KINONIK

LADYHAWKE (1985)

Directed by Richard Donner

WEDNESDAY August 19th 7PM

SATURDAY August 22nd 2PM / 7PM



I first saw **Ladyhawke** around 1990, on a television set, at an age when Matthew Broderick's motor-mouthed pickpocket was probably the only reason I stayed in the room. Without him the film would have been impenetrable: a beautiful, slow, European romance between two adults experiencing a grief I had no framework for. Broderick was the door. He was having fun, which gave me permission to have fun, which kept me in the seat long enough for Rutger Hauer and Michelle Pfeiffer to do something to me I wouldn't understand for years.

Two lovers cursed to never occupy the same form at the same time. By day Navarre is human and Isabeau is a hawk. By night she returns and he becomes a wolf. They share every journey and never truly meet except in the fleeting instants of dawn and twilight. Richard Donner and the legendary Vittorio Storaro shot this as a genuine romantic agony. Hauer and Pfeiffer commit completely. Their performances are interior, aching, almost silent. They inhabit the curse as if it were real, because for them it is.

And then there's Broderick, doing something else entirely. He talks to God like a player negotiating with a DM. He narrates his own actions with ironic distance. He's entertained by the stakes rather than endangered by them. He is, essentially, a person in 2026 playing a medieval RPG; present in the world, absolutely committed to the quest, but never fully inside the story.

The film contains two incompatible movies sharing every frame. Andrew Powell's synth score sides with Broderick: it belongs to 1985, not to the thirteenth century. Storaro's camera sides with Hauer and Pfeiffer: every composition is a Renaissance painting over which the music feels like graffiti. Neither movie wins, but that’s sort of the magic here. They coexist without resolution, two registers of experience occupying the same space but never the same reality.

In 1985 this was a production problem, and a problem for audiences, but today it’s more like a diagnosis. The curse isn't a fairy tale anymore, but a precise description of what it feels like to live in a world where everyone inhabits the same physical space but operates in hypernormal realms where genuine contacts — seeing another person clearly, in their full humanity — are twilight moments that don't last.