



Doctor Who: Horror of Fang Rock

Directed by: Paddy Russell

©: BBC

Producer: Graham Williams

Production Unit Manager: John Nathan-Turner

[Written] By: Terrance Dicks

Script Editor: Robert Holmes

Lighting: Bob Gell

Film Cameraman: John Walker

Title Music by: Ron Grainer and the

BBC Radiophonic Workshop [part 1]

Title Music Arranged and Performed by:

Delia Derbyshire *

Incidental Music by: Dudley Simpson

Sound: David Hughes

Special Sound: Dick Mills

Costume Designer: Joyce Hawkins

Make-Up Artist: Jackie Hodgson

Visual Effects Designer: Peter Pegrum

Title Sequence by: Bernard Lodge

Designer: Paul Allen

Production Assistant: Peter Grimwade

Assistant Floor Manager: Bill Hartley *

Studio: BBC Pebble Mill, Birmingham, UK *

Cast

Tom Baker (*Doctor Who*)

Louise Jameson (*Leela*)

Colin Douglas (*Reuben*)

John Abbott (*Vince Hawkins*)

Ralph Watson (*Ben*)

Sean Caffrey (*Lord Henry Palmerdale*)

Alan Rowe (*Skinsale*)

Rio Fanning (*Harker*)

Annette Woollett (*Adelaide Lesage*)

Colin Douglas (*voice of the Rutan*) *

UK 1977

4 x 25 mins

* Uncredited

Courtesy of BBC Studios

Doctor Who: The Collection – Season 15 will soon be released on Blu-ray by BBC Studios

BECOME A BFI MEMBER

Enjoy a great package of film benefits including priority booking at BFI Southbank and BFI Festivals. Join today at bfi.org.uk/join

SIGHT AND SOUND

Never miss an issue with **Sight and Sound**, the BFI's internationally renowned film magazine. Subscribe from just £25*

* Price based on a 6-month print subscription (UK only). More info: sightandsoundsubs.bfi.org.uk

**SIGHT
AND
SOUND**

EVENTS

Doctor Who: Horror of Fang Rock

+ Q&A with Louise Jameson, John Abbott and Annette Woollett

The making of 'Doctor Who: Horror of Fang Rock'

Even before it began, Season 15 was causing headaches for the *Doctor Who* production team. New producer Graham Williams had hoped that his debut series would consist of a string of linked serials under the umbrella title *The Key to Time*, but that would have to wait until the following season as script editor Robert Holmes was already commissioning new stories for the upcoming season. A fan of the Gothic horror style of serial like *The Brain of Morbius*, Holmes was keen to have something similar and set Terrance Dicks to work on a suitable treatment. Among other writers at work on their submissions were Bob Baker and Dave Martin, who soon ran into difficulties on their script for what should have been the series opener, *The Invisible Enemy*. Holmes decided to switch things around to give them more time and promoted Dicks' story to pole position. Dicks had been working on a vampire story titled *The Witch Lords* since November 1976 and it was officially commissioned under the new title *The Vampire Mutation* on 11 January 1977. But a sizable spanner was thrown into the works by Graeme MacDonald, the newly appointed Head of Serials at the BBC. Season 15 was expected to be broadcast on BBC One from September 1977 and MacDonald was concerned that a vampire story, so close to the Christmas broadcast of their adaptation of Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, could cause problems. He particularly worried that it might be seen to be sending up vampires and that it could, be worried, have a detrimental effect on their prestigious drama.

Holmes and producer Graham Williams were told that *The Vampire Mutation* had to go (Dicks would eventually revive the scripts as the serial *State of Decay* in 1980) and they were forced to move *The Invisible Enemy* back into the first slot of the recording schedule. But Dicks offered to write them something else to replace his now temporarily abandoned scripts, believing that he could get something written before production was due to start. Holmes thought that a lighthouse setting might be a good idea – limited sets and a small number of characters – and made Dicks aware of Wilfrid Wilson Gibson's 1912 poem *Flannan Isle* which he thought might be an inspiration. Gibson had in turn taken inspiration from the December 1900 story of a supply ship coming across an abandoned lighthouse on Eilean Mòr, its crew having apparently vanished without trace – The Doctor would quote from the poem at the end of the final episode.

True to his word, Dicks turned in a treatment, then going by the title *Rocks of Doom*, by early March, four scripts being commissioned retroactively on 31 March. Dicks decided to cast as the villain a Rutan, one of a race of invisible characters first mentioned in *The Time Warrior* (1973), a species locked in an endless war with the Sontarans. By the end of March, the scripts were complete, though the title *Rocks of Doom* didn't meet with much enthusiasm and several alternatives were proposed, including *The Monster of Fang Rock* and *The Beast of Fang Rock* before the final title of *Horror of Fang Rock* was settled upon. Paddy Russell, who had been contracted for *The Vampire Mutation*, and who had worked with Tom Baker before on the similarly Gothic horror flavoured *Pyramids of Mars* (1975), was retained as director but she was unimpressed by the scripts and particularly disliked the setting.

Russell was concerned about the circular sets which would require special lighting and a new way of working, but there was about to be a second spanner in the works that would cause her and the production crew further

IN PERSON & PREVIEWS

TV Preview: The Way + Q&A with Michael Sheen, James Graham, Adam Curtis and cast members Steffan Rhodri, Mali Harries, Callum Scott Howells, Maja Laskowska

Mon 5 Feb 18:15

The Scent of Green Papaya Mùi đu đủ xanh
Thu 8 Feb 18:20; Wed 28 Feb 20:40

Preview: The Iron Claw

Thu 8 Feb 20:35

Paolo Taviani in Conversation

Sun 11 Feb 18:00

Mark Kermode Live in 3D at the BFI

Mon 12 Feb 18:30

Preview: Getting It Back: The Story of Cymande + Q&A with Tim Mackenzie-Smith and Cymande, plus afterparty

Tue 13 Feb 18:30

Christopher Nolan in Conversation

Thu 15 Feb 18:30

Tenet + intro by director Christopher Nolan

Thu 15 Feb 20:15 BFI IMAX

Preview: Evil Does Not Exist Aku wa sonzai shinai
Sat 17 Feb 18:00

TV Preview: This Town + Q&A with Steven Knight, cast members Michelle Dockery, Jordan Bolger, Ben Rose and Levi Brown, director Paul Whittington and executive producer Karen Wilson

Mon 26 Feb 18:15

BFI PLAYER

We are always open online on BFI Player where you can watch the best new, cult & classic cinema on demand. Showcasing hand-picked landmark British and independent titles, films are available to watch in three distinct ways: Subscription, Rentals & Free to view.

See something different today on player.bfi.org.uk

BFI SOUTHBANK

Welcome to the home of great film and TV, with three cinemas and a studio, a world-class library, regular exhibitions and a pioneering Mediatheque with 1000s of free titles for you to explore. Browse special-edition merchandise in the BFI Shop. We're also pleased to offer you a unique new space, the BFI Riverfront – with unrivalled riverside views of Waterloo Bridge and beyond, a delicious seasonal menu, plus a stylish balcony bar for cocktails or special events. Come and enjoy a pre-cinema dinner or a drink on the balcony as the sun goes down.

Join the BFI mailing list for regular programme updates. Not yet registered? Create a new account at www.bfi.org.uk/signup

headaches. It turned out that engineering works at the BBC Television Centre meant that space would be at a premium during *Fang Rock's* scheduled production dates, forcing the production to temporarily relocate to Pebble Mill Studio A in Birmingham. Some among the production team felt that the Pebble Mill facilities weren't up to the standards of Television Centre and that the special requirements demanded by *Doctor Who* might be too much for the studio.

Louise Jameson also had issues with the scripts and made numerous suggestions to address what she saw as inconsistencies in her character Leela. She was also able to finally get rid of the brown contact lenses she was forced to wear (her natural blue eyes were deemed unsuitable for a warrior like Leela) which she found uncomfortable, and which restricted her vision. Williams agreed that they could go, and Dicks wrote in a late addition to the story, in which Leela is temporarily blinded by looking at the explosion of the Rutan mothership, turning her eyes blue.

As Jameson, Tom Baker and the production crew readied themselves for the first *Doctor Who* studio recording outside of Television Centre, work began on the special effects sequences at the BBC's new Visual Effects Department Model Stage in Acton, London. Filming began on 26 April and was completed on 2 May, with scenes set on the rocks outside the lighthouse filmed at the BBC Television Film Studios in Ealing from 4 May. Rehearsals were now under way, and it was becoming clear that Baker was proving increasingly difficult with Jameson. Baker disliked Leela as he felt that she was too violent to be a companion and besides, he was making it clear that he thought he didn't need a companion at all.

Worries about Pebble Mill's ability to cope with the complexities of a *Doctor Who* recording proved unfounded, the resident crew – keen to lure more dramas away from Television Centre – being more than willing to go the extra mile to help out. Studio work began at Pebble Mill on 25 May, and although Baker's relationship with Jameson was getting better, he and Russell clashed several times ('Tom Baker was easy to deal with at first,' she told *Doctor Who Magazine*, 'but the part went to his head completely. By the time I did *Horror of Fang Rock*, he was desperately difficult to work with.') Despite all that, the main recordings went ahead on schedule, wrapping up on 8 June. The following day, special effects were recorded although there were problems arising from the complexity of the chroma key effects being used and the poor processing of the 16mm film sequences. Russell had to fight for an extra hour of studio time (she was eventually granted an additional three weeks to complete the complex post-production work) and, disillusioned by her experiences, swore to never work on *Doctor Who* again. And she was true to her word. Though Russell may not have agreed, the hardships were worth it. The first episode of *Horror of Fang Rock* was broadcast on 3 September, the first episode to go out in the new, slightly earlier timeslot beginning at 6.15pm. 6.8 million viewers tuned in for the first episode, rising to a serial high of 9.9 by the final episode.

Behind the scenes though, changes were afoot at *Doctor Who*. On the day that *Horror of Fang Rock* debuted, Jameson revealed that she would be leaving the programme at the end of Season 15. And other changes were in the air. Robert Holmes had thought about leaving *Doctor Who* at the end of Season 14 when former producer Philip Hinchcliffe had moved on. By April 1977, Holmes had made it known to his colleagues that he would be going and suggested that Williams might like to invite Dicks back to the role. But Dicks wasn't interested and instead, Anthony Read took up the post, overseeing the final stories of Season 15 of the current season, as well as the entirety of Season 16.

Kevin Lyons, EOFFTV.com