

Rocky Arredondo & My Mom Present...

THE COBRA'S NOSE

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I'd Rather Be

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The Cobra's Notes...

Off and on, for years and years, I have wondered what would happen if the world suddenly turned upside down. Like if I were lying on the couch at the old house in Mesa, I would look up at the vaulted ceiling and think, "If the world suddenly turned upside down right now, I would miss the fan but hit that exposed beam and that would suck. Fortunately, though, I'm sort of in the elbow of the couch so when it fell it would sort of tent over me and I wouldn't be squashed." I think that's better than lying in bed in my current home and thinking, "If the world suddenly turned upside down right now, I would hit that lumpy ceiling, then the mattress and box springs, and all the stuff under the bed would pile up on top of me. *Unless* it caught on one of those pictures when they fell too and then maybe only my head would be hit by all that stuff. Maybe I should scoot little further down the bed just in case."

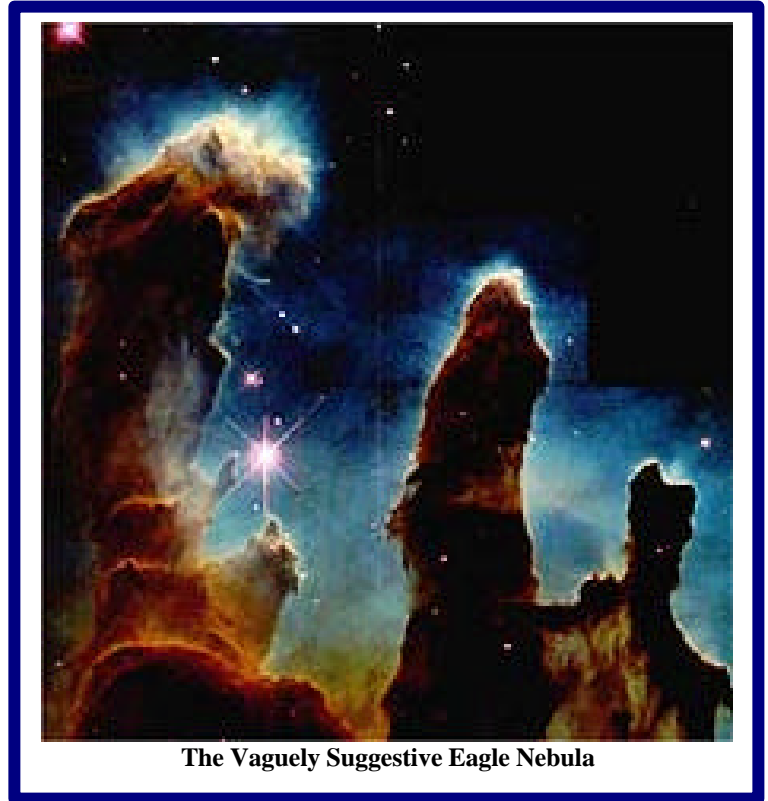
It's silly, of course. A room could never just...it's not even turning over, it's just *over*, as if earth's gravity abruptly relocated to the sky. And that just doesn't happen, at least not to me, even metaphorically. There have been events in my life after which I have thought, "That's it. The world has turned upside down. Life will never be the same after this." I'm saving those events for my scandalous memoirs, but for now suffice it to say the world righted itself every single time, or at any rate I got used to the new look and wasn't squashed.

I'm reminded of the book DMW loaned me, *Don't *!#%+ Around with My Cheese*. It's a slender volume and I shudder to think how much it would cost a person retail, but it makes a salient observation: Things Change. The book is about big things changing, the story is about mice, you see, and the cheese is their staff of life. I'm not going to tell you the names of the mice, because they would inspire some of you to violence. Oh, what the hell, I'm mailing most of these and don't care if you get violent with your own possessions, or even Cosmodemonic's; they are "Hem" and "Haw" and "Scurry" and "Sniff." (Ow! Pat, *quit it*.) Anyway, the book goes on to make a salient suggestion re Change: Deal with it. As much as I hate to admit it, those mice have a point. They go too far when they start squeaking about "embracing change," I'm not ready for it. "Embrace *this*, mice," is my motto.

I'm willing to accept that Things Change, and maybe even for the better. *Que* ever. But the next time my world turns upside down the one thing I know for certain I'll see are fingernail scratches on the wall—evidence of me trying to get back.

Sharon C McGovern
Editor/ Publisher/ Cobra-in-Chief

IF THIS IS PARADISE, I WISH I HAD A LAWN MOWER



The Vaguely Suggestive Eagle Nebula

State of the Cobra

This month, Cobra saw Stars...and got them to sign up for her newsletter!

My cousin Evelyn lives in Pasadena. Though she isn't famous yet (it's only a matter of time), I make a point of looking out for celebrities whenever I visit her. Actually, I make a point of asking her to look out for celebrities and telling me if she sees any, as I have a cripplingly short attention span and a horror of looking strangers in the face. Anyway, this last trip seemed unfruitful. Evelyn had been pointing at limos with dark windows and saying, "Maybe one is inside there." But she's sly. That very night, she invited two-count-them-two celebrities to an all-night-watch-*Sex-and-the-City*-and-eat-Pringles-and-chocolate-until-you-are-sick party—Judith ("Jude" to pals like me) Shelton and Brad ("Bradley") Slocum. You may recall these luminaries from *The Gregory Hines Show* and *SLC Punk!*, respectively.

And that's not all! A couple of weeks ago, Mr. P-Body of Funk+Fashion and *Java* fame stopped by the house and borrowed a bunch of dvds (including *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*, which he loved, so will you listen to the tape I made you already, Scott?) At the Funk+Fashion show last Thursday, he introduced me to the editor of *Java*—Robert Something—who exhibited that trapped look people get when I speak ([cont. on page 5](#))

Kirsty MacColl—15 Minutes at Least

Kirsty MacColl was killed in a boating accident in Mexico on December 18, 2000. That was the gist of the article in the *New York Times On-line* a couple of weeks ago, the headline stuck down with Culture Notes and obituaries for people I've never heard of. The footnote status for deceased philanthropists never bothered me, but when it was applied to one of my favorite singers on the same page that the ramifications of John Lennon's murder twenty years ago were being endlessly considered, well, it rankled. I know MacColl wasn't as important in any practical sense as Lennon, but she had rare and valuable talent, and I want people to miss her.

For her 1995 compilation *Galore*, Kirsty MacColl had her friends and fans in the business—including Bono, David Byrne, Chris Frantz & Tina Weymouth, Johnny Marr, Morrissey, and Billy Bragg—write liner notes praising her talent and bemoaning her obscurity. “Why isn't she massively successful?” wondered Shane MacGowan, to whom she sang “you liar you maggot,” and, “Merry Christmas my ass I pray God it's our last” on The Pogues dyspeptic “Fairytale of New York.” It's a fair question. Though she had lifelong stage fright and rarely toured, she was in demand as a singer on albums by most of the above, plus Robert Plant, the Happy Mondays, Alison Moyet, the Rolling Stones, and Simple Minds. But unquestionably, her best songs were the ones she wrote herself.

Kirsty MacColl wrote songs like George Bernard Shaw wrote plays—witty and candid, having a keen awareness of the sadness of life coupled with an aversion to wallowing in it, and an eye for telling detail.

*Another time, another day/ Another baby on the way
A dreamboy for your nightmare nights
Who never shouts and never fights
Happy with your 2.2/ What else is there for you to do
But turn and wet the baby's head
And pray he will be happier than you or me?
That's how it's meant to be/ It's called a lifetime*

That's the beginning of “Tread Lightly,” and the sound of a woman giving up on her future is remarkably stolid and fleet. MacColl may write about desperate characters (in fact, *Desperate Characters* was the title of her 1981 British lp), but she is never one to mope. “I never knew just what to feel or to expect/ I tried to stretch my mind but I just get my body wrecked,” is presented as a statement of fact rather than a lament; and the emphasis she places on *wrecked*, starting with a slight growl on the “r,” she owns her predicament, takes responsibility for it. She realizes people are created by their choices, good and bad, and she wishes they would wise up even if “it would take a gunshot just to clear your head a while.”

MacColl has a knack for pithily assessing a person or situation, as in:

*She was a party girl, stayed up till the small hours
Now she's embarrassing and everybody laughs
At the girl with the face that could drive her baby wild
Now wasn't she the child with everything?
 (“What Do Pretty Girls Do?”)*

and...

*It's cold and it's going to get colder/ You may not get much older
You're much too scared of living/ And to die is a reliable exit
So you push it and you test it/ With Thunderbird and Rivin
 (“Free World”)*

But, she adds, “I wouldn't tell you if I didn't care.” And though that sounds snarky and ironic out of context, she has turned the same gimlet eye on herself often enough and is sympathetic to human frailty. For



The Party's Over

instance, in “Soho Square,” she is stood up on her birthday and struggles with how bad she feels about it. Her inner self bickers with her absent suitor. She imagines his apologies and retorts, “I don't want to hear it, baby,” but her toughness is as illusory as his regret. Why didn't he just come? Why doesn't he just love her? Why can't they just be happy? She sings a lilting tune and wills a happy ending, and ends the song with a flourish of self-conscious denial.

It's a daydream and she knows it, like her fantasy in “Bad” where she wants to trade the currency she's collected as a “token daughter and a token wife” to “the man who wants to go too far for a token of my affection.” But where she uses daydreams to direct wanton energy (“I'm not crazy, no I'm just mad”), sleep is a passive aggressive escape. In “Dancing in Limbo,” “She sleeps like a woman when he wakes like a man,” in “Mother's Ruin,” “Don't wake me up again, don't let me feel anything,” in “Tread Lightly,” “I don't sleep at night in case I don't wake up tomorrow.” Significantly, the penultimate track on her album *Titanic Days*, which was recorded during the breakup of her marriage to producer Steve Lillywhite, is “Just Woke Up,”

*Oh let me open my eyes
Open the door and look up to the skies and leave the shore
And let my hand trail in the cool water, float downstream
Say goodbye to that dream...I just woke up*

a nearly delirious release of the bad dream of a bad relationship.

It's easy to quote quotable lyrics, but what I wish I could convey is the deep prettiness of her voice—tough enough to sound right with those folk-punk-hooligans The Pogues, but still warm and sensible—the best voice you can imagine hearing in your pub. And how unforced and catchy her songs are, whether they enter with a clatter or circle like drowsy thoughts. For that, you'll have to buy her albums (I'd start with *Kite*), and let me tell you in advance “I envy your first listening experience,” and, “You're welcome.” 🍷

Another Perfectly Good Tale of the Paranormal Wrecked by Facts

A few days after Christmas (it was fine, thank you, and yours?), I got an e-letter from St. Janet of the TP in which she related a strange story. She was shuttling drunk friends around Pennsylvania and one of them spilled taco sauce on her car's upholstery. Okay, sloppy inebriates are not strange, the strange part is her car *did not smell of taco sauce*. And that's not even the *really, really* strange part, which is while her car was *not* smelling of taco sauce *mine was*, even though it was *thousands of miles away* and *no tacos had entered my car for weeks*.

There's more.

As the taco smell in my car began to diminish, the taco smell in St Janet of the TP's car not only began, but then *intensified*.

Needless to say, I was perplexed by these events, though not too concerned about a demonic infestation as my reading on that topic has indicated evil has a fecal aroma. But perhaps, I theorized, a displaced Aztec spirit was using this strange medium to communicate to St. J that moving away from Arizona was a mistake and she should return at once. I still think that, though the mystery on my end was blown the other day when I executed a sharp turn and an everything bagel of late December vintage rolled out from under the front passenger seat—apparently an escapee from the batch I delivered to the Jensen-Tenney residence a few weeks back. And I suppose you're going to tell me St. Janet's car didn't smell right away because she lives in the frozen north.

But before you lose your faith in the paranormal, have a look at Bhavni Shah of Edgware, England, found in her tub of Philadelphia cream cheese on January 11th of this year—Lord Neminath, the first cousin of Krishna and 22nd prophet of the Jainism religion. This is the first miracle of Jainism recorded in Britain, and may have been precipitated by Shah's son's recent conversion to vegetarianism (Lord Neminath is traditionally associated with vegetarianism and animal welfare). The cream cheese will not be eaten, as the Shah's have been advised to release it upon the water.

Please visit ["The Cobra's Ghost" section of The Cobra's Web Site, now featuring "Poltergeists of Distinction"!](#)



Cookin' with Cobra



For the New Year

If you, like me, are a busy Cobra on the go, allow me to recommend the following time saving recipes.

First from St. Janet of the TP:



Put one can of Campbell's Soup in a saucepan on the range. Don't add water, because who has the time? Eat directly from the pan when it is warm, or when you get tired of waiting for it to get warm.

I've tried this one myself and can personally recommend it. Now, from the Very Cobra Kitchen and Laboratory, a little something I like to call...



"Cobra's Breakfast Delight"

Ingredients:

- ☛☛ Apple Jacks knock-offs you buy in a bag from fine establishments such as Basha's or AJ's.
- ☛☛ Starbucks Frappaccino in a jar. I prefer coffee flavor, but the mocha and vanilla are also fine. You can purchase this at Basha's too (don't know about AJ's), but for maximum value, try to convince Amy M. Jr. or Ms. Bronc to take you to Costco where you can buy it by the case for a comparatively reasonable price. And you will want the case, that's how sure I am that you will find this recipe invaluable. Attention, health nuts! Starbucks Frappaccino purports to be low in something bad. Fat, I think.

Directions:

Pour yourself a good sized bowl of Apple Zings (or whatever they are calling themselves these days). Now normally, you'd go reaching for the milk—but wait! Reach for the *Frappaccino* instead. Pour in as much of that into the bowl as you can and still make it to the couch in front of the TV without spilling too much. Or better yet, take the Frap and bowl and cereal and spoon (you'll need a spoon) to the couch and do the assembling there. This hearty breakfast contains enough sugar and caffeine to kick off your day the Cobra Way!

Xenavision

A Primer for the Warrior Princess

There is a species of TV show that inspires a following of more than regular or even dedicated viewers, but acolytes. *Friends* has fans, for example, *The X-Files* has a Following. I'm not sure if it's the shows themselves or their Followings that make the public at large so contemptuous of both, but that's sort of a chicken and egg question, anyway. They are cheap and easy targets because in a marketplace that treasures shows about the same nothings that sitcoms have been about since their inception, they are resolutely about Something. And not the silly somethings so routinely mocked by superior so-and-sos. *The X-Files* isn't about aliens, it's about truth, and trust, and faith. *The Prisoner* isn't about getting chased by those silly bubble things, it's about learning serenity in the face of the betrayal which is everywhere, even in your own heart (it's a paranoid show). *Star Trek* et al isn't about space exploration or who would make the best leader (Picard, duh), it's about broken families and cultural tolerance. And *Xena: Warrior Princess* isn't a dimwitted lesbian romp, it consciously uses the tools of myth to explore themes of redemption and love.

Now, before or at least shortly after you groan and roll your eyes, consider what a myth is: a story which uses characters and plots to embody ideas or aspects of culture. It is more than drama in that its parameters are regularly stretched to epic proportions, and includes supernatural beings and exaggerated situations. But myth is less than drama for the same reasons. The ambitions and suffering of Prometheus are harder to relate to than the ambitions and suffering of Willy Loman; and as horrible as suicide is, it's more comprehensible than having your liver pecked out daily for centuries. So while *Prometheus Bound* and *Death of a Salesman* might both be great theater, their presentation would vastly differ.

Likewise, a viewer shouldn't watch *XWP* and expect to see *Law&Order*. For while certain Cobra readers (Hi, Evelyn!) have complained about the acting and writing on the show, I have to argue it's a question of taste rather than quality. To accommodate the near constant intrusions of gods and monsters, everything in the Xenaverse has been exaggerated, but consistently and to premeditated ends. One actor on "er" striking poses and cracking wise by turns would be embarrassing, but when everybody in *XWP* is doing it, they are part of an aesthetic that I'm going to call "Raimism."

Raimism began in late seventies Michigan with three school friends, Sam Raimi, Rob Tapert, and Bruce Campbell, who made countless Super-8 movies under Raimi's direction. Their finest effort as amateurs was a short film called *Within the Woods*. It generated enough acclaim that they were able to raise \$350,000 and make it into the feature length *The Evil Dead—The Ultimate Experience in Grueling Horror* with Raimi as director, Tapert as producer, and Campbell as star. With this film, a major distraction at the 1982 Cannes Film Festival, the principles of Raimism were established: smart ideas, exuberant execution, and overriding good humor. Raimism distills the conventions that make movies fun, then makes them funny.



While the output of Renaissance Pictures—Raimi, Tapert, and Campbell's production company—has been uneven, it has produced some genre gems (the *Evil Dead* trilogy, *American Gothic*, *Darkman*, *The Quick and the Dead*, among them) which inject the mythic and slapstick in equal parts to the proceedings with unique, unmistakable results—a Three Stooges production with the bones of a Shakespearian tragedy. And if that combination seems a bit unwieldy, it is perfect for a show (led by Tapert with occasional appearances by Campbell) with a cast of New Zealanders impersonating ancient Greeks, Romans, and Persians, speaking modern slang in all-American accents.

Like the best Renaissance Pictures, *Xena: Warrior Princess* starts with an intrinsically dramatic premise and runs. In this case, Xena was a vengeful annihilator whose one good deed (protecting the lone survivor, a tiny baby, of a targeted village) cost her her warlord status, and nearly her life. It also gained her the eternal ire—and later fascination—of Ares, the god of war, who never forgave (or entirely believed) his most effective soldier's defection to the side of Right and Good. And it's easy to see his point. Even reformed, Xena is a walking encyclopedia of evil acts, and in the old days was so ruthless she made Odin's blood run cold. That's why even at its inception, *XWP* had more going for it than its progenitor, the hokey-joke *Hercules: The Legendary Journeys*. Hercules was just a genial demigod, easy on the eyes and brain, and with a weak spot for his human half-brothers; but even a repentant Xena is pretty scary.

The counterpart to this heroic character with homicidal tendencies is Gabrielle—a bard who sells accounts of her and Xena's adventures to keep them afloat, but who has a chronic inferiority complex about her place in the world. And who could blame her? Gabrielle sees herself as living in Xena's shadow. She is much smaller than Xena, round-faced, wide-eyed and queasy about killing. Her biggest admirer (aside from Xena) is a geek who thinks she is his sidekick, and she regularly dismissed as Xena's little blond girlfriend. Xena, however, sees herself as a shadow cast by Gabrielle's inner light. (cont. on page 6)

Stars Upon There



I can tell from here in that spooky in that spooky, omniscient way of mine that some of you are slightly less than dazzled by my celebrity encounters. Well, most of you are reading this with the pea green eyes of jealousy, but for you cynical others I have a song: "Kansas City Star" by the incomparable Roger Miller. And the fact that some of you are saying, "Who?" doesn't diminish the validity of my point at all. Roger Miller is not not incomparable because you haven't heard of him, he's just evidence of how inadequate traditional definitions of fame are. Miller is best known as the author and singer of "King of the Road," but during the 50s and 60s, he was a country Mod, the closest that genre ever had to Pete Townshend. In the 80s, he was honored as the composer of the Tony winning Broadway musical *Big River*, in the 90s he was inducted into various songwriting halls of fame, and

currently his song "Chug-a-Lug" is part of an ad campaign for milk. His songs are as brief as they are witty—few top three minutes and most clock in at under two and a half—and little masterpieces of wordplay, eg "The Last Word in Lonesome is 'Me,'" "Atta Boy, Girl," "Lock, Stock, & Teardrops," and, "My Uncle Used to Love Me (But She Died)"; but he was more than a flip hipster—"Husbands & Wives" is just one of his songs that could break your heart, seemingly without trying. In "Kansas City Star," he simultaneously appreciates local fame and gives it a nudge in the ribs—probably a good policy for all fame, come to think of it. So back off my celebrities, and remember, if Andy Warhol could surround himself with Superstars, so can I.

**Got a letter just this mornin' it was postmarked Omaha
It was typed and neatly written offerin' me this better job
Better job at higher wages, expenses paid and a car
But I'm on TV here locally and I can't quit, I'm a star
Hah-ha I come on the TV a-grinnin', wearin' pistols and a hat
It's a kiddy show and I'm a hero of the younger set
I'm the number one attraction at every supermarket parkin' lot
I'm the king of Kansas City, no thanks, Omaha, thanks a lot
Kansas City star, that's what I are
Yodel-leedle lay-dee, you oughta see my car
I drive a big old Cadillac with wire wheels,
Got rhinestones on the spokes
I got credit down at the grocery store
And my barber tells me jokes
I'm the number one attraction at every supermarket parkin' lot
I'm the king of Kansas City, no thanks to Omaha, thanks a lot
SPOKEN: Stay tuned, we're gonna have a Popeye cartoon in a minute**

(cont. from page 1) to them, and wasn't dazzled by my Cobra Business Card. The good news is we also saw Jim Cherry, editor of phoenix.citysearch.com, looking like an anal auto mechanic (Did I tell you my fuel pump story? Remind me.) and signing people up for *his* newsletter. He and his pale assistant with garnet colored hair had a clipboard full of names, which makes me think maybe I should get one of those aqua jumpsuits.

At Kathy the Greek's Karaoke New Year's Eve Party (try to talk her into singing "Itsy Friggin' Bitey Spidey Thing" for you), I received permission to start sending **THE COBRA** to my cousin Brett, who isn't famous—that process starts now. In other cousin news, one who is already famous *and* a subscriber covered himself in even more glory with the release of *Dracula 2000*. Yes, "Dan Arredondo" is *that* Dan Arredondo, and you know, the movie isn't nearly as bad as he led us to believe. The title is weird. "2000" doesn't seem to have anything to do with anything, unless maybe it is a tribute to *Dracula AD 1972* with which it shares some characteristics, but that's a pretty arcane reference. Anyway, it adds a couple of new kinks to the moribund vampire genre (which needs them), and the Count is easy on the eyes and that's always a plus (sexiest vampire: Chris Sarandon in *Fright Night*; scariest: Max Schreck in *Nosferatu, eine Symphonie des Grauens*; best van Helsing of all: Peter Cushing). *D2K* (as it is known to its pals) does succumb to conventionality, but so do *Quills* and *You Can Count on Me* and they've won all sorts of awards. To tell you the truth, the finest new movie I've seen in a long time is *Cast Away*, even if my teeth have bothered me ever since.

Best of all, the remarkable Rebecca Peterson came for a visit this weekend. She isn't famous either, but she has some incriminating video of my brother with which she may yet make her name. Her brother runs The Salt Lake City Ghosts and Hauntings Research Society web site from which I've stolen a few things. If you go there though, do not waste your time on that video which alleges you can see a doll's eyes move two pixels to the left, or the one where you're supposed to see a bruise spread across its face because you can't.



Ares
God of War



Autolykus
Prince of Thieves



Joxer
The Mighty

The Men of Xena: Warrior Princess (Yes, there are so men in Xena)

And Favorite Quotes

Xena: Joxer, you can barely kill TIME.

[*Autolykus is refusing to help Xena and Gabrielle.*]

Gabrielle: Autolykus, an innocent person is going to die!

Autolykus: No he isn't, because he's leaving.

Minya: I expect more from the god of war. I mean without his powers he's just another man. Just another big ol', leather-clad, well-muscled, gorgeous, hunka bad boy... man.

Gabrielle: How are your hormones?

Minya: Raging!

Ares: What she did when I had her on trial for her life... amazing! And she did it all with that, that, you know, steely gaze thing, you know the one I mean?

Gabrielle: Yep. Seen that one a few times.

Gabrielle: Another one's fallen for you.

Xena: Again? What is it?

Gabrielle: Oh, the blue eyes... the leather. Men love leather.

Xena: I think it's time for a wardrobe change.

Gabrielle: Yeah. You could try wearing chain mail.

Xena: Nah. That'd just attract a kinkier group.

(cont. from page 4) Gabrielle has a moral core that is vulnerable only to her own insecurities. Xena worships Gabrielle's moral clarity, Gabrielle resents it. Her struggle with goodness is as palpable, if not as pronounced, as Xena's with evil, and has resulted in her elevation to Amazon queen and her degradation as mother of a demon.

That's not a figurative demon, by the way, and that a person as intrinsically good as Gabrielle could give birth to a monster is not a fluke—it's part of the eternal flux of good and evil, or more appropriately, the hate and love that constantly create one another in the Xenaverse. Xena abandoned a son in the bad old days who became against all odds a fine boy. Gabrielle had a daughter who destroyed him. The repercussions were so operatic they became an opera, "The Bitter Suite" from Season Four.

And that's another wonder of *Xena: Warrior Princess*—the writers' and producers' willingness to craft bold ideas with bold strokes. Fights aren't just fights, they are violent extravaganzas in which Xena demonstrates supernatural prowess (she is rumored to be Ares's daughter, and her Chakram may be a token of her godly parentage), and everybody has supernatural recovery rates. Individual episodes may be comedies, tragedies, parodies, or cautionary tales; and while even hard core Xenaphiles are apt to criticize the mix, cultural myths take the same forms.

And like those myths, *XWP* takes place in an indefinite past. Gabrielle bested Homer and Euripides in a bard competition. Xena's foes are as diverse as Julius Caesar and the Archangel Michael, and has rescued Prometheus and Cleopatra among others. Just this season, she slew Mephistopheles, tricked Lucifer into becoming the new king of hell, then joined forces with Beowulf to fight Grendel (whom she had a hand in creating years before). The show's writers do not adhere to orthodox versions of myth and history, and since both are mighty confused they shouldn't be grievously faulted for that. Rather, they drop names with cultural cache into the narratives. For example, in a series of events too complicated to relate here, Xena was miraculously impregnated with a child whose birth was prophesied to bring about the end of the Greek gods. When the child was born, Xena named her Eve. Due to a few more complications, Xena wasn't available to raise Eve, so Ares put her in the care of the Roman royal family who renamed her Livia and turned her into a vicious despot. Now Eve couldn't have been the mother of humanity as in the Judeo-Christian tradition because humans already existed, but her birth marked the end of traditional Greco-Roman faith and the beginning of something like Christianity. Likewise, her years as Livia don't match the historical Livia's



life, but her name has such a potent connotation of Roman evil that even before you learn what she's been up to you know its trouble.

The most important component of *Xena: Warrior Princess* is the actress who plays the title character. Lucy Lawless is the best female interpreter of Raimism, as comfortable with that idiom as Joe Mantegna is with David Mamet's plays and Wendy Hiller was with Bernard Shaw's. There is a pure physicality to her that lends itself to both a personification and send up of heroism. She is an agile comedienne who can also embody raw heartache; and though it's not the sort of thing that wins awards, Meryl Streep couldn't play the role better. That's why assertions of Xena and Gabrielle's lesbian relationship seem not so much wrong—though both have had numerous affairs with men—as reductionist. Xena and Gabrielle, as played by Lawless and Renee O'Connor, represent all aspects of yin and yang—men are not rejected so much as they are extraneous. That said, they do take a lot of baths together. But, if nothing else, Lawless is the only actress in television who can plausibly be described as "mighty" (don't you dare mention that twig Buffy), and the concept of her laying waste to other programs is tonic in a medium where nearly all female body types could be classified as Flockhart- or Roseanne-esque.

Nothing I write could *make* you like *Xena: Warrior Princess*. "The Bitter Suite" will never be performed by the Met, and the television establishment is too busy honoring garbage like *The Practice* to take heed of a program so daring and fun, but if you tune in for the next few months (which are the last few months of original *Xena* programming), you may find that it is more than you thought. ✍

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Use them.

Although my calendar says the date is only January 19th and my poor little Burton nephews just barely got to open their Christmas gifts, my holiday memories are twinkling little objects off in the distance. I know why. For weeks and weeks, I conspired to have four days of work and three day weekends, and now regular five day weeks are *killing* me. I stay up to watch Oz late Sunday nights and spend all the other days in a coma. It's no way to live, and as you may well remark, no way to write either; so if you have complaints re this issue, the best way to reach me is through my subconscious, ala Edgar Cayce. If on the other hand you have positive things to say, please feel free to use any of the methods to the left. I wanted to note, but ran out of room in the appropriate articles, that Garrett Wilson is a cool Roger Miller fan from way back who will sing "Dang Me" if you ask him nicely, and Aureng Zebe introduced me to Kirsty MacColl years ago, and has my undying gratitude for it. Also, I fully intended to publish and ridicule the names of people who didn't send me Xmas cards, but when I started factoring in the people to whom I owe eletters (including Jana Banana, Katy Wenger, and Sue Zierle, and I promised Garrett a Sandra Bernhard tape long ago and have been suffering such guilt about not having gotten to it you'd think I just *would*) that I lost heart. Anyway, Amy M. Jr. told me that if I wanted a certain number of cards I should have been specific when I petitioned the Universe for them. She's been getting excellent results from her frank, open requests to the Universe, and I think it's one of the many habits of hers that I should emulate. Now, take care, and if I don't catch you before Feb. 14, give Cupid a good, solid kick in the rump on my behalf.