

knowing that I don't have quite as much influence [on events] as I would have if she had raised me. I've had a bunch of different influences that created somebody who is individual but enough like Xena to make sure that I have the influence of being her daughter."

The description of different influences is certainly right. In the time span between the events of *Looking Death in the Eye* and the following episode, *Livia*, Eve had been trained by Rome to be a hard-headed champion. By the time she appears in *Motherhood*, the situation is completely different.

"This episode is such a fast turn," Wilkinson says of *Motherhood*. "[In] the previous episode [Eve], I was still very much a warrior. I wasn't broken at all. It's been the first role where I was evil, the first role where I was a warrior, the first role where I fought. In *Motherhood*, it's such a physical change – my outfit, the fact that I'm wounded whereas I'd never been wounded before – things like that. Within three episodes I've had so many different twists and turns of character, and I've got to do so many things physically. Just the different sets we're had – locations and things like that – have been a real challenge."

At the time of our interview, Wilkinson is looking a little bit worse for wear. This is hardly surprising, since she and Lawless are in the middle of shooting part of a mortal-immortal battle, with special effects fire breaking out on all sides. Through her cut-and-bruised make-up, Wilkinson accentuates the obstacles her character has had to face. "Eve has been through a struggle, physically and mentally, trying to find herself and figure out what is right and what is wrong... and just trying to figure out where she's going." There is also the minor fact that several uptight gods are trying to kill her.

Eve may have been forced to get over many obstacles in the ancient world, but here on the *Xena* set, Wilkinson has experienced a couple of hair-raising moments herself. One of these challenges involved her getting uncomfortably close to a certain bunch of 'co-stars' she didn't much care for. "Something that was unique for me," she remembers, "was playing with Avondale spiders."

The spiders are very large residents of the Auckland suburb of Avondale, not far away from the *Xena* film studios. Anyone who has seen the horror comedy

film *Arachnophobia* – in which Avondale spiders were the main special effect – is sure to understand Wilkinson's reluctance to handle them.

"In the States," she explains, "if a spider is that big, it's definitely something you should stay away from. So for *Xena*, I had an official 'meeting the spider' day, so they could make sure I wasn't actually going to be scared of it. It was definitely a challenge, trying to learn that it was perfectly fine and there was nothing wrong. That was pretty crazy!"

Other experiences that Wilkinson will take away from her time as Eve involve the skills and moves she has learned while playing the part. "I've learned so many new things," she says enthusiastically, "so many things that I've

**"I've had so many different twists and turns of character, and I've got to do so many things."
Adrienne Wilkinson**

Below: Xena's maternal instincts come to the fore in season five, culminating in her bonding with daughter Eve in the season finale, *Motherhood*

