

Zena, Warrior Princess Encyclopedia Article

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Zena, Warrior Princess

A 1996 *Ms.* magazine cover story lauded *Xena, Warrior Princess* as a feminist and progressive retelling of Greek myth, as television that is notable for "breaking new ground in its treatment of sex." Debuting in syndication in 1995, the series chronicles the adventures of a sword-wielding princess seeking to atone for her violent past. Accompanied by her sidekick, Gabrielle (Reneé O'Connor), Xena (Lucy Lawless) battles fickle gods, tyrants, slave traders, barbaric tribes, and other nemeses in a magical land that evokes ancient Greece and Rome. Filmed in New Zealand and produced by Renaissance Pictures in conjunction with MCA TV, the series is a postmodern pastiche of classical mythology, characterized by hyperbolic violence and slapstick. At the same time, it manages to explore sexuality and ethical issues without losing its mass audience. Xena's sexually-charged relationship with Gabrielle has made the series popular with lesbian audiences, in particular.

Further Reading:

Minkowitz, Donna. "Xena: She's Big, Tall, Strong—and Popular." *Ms.* July/August, 1996, 74-77.

Weisbrot, Robert. *Xena, Warrior Princess: The Official Guide to the Xenaverse*. New York, Doubleday, 1998.