

‘Man, Woman, Wild’: Survival, Romance in Faraway Places

by Alan Mowbray



He’s a tough and resourceful former Special Forces survival expert. She’s a refined and articulate TV journalist. Together, they are husband and wife, teacher and student, warrior and fair maiden, hunters and (sometimes) hunted.

Mykel Hawke and his wife, Ruth England, take on some of the most forbidding and remote locations in the world in *Man, Woman, Wild*—a Discovery Channel reality show.

Dropped into each spot with only a knife and the clothes on their backs, Hawke and England attempt to survive as a team for four days and nights. As they test their will and marriage, the two find common ground standing up to nature as husband and wife in the wildest places on earth.

I’m naturally skeptical of reality shows. They seem so scripted. They’re so cliché. They’re so ... not reality.

When I sat down with my wife, Dorothy, to watch “Amazon,” the first episode from Season One, I wasn’t prepared for the quick connection this husband-and-wife team were able to make with us. The couple dynamic—although filtered through the futility of being stranded deep in the Amazon jungle with snakes, jaguars and every biting insect within 100 miles—somehow brought us into their experience, connection, and their love and trust for each other.

I saw a guy who knew way more about survival than me. Hawke deferred to his wife’s wishes when he could. He fretted over his position as provider and protector, while showing tenderness to England. There were times that he goes off alone and does stuff so dangerous that he has to wear a helmet-cam

because even the film crew isn't that crazy. My hat's off to him.

Not that his wife is any slouch either. For someone to trust in her husband as implicitly as she does in these situations is truly inspirational. She knows nothing about survival. You could see times when every instinct in her body wants to scream, "N0000!" Yet when action was needed, England came through every time. To which, her husband proudly described her as "tougher than woodpecker lips." It was quite romantic in a non-poetic, hope-we-survive-through-the-night kind of way. I couldn't help but smile.

Neither Dorothy nor I moved as "Botswana," the next episode, started—featuring a situation even more bleak than the first one. Besides more snakes and insects, add in a pride of lions, hyenas and crocs lying in wait when Hawke and England go for water. Not my idea of a vacation.

How they are able to mix warm and loving with dangerous and possibly fatal is beyond me, but it works. We loved it. My wife said that as much as she hates snakes, she forced herself to watch England kill a boa constrictor for food. Call it sisterly solidarity. Why not? She's tougher than woodpecker lips as well. And I wouldn't have it any other way.

As a couple, both of us enjoyed the trust and love between Hawke and England. Even in such stressful surroundings, the true relationship showed through the lens into our living room. I liked these two as people. I liked them as a married couple. They are an inspirational team.

Although *Man, Woman, Wild* will not be renewed for a third season, Discovery still airs reruns of the survival series, so check local listings. Click [here](#) to view clips from the show.

Content Watch: *Man, Woman, Wild* is a survival show. There are

real animals being caught killed on camera for food. No adult language of any sort. No compromising situations noted. These two kiss as the opportunity arises—as a husband and wife should.

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