrospect. "There's nothing about it that's harmful, but it's just so big."

"Lucy doesn't like spiders, but she can deal with them if she has to. She was giving me a pep talk, and she said, 'When you have that spider, a third of the crew won't be on the set because they can't stand to look at it.' And it's absolutely true!

The poor girl who had to hold the camera couldn't come near me. It made me feel good afterwards! At the time it was completely nerve-wracking, but I was far more nervous about how valuable the spider was!

"The guy who trains the spider is standing there watching you with it because it's a protected species. So they weren't worried about me at all! They have no reason to, because the spider isn't harmful. So you're completely nervous, and they're only worried about the spider!"

Wilkinson had a bit of a surprise when she received the script for Livia, her first Xena episode. "The scripts are always far more racy than what actually appears on television," she explains, "because the writers pretty much put what they want in them. Whenever I get a script, I always think of my siblings and my parents and how they're going to want to see it. But I got this first script and it was unbelievably racy. It started out with a scene where I'm in the bathtub, and I'm obviously enjoying myself, and Ares suddenly pops out from under the water!"

"I was like, 'Oh my!' I didn't know how to deal with it. I was freaking out, and I thought, 'Do I tell them I don't want to do this? I can't do that.' I was really worried, and the producers called me and said, 'We know that you booked Xena, and maybe you were worried you booked the Red Shoe Diaries.' The scripts are always so much racier—don't worry about it. It's no big deal."

However, one particularly racy scene was filmed that didn't make it to the final cut of the episode. "It was the most uncomfortable scene I've ever filmed in my life," she says. "It replaced the scene in the bathtub, and it was my first nude scene. And there were a hundred people there! I wasn't



Below: Enjoying a well-earned break from Xena's sixth season in LA, Adrienne Wilkinson is all smiles.



Photo by Ruth Thomas