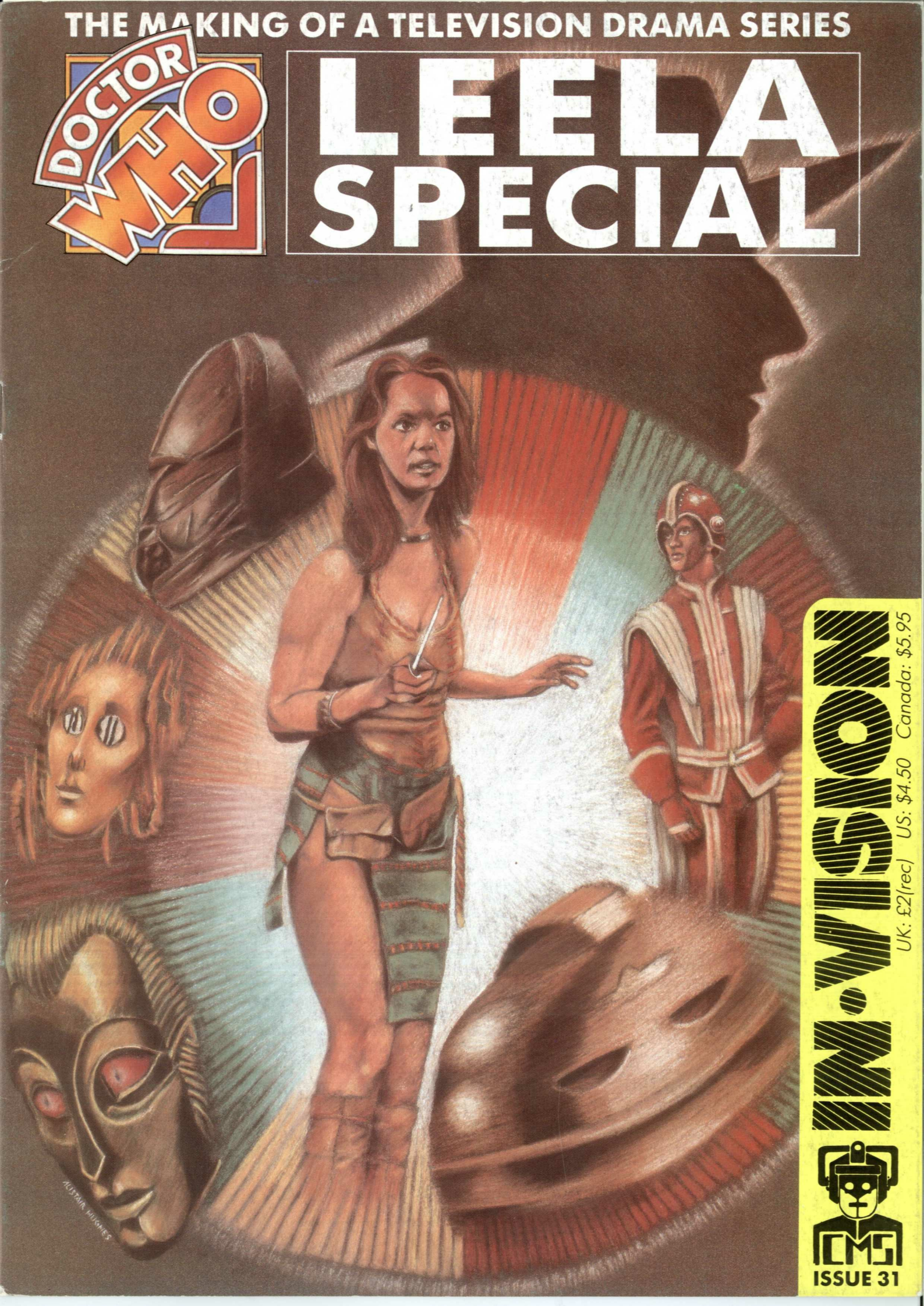
THE MAKING OF A TELEVISION DRAMA SERIES

DOCTOR WHO

LEELA SPECIAL



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CMS

ISSUE 31

LEELA

Played by Louise Jameson

1977-8: Seasons 14-15

ORIGINS

Initial Ideas

Chris Boucher was briefed for his story '*The Day God Went Mad*' to create a one-off character to fulfil the companion's function, because at this stage the production team had not finally made their minds up about the new regular companion, and were even considering having a series of one-off characters rather than a continuing regular character. The brief also stipulated that she should not be a screaming girl, which Robert Holmes wished to move away from. (In other words, the production team were being non-committal about a new companion.) [1]

An idea Philip Hinchcliffe had in mind for the new regular companion at this point was a cockney waif (based on Eliza Doolittle in Shaw's play *Pygmalion*). She would be introduced in the planned Victorian story by Robert Banks Stewart, and shown the universe by the Doctor in the role of Professor Higgins. [2]

Philip Hinchcliffe's initial choice of actress was Emily Richard. She had recently appeared in the title role of the BBC's adaption of Lorna Doone, but turned out to be unavailable. Pennant Roberts favoured Louise Jameson.

The Face of Evil

Chris Boucher's basic story outline included a primitive cave girl

Savage words

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IN THE initial stages, when I went for the interviews, all the director and the producer had was a script and a costume. They didn't really have any idea exactly what they wanted to do with her, so it was left pretty much up to me in the care of Pennant Roberts, who directed FACE OF EVIL, which was my first one. We worked very, very strongly together for the first four episodes, and then once I'd established certain things - she didn't scream and run away frightened, she didn't shake with fear every time there was any danger - I had to fight to hold onto that, because I was getting scripts that had been originally conceived for Sarah Jane, so it was virtually getting Sarah Jane crossed out and Leela put in, without much thought going into any kind of character change. So it was more of a struggle to hold onto what I had established rather than finding more and more things.

There was a certain amount of thought given to Leela in THE TALONS OF WENG-CHIANG, but not as much as I'd have liked to have seen, and my job got progressively more difficult as the series went on. Being a parody of *Pygmalion* doesn't actually mean it's Leela. She was a slut out of the London gutter, *Pygmalion*, but I'm an alien from a completely different planet, albeit with Earth ancestry. You can't fit her into a *Pygmalion* role. We had a lot of trouble with that. I do actually think that Bob Holmes is the best writer **Doctor Who** has had, so I'm not knocking him at all, and I think that THE SUN MAKERS was the best script I worked on - for once they were actually blending an adventure story with something that was quite morally just.

The one I had most trouble with was the lighthouse one, HORROR OF FANG ROCK. Terrance Dicks has actually done some marvellous stuff in the past, but it was just a half-hour story - it wasn't a two-hour story. It was impossible to do, with no thought given to her at all. In one area she started to take her frock off in front of the man, but that was as far as the subtlety towards her character went, as far as I remember. It was recorded about four-and-a-half years ago, so my memory isn't that clear, but I remember having terrible trouble with that story.

I didn't do all that I'd have liked with the character, but when you're playing that kind of part you're basically there to ask questions so that the Doctor can tell the audience things - you're basically a foil, basically a sub-character. Some things I would have liked to have done, but out of deference to Tom, and out of deference to the programme, you take a back seat, and for that reason I found it quite frustrating, which is why I liked THE SUN MAKERS so much, because I was actually allowed to drive the story through quite heavily, and get my own character off the ground. But when you're getting scripts which only say "What do we do now, Doctor?", without upstaging him you're not going to develop as much as you would like to.

I don't blame the writers. The marvellous thing about **Doctor Who** is that it doesn't have the science fiction laws that other science fiction programmes have, and we get very heavily criticised for it, but we don't get hidebound by it. It actually allowed us a certain amount of freedom that other similar series don't have, and that actually goes down to the characters and the writing. When you're doing a nine-day turnaround, there isn't the time or the money to give it the kind of consideration that is necessary for, say, a three-hour stage play, unfortunately. I'm not laying blame anywhere. I'd lay it on Maggie Thatcher's lap, actually, the fact that there's just a lack of money in the arts generally. I wouldn't lay it down to a script editor or director - certainly not a director, because they come in for four episodes, and Tom and I actually know more about the series than they do. It's not anybody's fault, apart from lack of finance.

I DEVELOPED Leela from my dog Bosie and the little girl upstairs - not so little now. When I started the job she was nearly four - it's difficult to age down that far. From her it was just her sheer naivety. Leela was never devious in any way. You know as you grow up you learn to be devious, you learn to play society games? In THE SUN MAKERS she's trapped in the corridor and tries to make the guards think she won't fight, but that's an animal thing, it's playing possum. It's when a bear lies down and pretends to be dead, and then springs into action when he's got them off guard. I don't think that's too sophisticated for Leela, because fighting's the area she's trained in. Occasionally towards the end we were doing things like the chess game with K-9 and the Doctor, but she could never have done that at the beginning without the kind of education the Doctor gave her. That and the kind of simple truth that you get from children. You know sometimes you hear a child say something, and it's just so simple, it's extremely profound? I tried to get that. Sometimes it's very difficult with those kinds of scripts, but I think you've got to take the job as seriously as possible.

My dog has a huge pair of ears which are part-basenji, which he uses like radar. If someone goes out of the room, myself or his master, he cocks his head on one side so much that you think the neck's

character, who became the confidant figure as the story was developed with Holmes in discussions.[3] However, Robert Holmes has said that it was his idea, not Boucher's, to make the character a jungle girl on the model of the Raquel Welch character in the film *One Million Years BC* (1966). He was aiming for a more positive companion whose savagery would contrast with the Doctor's 'pacific nature': she would be 'handy with a knife' and would initiate violence. She would also have 'primitive instincts to complement the Doctor's more cerebral approach'.[4]

According to Boucher, there were several influences on the character of Leela in the initial script. The women's movement had begun to change public perceptions of women, and there was also a liberated female type to draw on in Diana Rigg's character in **The Avengers**. The other influence was the glamorous and notorious female terrorist Leila Khaled, who provided the name.[5]

Subsequent Scripts

Subsequently, Boucher was briefed to use Leela in the following story; it was decided to use the character for the rest of the season, with Boucher and Holmes handling the writing chores to see that she was introduced properly. Finally it was decided that she would continue as the regular companion, by the time that the writing of 'THE ROBOTS OF DEATH' was complete.[6]

Hinchcliffe's aims were to break the pattern of the twentieth-century companion, and to

give girls in the audience a character they could identify with: 'a heroine who can do the kind of things that they would like to do'.[7] According to Louise Jameson, he also wanted to extend the companion's appeal to adult [male] viewers, hence the costume.[8]

One of the imperatives was to make her a total contrast with her predecessor, Sarah, because, according to Louise Jameson, Elisabeth Sladen had done Sarah so well that she couldn't be bettered.[9] The emphasis on her being uneducated was an element in this antithesis: at the press launch, Hinchcliffe said that she was a departure for **Doctor Who** girls in that she was not an educated 'whiz-kid'.[10]

Subsequently Hinchcliffe resumed thinking along the lines of Eliza Doolittle. This entailed turning 'THE TALONS OF GREEL' (later '... OF WENG-CHIANG') into a second pilot for her, modifying the character as an uncultivated barbarian (or 'savage urchin', in Jeremy Bentham's phrase) to be taught civilization and moral values by the Doctor. The long-term aim was that, by the end of the following season, she would be 'elegantly gowned and beautifully mannered, beautifully spoken - the epitome of a cultured woman, which was a joke, because there'd always be the side of her that was actually alien'. This process had begun in 'THE TALONS OF WENG-CHIANG', when she is persuaded by the Doctor to wear 'proper clothes': "She didn't like them very much, but it was a start."[11]

going to get twisted off, and I tried to use that as much as possible, on the few occasions where I was allowed ESP - "I feel something's wrong, Doctor" - which we had to be very careful of, because if I felt that all the time, we'd never get into danger and there'd be no story. We had to keep a pretty low profile on that kind of telepathy. I tried to use that, and the way he has an extraordinary alertness, even when he's sitting down. If he knows someone's coming in or it's going to be a walk soon, he has a kind of tenseness. Do you understand what I mean by centre? People have low centres and high centres. Someone that's completely slumped has a very low centre, and someone that's very uptight and agile will have a high centre. Obviously, people try and reach the equilibrium, try and keep pretty much in the middle, but I think Leela's centre was quite high, her energy level was that much higher than mine.

HOWEVER, I didn't consciously try to develop an overall body language and voice pattern for her. I think if you start looking at yourself from the outside, you're going to get nowhere. If you instinctively feel something is right, then the body will follow accordingly. I think if you start thinking too technically, you negate any kind of instinct in your acting. I did try to keep her language very precise, for example saying 'it is' instead of 'it's'. I didn't do it all the time, but I did try. Australians originally came from England, but they don't have the English accent that we now have, and even though my ancestry was of Earth, I tried to just make a slight difference, because it wouldn't have developed in exactly the same way. That was as much as I could do without putting on some kind of accent that would have been phoney, would have placed it somewhere on Earth, rather than somewhere in space. I thought it would be just enough to make the rhythm just slightly awkward, slightly not of this world.

By THE SUN MAKERS the Doctor has taught her the value of life, which she didn't have right at the beginning, which is why she doesn't want Cordo to commit suicide. She would like to know the problem before she sees a death committed. That's what I mean about lack of character development, this is all my subtext, and how do I get it across to an audience without the scenes being written? I travelled with the Doctor for that long, right at the beginning, "No more Janis thorns", and yet I used one in the following story, so that had a kind of whittling away, but it was never actually said, "Yes, Doctor, I understand how valuable life is." That was never said, that was never written down.

The Doctor also tried to teach her about science. She saw science as a magic that had an explanation, and magic was just something that she never even understood. I think she used the whole thing as an umbrella, and half of it she understood and half she didn't, and the half she understood she called science.

Make-up for Leela took about an hour and a quarter. Full body make-up, kohl eye make-up. It varied from girl to girl. Leela apparently means *dark-eyed beauty* in Urdu or Indian or something, so I had red lenses to make my eyes brown. When Graham Williams took over, I was allowed to see through blue lenses instead of red, which was a great relief.

When I had to crash through a window in THE TALONS OF WENG-CHIANG, the stunt guy Stuart Fell stood in for me. It was quite funny because everyone kept goosing him, because from the back we looked the same when he was in my costume. I leapt on the coach myself, and jumped down off things, but I didn't actually crash through any windows or anything. I hated the rat. When anyone says "What was your most frightening monster?" that's the one. Chris Benjamin and Trevor Baxter were a joy to work with. I love them, I love them to death. Alan Lake's another favourite. It was nice to have met him. Unfortunately in television you don't get a chance to get to know people as well as you do in theatre, so it's all a bit on a superficial level. It's when you go away filming, when you're really thrown together that you get to know people so well, or when you're away on tour.

Leela's image changed in IMAGE OF THE FENDAHL. The new outfit was of very similar design. Quite honestly, the costume was wearing out. I'd worn it for

quite a few stories. They talked about making a duplicate, and they said, "Just for the sake of variety, why don't we do something similar?" There were certain problems with the costume, such as having a pee in a hurry, so they designed something that was more convenient, more comfortable, and pretty similar. I've heard since that Graham Williams wanted Leela to look more sexy, but he wouldn't say that to me, because he might think he's putting down Louise Jameson, actress, by saying that. But I actually think there was little to choose between the costumes really. I changed back in the following story because it was shot out of synch. But she then had two costumes in her wardrobe.

AS FOR the hairstyle, I went to have an inch trimmed off, and I got about seven or eight inches trimmed off by the BBC girl, so it was much, much shorter. I thought I'd shove it up rather than make it look as short as it was looking.

Sadly there was some criticism of Leela from the fans. You try and please people all the time, you know, but you're only going to appeal to a few. Hopefully I appealed to more than a few. It hurts when you get criticism, but it is never unexpected, simply because you can't be to 100% of your audience's taste all the time. I'll tell you one anecdote which was very good for me personally. I got a lot of fan mail, particularly when it first happened, saying lots of nice things, and I won't embarrass myself or bore you with the quotes. The secretary used to sort out all the fan mail and send it off to the various people, but in the middle of mine she'd got muddled up some fan mail for Lis Sladen. In a letter it said, "I hate this new girl, I think she's terrible", against a whole mass of "You're beautiful, you're wonderful, you're the best thing that's happened to **Doctor Who**"-type letters. I then got this in the middle, and thought, yes, you must always remember this letter, because you're not as perfect as some people would lead you to believe you can be.

One of the criticisms was that she wouldn't want to stay in leathers once she's seen what modern people are wearing: she'd want to wear modern clothes. If she sees herself as a sex object sure she does, but that's not what Leela was about. There was one nice moment they did give me when she came down in that tight dress in THE TALONS OF WENG-CHIANG. I thought that was quite a lovely moment. She suddenly didn't feel so freaky.

The sexual element of the character was not deliberate at all. I guess if you slap anyone in a leather leotard and bung them on after the football results there is going to be a certain amount, but it was astounding to me. I was amazed that one was ever thought of as a sex object in any way at all. Leela was innocent in that way - I think **Doctor Who** is innocent of sexual taboos and things.

She was written out by getting married. I wish they'd developed that further. I do think that was a fault in the writing, that I'd saved his life in episode two, and suddenly there I was in love with him in episode five or whatever, with virtually no contact in the middle. I believe originally I was going to marry a drop-out, one of the overgrown hippies, but they killed them all off in episode six, because they never quite believed I was going to leave the series, and I got wined and dined and tried to get talked back into it right up to the last day of recording, almost, but I stuck by my guns and said, no, it was time for me to leave, because I wanted to get back to the theatre.

Doing **Doctor Who** was basically good for my acting career. I should think it comes down quite heavily on the good side, simply because people know who I am now, and they didn't before. But to a certain extent it's stopped people taking me seriously. It's not like **Crossroads**, which is supposed to be the pits within the profession. People say, "**Crossroads**? Okay, forget it, don't touch them." It isn't the fault of the actors. I know some very good actors who've been in **Crossroads**. Any long running series gets that. People turn up their noses at **Emmerdale Farm** and **Coronation Street**. I was hoping I wasn't going to get typecast in any way. I've done **The Omega Factor** since, but that's the only telly. A lot of theatre. Theatre work's rolled in quite well. □

Parts of this interview first appeared in 'Fendahl' 13 (December, 1980)

Performance

Philip Hinchcliffe told Pennant Roberts that Leela was to be 'not so much an ordinary companion', but 'actually much more of a character in her own right'.[12] However, both Roberts and Jameson have said that though the production team had conceived the visual image and costume, it was up to them to create the actual character and temperament of Leela.[13] He and Louise Jameson worked out the details of Leela's moods and responses carefully.[14] They worked mainly from the script for 'THE FACE OF EVIL', which was sufficiently 'self-explanatory'; thereafter Jameson developed the character independently.[15]

In creating the character, Jameson paid especial attention to Leela's body-language.[16] Her aim was to make her 'totally instinctive', and drew on her observation of her basenji dog Bosie and of the little girl who lived upstairs, Sally, 'making a half-child, half-animal'. In particular she took from Bosie certain mannerisms: tilting her head when listening to something distant, and stretching to her full height (especially in the neck) at any sign of danger.[17]

She tried to make her as aggressive as possible, whilst keeping the element of vulnerability.[18] She believes the characteristics of openness and honesty came from herself.[19]

The earliest photographs show her with dark make-up, suggesting that she was originally intended to be coloured; this

would explain the need to change Louise Jameson's blue eyes to brown with contact lenses.[20] Chris Boucher, however, did not write her with a coloured character in mind, and has suggested that, if the theory is correct, the intention reflects a racist assumption about a primitive character on the part of Robert Holmes.[21]

SOURCES

The image of the leather-clad Leela was influenced by memories of the heroines of **The Avengers**, which was mentioned frequently by the press in early stages.[22] Graham Williams has said that the character was of 'exactly the same sort' as Cathy Gale.[23] It has been suggested that there was a long- term production aim to have a companion in leathers based on the **Avengers** image: this had been tried for twice by Barry Letts with Jo and Sarah.[24]

Terrance Dicks associates her with a different image: 'a kind of glamorous female Tarzan'.[25] Louise Jameson invoked the same image in talking of a 'Me Leela - You Doctor Who' relationship.[26]

She has also been called a 'Shakespearean savage'.[27]

CHARACTERISTICS

Boucher: "I wrote this girl who was brave, bright, primitive, proud, curious, and despite her basic naivete didn't have the habit of deference."[28]

Jameson speaks of her 'fiery instinct'. [29]

She is loyal to her beliefs and friends. [30]

She also has a 'forceful dynamism'[31]

Dressed to Kill

AMY ROBERTS talks about designing Leela's second outfit

"Louise Jameson who was playing Leela, a character unlike any other **Doctor Who** companion, had become immensely popular. The screamer-ladies had disappeared - Elisabeth Sladen had been a sort of transitional non-screamer - and out of the blue came Leela, a lithe, attractive, savage-type lady who appealed as much to fathers as to sons. Graham Williams who was producing THE IMAGE OF THE FENDAHL decided that in this particular story Leela should be a little more sexy, so he called me in to see what I could do with her costume. Obviously, there could not be too much of a change because we wanted to preserve her image and of course there was really no need for her to look-any different in this particular story (remember she had worn Victorian dress in THE TALONS OF WENG-CHIANG and had looked curiously uncomfortable!).

"Basically, these were the requirements: Leela's costume should be in a similar vein to her original one, making a visual print of her savage origins, but It should be a little more sexy - but not too sexy.

"I arranged to meet Louise as soon as possible. This was not easy as her schedule was very tight but or course it is absolutely vital for a designer to meet and effect some sort of rapport with the person he or she is designing for. And in any case, I had to be especially careful - **Doctor Who** is such a long-runnlng show, Leela was such a popular character - everything had to go really well. I should like to think that it did - we certainly had no complaints from viewers.

"Louise Jameson couldn't have been nicer. She is a very warm, friendly, helpful person with no complexes about her appearance. (You'd be surprised how many actors and actresses have fixations of one sort or another about the way they think they look! Louise was smooth unspoilt sheets) with coloured wool embroidery. This preserved the savage image - natural skins, natural-dyed wools, simple stitching. Her accessories were laced leather armbands and a double belt for her dagger.

"Louise was duly measured by Vicki Mear, a freelance costume maker who then made up a toile. This is what always happens when any important costume is made - obviously you can't risk ruining material as expensive as chamois leather and it's the same thing that well-known fashion designers do before they actually start cutting, expensive brocades, silks and satins. The toile is a copy of the costume but is cut from fine calico cloth. This enables the designer to see the costume at the first fitting and because the calico is relatively cheap there are no problems about the cost of alterations. With Louise, it was especially vital to see how the costume responded to movement: remember she had to do a lot of leaping and bounding and the costume had to stand up to a fair amount of stress! Her movements had to be very free and uninhibited - the costume must not split.

"The toile was worked out and then Vicki used it as a pattern to cut out the extremely expensive chamois leather. A final fitting, complete with tools, belt, armbands and dagger, then the finishing touches. I embroidered each seam with coloured wools and it was ready for Louise.

"For the viewers it was apparently very successful. Louise Jameson liked it enormously for daytime shooting, but she confessed that in the night time sequences in the woods around the cottage she felt extremely chilly and had to spend a fair amount of time between takes shivering in blankets, and longing for a glass of something hot and reasonably alcoholic!" □

Image Makers

ANNE JARDINE on the attitudes of the press

On the whole the press has been very kind to me", Louise Jameson told *Whovian Times* in 1988. "But there have been one or two occasions when I would very happily have kept a lower profile." Of all the **Doctor Who** companions, however, Leela seems to have attracted the greatest and most continuous attention.

Much of the attention is attributable to Jameson's success before and after playing Leela. Her theatre work and roles in **Tenko** and **Bergerac** brought her renewed attention after leaving the show, but press coverage was often in terms of her **Doctor Who** background. Thus it was "Look Who's set to be Bergerac's Girl" in the *Daily Mail*, and "Suede undies in Dr Who didn't suit Greenham Common supporter" over a picture of **Tenko**'s Blanche in a *National Revue* article (14 November 1985) about **Bergerac** which managed to combine three popular television serials and mid-eighties anti-nuclear paranoia.

Other press coverage in the nationals used the popular memory of Leela as an excuse to run a related story: "East Enders killer and Dr Who actress" was the *Daily Mail*'s headline over an article about Jameson's work as a prison visitor, during which she coached the future soap star Leslie Grantham in acting; "Who goes there?" was the *Daily Express* headline to an article reporting on Jameson's possible sighting of a Bristol sex attacker (22 April 1978).

These last two stories also implicitly played on the sexuality of the Leela character and the associated actress. Jameson is "twenty-seven-year-old Louise" in the *Express* (and "lovely Louise Jameson" in the *Photoplay* retelling of the story), and the article is accompanied by a large smiling photo cut just below a low neckline. In the *Mail*, a standard *Bergerac* head-shot (reused from the *Mail*'s earlier story) accompanies the description "leather-clad assistant". Not that this is any surprise for the Bristol tabloid press, for whom undressed or half-dressed women have been a marketing ploy for several decades. They were only extending and developing the image which the **Doctor Who** production office had been happy to create back in the Seventies: "the barbarian who comes out fighting" (*Express*), "a cave girl with the killer touch" (*Mail*), and "I gather that fathers and little boys like to have a girl in the programme" (Tom Baker). As Jameson herself observed (in *Titbits*, 23 February 1978), "It was quite a shock to suddenly find I'd become a sex symbol. But I think the costume had a lot to do with it, don't you?"

She could have perhaps anticipated the extent of press reaction from her first day of interviews: between 7am and 10pm she had an interview lunch with 26 people, two radio interviews, a live television interview, and a full-day's **Doctor Who** recording. But if the production office

She has 'a great directness'.[32]

She is anti-authority: she disregards the orders of people in authority.

She looks on men and women as the same, potential threats; this underlies her tendency to kill first and ask questions later.[33] 'raw natural intelligence'. She continually favours direct action.[34]

She has a 'streetwise' quality which Jameson has compared with her character Blanche in the tv series **Tenko** (1981-2).[35]

She is humourless, a result of her lack of understanding.[36]

Intelligence

Louise Jameson sees her as intelligent but uneducated, 'a mixture of instinct and naivety'; in this she is like the child and the dog who inspired the performance.[37]

BACKGROUND

One theory attributes her social malajustment to the supposition that, as Sole's only child, she was brought up as a boy, the son he never had, in a patriarchal society. This leads her to question male dominance, and eventually even the existence of Xoanon.[38]

As a savage, she has been called 'rather artificial'.[39] In particular, it is notable that, though an alien, she frequently refers to Earthbound things.[40]

DIALOGUE

She doesn't elide her words (or, as she would say, does not elide them); in this she has a 'savage dignity'.[41]

EDUCATING LEELA

She provides a basis for conflict between the Doctor and companion, in that her tribal culture is at odds with his 'civilization': he lectures her on the latter.[42]

She is learning all the time rather than just accepting new situations. [43] When scolded, she responds by accepting it; but when criticized unfairly, she protests. [44]

It has been argued that there is a conflict of identities in her, between the primitive and the eager pupil of the Doctor's.[45] Another view is that this conflict operates at the level of character function: the sexuality of the huntress image intervenes in the education theme, making it abortive.[46]

How Successful is her Education?

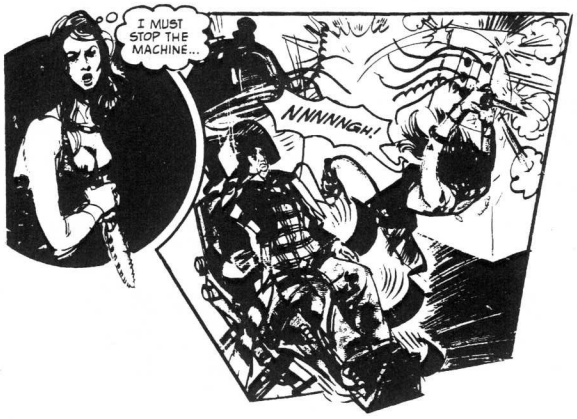
Louise Jameson feels the Doctor tamed her to an extent.[47] However, though she becomes more educated and sophisticated, she does not mellow: she is still a savage on Gallifrey.[48]

Terrance Dicks, however, feels that he has only limited success;[49] despite being slightly civilized as a result of her travels, she reverts to the primitive at the first sign of danger.[50]

A further view is that he was unable to tame her at all.[51] She doesn't comprehend his notion of 'civilization', let alone embrace it.[52]

DRAMATIC FUNCTION

She is 'the only female companion who ever challenged the



and the actress had wanted to emphasise the Boucher-Holmes-Hinchcliffe-Jameson-Roberts creation as an independent and instinctive individual, the press and public interest focussed on defining Leela in sexual terms. Large action pictures of Leela in the Tesh ship appeared in most tabloids; the *Sunday Mirror* compared Jameson with Anne Aston (hostess on The Golden Shot) in a *Battle of the Legs*. And in an interview on BBC's Nationwide (26 October 1976), interviewer Bob Wellings (talking about Leela in costume) observed in a confused way: "I gather that Leela - she's very lovely isn't she - is a very positive person." Even the staid BBC2 ended a late-night slide show of **Doctor Who** monsters (its **Closedown** feature on 2 April 1977 - the night before the **Whose Doctor Who** documentary) with "the more soothing sight" of Leela in costume. During the later weeks of THE TALONS OF WENG-CHIANG, *Radio Times* ran a letter (from a man aged 52) asking "...when is Leela getting back into her original gear?" Rival TV Times were later to describe her as "perhaps the sexiest sidekick ever to do battle alongside Dr Who." Several articles pursued the sexuality as far as the actress herself: a number reported her wooing of current boyfriend Robert Ashby, and News of the World ("Why Dr Who girl is giving up Daleks for good", an article by Ivan Waterman published on 6 November 1977) elicited Jameson's "secret about what all body-conscious space-age girls are wearing: "...I have this wonder-bra to give me that extra lift... To be honest, there's not as much of me up top as there might be."

Thus, while the referencing of Leela inside the programme was to an emancipated individual (though still an interesting contrast to the reasoning character of the Doctor), outside the programme Leela fed familiar male fantasies like **The Avengers** 'girls' before her. Even in January 1979, Donny MacLeod was talking about "the leather gym-slip" on BBC 1's **Pebble Mill at One**. Margaret Forwood in *The Sun* (24 February and 24 March 1977) and Carolyn Watts in *Isis* ("Indoctrination With Mother", 18 February 1977) read sexism into the series - Forwood rather more obviously ("How much longer can he keep his hands off her?") than Watts ("now qualifies for the ranks of series with explicitly sexual heroines").

To accompany the change of character from the screaming companions like Jo and Sarah to the huntress, killer, non-screamer, alien), the production office devised a striking image. The popular press use striking photographs as design elements on their pages, and a story can be justified on the strength of a picture alone (a practice which reached its nadir with the current Sunday-magazine celeb-snaps accompanied by corny caption). So it is no surprise that Fleet Street picked up so immediately on Leela's appearance in preference to her psychology.

And in subsequent **Who** articles down the years, library stills of leggy Leela will most likely take precedence over less conventionally appealing pictures of stiff-suited Barbara or spotty-faced Adric.

Leela remained in the minds of some people as the Doctor's companion for years after Jameson left the programme. Apart from the near comeback in Christopher Priest's SEALED ORDERS story (for which, in fact, Sarah Jane Smith was first choice, and ended up with **K-9 and Company** as a poor second), this manifested itself in two curious incidents. The first was a River Trent exhibition at which a fancy dress Doctor and Leela appeared (reported by vanessa Wiggins in an article "Time stands still on the river Trent" in *Waterways News* issue 93, from September 1979). The second was in the 1979 *TV Comic Annual* (published by Polystyle in 1978), in which the Doctor's comic-strip companion, Miss Young (is her first name Susan?) may wear a chunky sweater, stout trousers and long high-heeled boots, but speaks strangely ("It comes... It follows") and who wields a knife like a warrior - despite being hampered by a heavy pair of spectacles obviously added by another artist.

Leela actually did appear in 27 issues of *TV Comic*. One instalment ends with Leela falling into a spider's web - with the flap on the back of her costume added to cover her modesty apparantly as an afterthought. A couple of issues earlier, Leela's clothing had been even lower-cut than usual, so perhaps it is as well that from issue 1348 she wore more conventional clothing (chunky sweater, stout trousers and long high-heeled boots...) Whatever she wore, though, Louise Jameson was not impressed by artist John Canning's illustrations. Her appearance in the *Doctor Who Winter Special* (Polystyle, 1977) was in a text story called The Living Wax, written around photographs from ... MANDRAGORA and TALONS...

Other Leela imagery included the Denys Fisher doll, which Louise Jameson noticed at the first DWAS convention in 1977 had a "Raquel Welch bust". Made in Hong Kong, it was a nine-inch high toy which initially cost £3.99 (24p more than the Doctor). It had "long auburn hair, simulated leather dress and a safe plastic knife" and it was trademarked as a name in 1976. Plans for marketing Leela jewellery (as worn in the programme, designed by John Bloomfield for FACE OF EVIL) never came to anything.

Today we can see that Leela escaped categorisation as the archetypal screaming **Doctor Who** girl only to reinforce the glamorous or sexy image established by earlier companions like Zoe and Jo. That Louise Jameson was not categorised similarly is a tribute both to her actual characterisation of Leela and to her subsequent work in theatre, radio and television.

Leela in the comics

TV COMIC
Issue 1328 (28 May 1977): Includes a "wonderful colour poster" of Leela.
Issues 1334 - 1340: story *The Orb*
Issues 1341 - 1347: story *The Mutants*
Issues 1348 - 1352: story *The Devil's Mouth*
Issues 1353 - 1360: story *TheAqua City*

DOCTOR WHO WINTER SPECIAL
1977: text story *The Living Wax*

DOCTOR WHO ANNUAL
1979: text stories *Famine on Planet X, The Planet of Dust, Terror on Tantalogus, Flashback, The Crocodiles from the Mist*
picture stories: *The Power, Emstone's Castle*

Doctor for heroic identification'.[53] One early reviewer thought her a 'cynically suitable back-up' to Tom Baker's 'whimsical' Doctor.[54] She is an archetypal heroine, lacking only 'the intelligence that comes with education'; this helps to make her accessible to the audience.[55] As the Doctor becomes more bizarre, she takes over the active tasks of 'running and punching'.[56] Thus she acts where the Doctor plans.[57] Bob Baker found her enjoyable to write for because of her active role: 'she could put totally opposite views to the Doctor and do things independently of him, which he would disapprove of, and so on'.[58]

However, Tom Baker objected to this dominance, and he has said that he felt the character was 'out of place'.[59] It also worried the director David Maloney: the Doctor seems less of a mentor and more of an equal, because Tom Baker and Louise Jameson were close in age, and also because Leela's costume introduced the idea of sex.[60]

The problem was that to have a strong female companion created a contradiction in that she must defer to the Doctor to fulfil her function as a feed. By making her a savage, Hinchcliffe was able to get round this contradiction: it served to balance her strong female characterization, and so to avoid a threat to the Doctor's dramatic dominance; this dominance therefore signals brain over brawn. Moreover, Leela must ask questions of the Doctor in the process of being educated.[61]

She is exceptional in being

conceived as a character part as well as a functional role of feed.[62] Graham Williams feels that, as a positive female role, she 'didn't work terribly well'.[63]

Her social inexperience gives her a capacity for comedy.[64]

She fulfils two traditional companion roles, 'in a more aggressive, heroic way': she fights, and she screams (e.g. when the rat bites her leg). [65]

One view is that she is misused: she should have been a vehicle for the Doctor to moralize to.[66]

It has been suggested that Robert Holmes wrote best for her. [67]

VIOLENCE

She has 'a natural skill with every kind of weapon', and sees violence as 'the obvious way of settling disputes'. This means that she is baffled by the Doctor's ideals: 'for Leela, the only good enemy is a dead one'.[68]

Tom Baker disapproved of her killing, which he felt suggested to the child audience that murder was being condoned.[69]

She has been seen as providing a sub-plot: she uses violence, the Doctor condemns it; she is stubborn at this condemnation, and he finally accepts her way, e.g. complimenting on her throw in 'THE INVASION OF TIME'.[70]

SEXUALITY AND SEXISM

The press cottoned on to her as an 'explicitly sexual heroine',[71] an interpretation which Louise Jameson attributes to the cos-

Louise Jameson Biography

BIOGRAPHICAL

Born: 20-4-51, Wanstead; daughter of an insurance broker
Grew up in Milford Green.
1955: Played Little Miss Muffet at school.
1966: left school.
c.1968: took a secretarial course (at parents' insistence).
1969-71: trained at RADA (with Mary Tamm); won two prizes.
Worked in a typing pool.
1976: attempted to move into tv; auditioned for **The New Avengers**, **Angels**, and **Doctor Who**.
1977: worked as a prison visitor.
1978: Short-listed for the film Yanks (not cast).
c.1980: Sought a role in **Charlie's Angels**.
1981: appointed to the board of directors of Anvil Productions (the Oxford Playhouse Company).
1986: worked with Pennant Roberts on *Zee and Co.*, a teaching project directed by one of Roberts's pupils.
Two sons, Harry and Tom.
Directed fringe play, *Falling Out* (date unknown).

STAGE

1966: Viola in *Twelfth Night*; the Wonster Players. (First stage role; amateur.)
20-7-71 - 31-7-71: Maggie Pearson in *A Collier's Friday Night*; Opera House Harrogate; dir. Brian Howard.
7-3-72 - 18-3-72: Sister Gisella in Abelard and Heloise; Belgrade Theatre, Coventry.
Spring-Autumn, 1972: St Andrews Repertory Company at The Byre, including: Laura in *The Glass Menagerie* (25-4-72 - 6-5-72); Mother Keller in *All My Sons* (13-6-72 - 1-7-72); Penelope Toop in *See How They Run* (4-7-72 - August), dir. Andrew Tourell; Gwendolen Fairfax in *The Importance of Being Earnest* (22-8-72 - 9-9-72), dir. Andrew Tourell; Dulcie in *The Boy Friend* (12-9-72 - 30-9-72); Ruth Gray in *Epitaph for George Dillon* (3-10-72 - 14-10-72).
15-1-73 - : Voice 3 in *Sylvia Plath*; RSC Stratford at The Other Place; dir. Barry Kyle.
1973: RSC at Stratford, including: ensemble work in *Three Women* at The Other Place (4th July), dir. Barry Kyle; Jaquenetta in *Love's Labour's Lost* (7th August), dir. David Jones; Lady in *Romeo and Juliet* (28th August), dir. Terry Hands; Bianca in *The Taming of the Shrew* (23rd September), dir. Clifford Williams.
20-10-73 - : *Three Women* (transfer from Stratford); The Place, London.
15-1-74 - 27-1-74: transfer from Stratford of *Sylvia Plath*; Brooklyn Academy, New York.
1974: RSC at Stratford, including: Blanche of Spain in *King John* (20th March) dir. John Barton & Barry Kyle; Cordelia in *King Lear* at The Other Place (10th April), dir. Buzz Goodbody; Anne/Mary Fitton/other roles in *I Was Shakespeare's Double* at The Other Place (14th June), dir. Howard Davies.
1974-5: RSC in London, including: Sonya in *Summerfolk* (21st August), Aldwych, dir. David Jones; transfer from Stratford of *King Lear* (23rd October), The Place; Molly Griesinger in *The Marquis of Keith* (19th November), Aldwych, dir. Ronald Eyre; transfer from Stratford of *King John* (9th January), Aldwych.
11-2-75 - 30-3-75: American tour with RSC, reprising productions of *Summerfolk* (1974), *Love's Labour's Lost* (1973) and *King Lear* (1974).
29-4-75 - 24-5-75: RSC in London, reprising *Love's Labour's Lost* (1973), Aldwych.
Autumn, 1975: Bristol Old Vic company, including: Annie in *Serjeant Musgrave's Dance* (30-9-75 - 25-10-75); Portia in *The Merchant of Venice* (28-10-75 - 22-11-75).
1976: *Private Lives*; tour; Prospect Theatre Company.
Spring 1978: Bristol Old Vic, including: Beatie Bryant in *Roots* at the Little (14-2-78 - 11-3-78); Catherine in *A View from the Bridge* at the Royal (14-3-78 - 8-4-78); Raina in *Arms and the Man* at the Little (11-4-78 - 6-5-78).
Autumn 1978: Berinthia in *The Relapse*; Cambridge Theatre Company tour; dir. Jonathan Lynn.
Summer-Autumn, 1979: Oxford Playhouse Company, including: Giacinta in *The Country Holiday*; Usher for *An Eleventh Hour Entertainment* (charity revue, 17-8-79; no acting part); Regan in *King Lear*, dir. Gordon McDougall (2-10-79 - 20-10-79); Anabel in *Touch and Go*, dir. Gordon McDougall (5-11-79 - 10-11-79).
Spring, 1980: Bristol Old Vic at Theatre Royal, including: Helena in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (19-2-80 - 15-3-80), dir. Richard Cottrell; Ann Deever in *All My Sons* (22-4-80 - 10-5-80).
June-July, 1980: *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (transfer to London Old Vic of Bristol production).
Autumn, 1980: Oxford Playhouse Company, including: Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing*, dir. Gordon McDougall (22-9-80 - 4-10-80 and 23-10-80 - 29-10-80); The Green Woman/Arab Girl/Strange Passenger, in *Peer Gynt*, dir. Gordon McDougall (7-10-80 - 22-10-80); Miriam Gottchalk in *Mephisto*, dir. Gordon McDougall (31-10-80 - 11-11-80); Lady Edith Londonderry in *The Man to Save Us*, dir. Nicolas Kent (13-11-80 - 15-11-80). 8-1-81 - 4-4-81: Kate in *Passion Play*; RSC, Aldwych; dir. Mike Ockrent.
June 1983: Rosalind in *As You Like It*; Open Air Theatre, Regent's Park; dir. Richard Digby Day.
?1984: *Twelfth Night* and *Against Two Tides* (one-woman show); tour of America.
October-November 1984: Moll in *Moll Flanders*; York Theatre Royal (6-11-84 - 17-11-84), & tour; dir. Stephen Rayne.
Christmas 1984-5: Aladdin in *Aladdin*; Watford Palace Theatre; dir. Stuart Mungall.
22-1-86 - 1-3-86: Linda in *The Light Rough*; Hampstead Theatre; dir. Michael Attenborough.
25-2-87 - 28-3-87: Jennifer Dubedat in *The Doctor's Dilemma*; Bristol Old Vic/Theatre Royal; dir. Leon Rubin.
19-12-88 - : Roxanne in *Sticky Fingers*; King's Head Theatre, Islington; dir. Yvonne Brewster.
May-June 1989: Elvira in *Blithe Spirit*; tour; dir. John David.
16-7-89: *Voices from Namibia*; Bloomsbury Theatre; benefit performance.
13-10-89 - : Molly in *Sleeping Nightie*; Croydon Warehouse; dir Terry Johnson; transferred to Royal Court Theatre Upstairs, 17-11-89.
31-7-90 - 30-10-90: Nadiezhda in *Barbarians*; RSC, Barbican; dir. David Jones.

FILM

1972: Betty in *Disciple of Death*; Chromage; dir. Tom Parkinson.

TELEVISION

14-11-71: Mary in **Tom Brown's Schooldays**, ep. 1; BBC; dir. Gareth Davis.
25-12-71: Junior Teacher in **Cider with Rosie**; BBC; dir. Claude Whatham. [First recorded tv role.]
24-1-72: Denise in **Z-Cars**: THE ATTACKERS; BBC; dir. Julia Smith.
22-1-73 - 30-1-73: Sharon Crosswaite in **Emmerdale Farm**, eps.27-30; Yorkshire; exec. prod. Peter Holman.
1975: Harriet in **Dominic**; Yorkshire; dir. Hugh David.
23-3-76: Stella in **Play for Today: The Peddler**; BBC; dir. Claude Whatham.
3-1-77: Elsie Whitworth in **The Game**; BBC Manchester; dir. Tristan de Vere Cole.
1-1-77 - 2-4-77: Leela in **Doctor Who**, Season 14; BBC; regular, 14 eps.; prod. Philip Hinchcliffe.
3-9-77 - 11-3-78: Leela in **Doctor Who**, Season 15; BBC; regular, 26 eps.; prod. Graham Williams.
13-6-79 - 15-8-79: Anne Reynolds in **The Omega Factor**; BBC Scotland; regular, 10 eps.; prod. George Gallaccio.
5-11-81 - 23-12-81: Blanche Simmons in **Tenko**, eps.3-10; BBC; regular; prod. Ken Riddington; dirs. Pennant Roberts & David Askey.
25-11-82 - 23-12-82: Blanche Simmons in **Tenko**, Series 2, eps.6-10; BBC; regular; prod. Vere Lorrimer; dir. Jeremy Summers.
6-10-84: Emma Saunders in **The Gentle Touch**: MAD DOG; LWT; dir. Peter Cregeen.
11-10-85 - 20-12-85: Susan Young in **Bergerac**, Series 4; BBC; regular, 6 eps. of 9; prod. Jonathan Alwyn.
1985: Mrs Braithwaite in **The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole**; Thames; dir. Peter Sasdy.
26-12-86: Susan Young in **Bergerac**: FIRES IN THE FALL (Christmas Special); BBC; dir. Tom Clegg.
3-1-87 - 27-2-87: Susan Young in **Bergerac**, Series 5; BBC; regular, 7 eps.; prod. Jonathan Alwyn.
1987: Tania Braithwaite in **The Growing Pains of Adrian Mole**; Thames; dir. Peter Sasdy.
26-12-87: Susan Young in **Bergerac**: TREASURE HUNT (Christmas Special); BBC; dir. Robert Tronson.
1988: Susan Young in **Bergerac**, Series 6; BBC; regular, 8 eps.; prod. George Gallaccio.
27-12-88: Susan Young in **Bergerac**: RETIREMENT PLAN (Christmas Special); BBC; dir. Edward Bennett.
14-1-90: Susan Young in **Bergerac**: A TRUE DETECTIVE; BBC; dir. Richard Bramall (cameo appearance).
12-10-90: Judy in **Casualty**: SALVATION; BBC; dir. Michael Owen Morris.
14-2-91: Irene in **The Bill**: IN CHAMBERS; Thames; dir. Michael Owen Morris.

RADIO

12-12-89: Jill in **Curious Exchange**; BBC; dir. Sue Wilson.

INTERVIEWS AND PERSONAL APPEARANCES

26-10-76: **Nationwide**, with Tom Baker; as Leela; BBC tv.
12-2-77: **Swap Shop**; BBC tv.
25-5-77: **Pebble Mill at One**; BBC tv.
8-9-77: **Pete Murray's Open House**; BBC Radio.
1977: **Star Turn**; BBC tv.
February 1978: **Points West** (local news programme); BBC tv West.
11-2-78: **Celebrity Squares**; ATV.

Savage Treatment

MARTIN WIGGINS examines how Leela's character was developed

Leela was a character part in a role that is usually filled by personalities. At the press conference called to launch her at the end of October, 1976, Philip Hinchcliffe told reporters that she was "a big departure for **Doctor Who** girls", and commented on the fact that, unlike her predecessors, she was not a bright and educated "whiz kid". More fundamentally, though, Leela was a departure in that she was an alien, and this had its effect on the nature of the part. Sarah Jane Smith, like others before her, had come from a contemporary Earth background; generically speaking, she had the same origins as her audience. This made the part highly adaptable: she could have whatever personality traits the actress and scriptwriters saw fit. In contrast, Leela was defined by her origins in an unfamiliar, primitive culture, and her behaviour had to reflect this; arbitrary quirks of personality were only the icing on the cake.

In practice, scriptwriters paid most attention to two aspects of Leela's background, her peculiarly sharp sensitivity and her primitive impulse towards violence. "Leela's senses are particularly acute," comments the Doctor in HORROR OF FANG ROCK, and it is she who first notices the drops in temperature that indicate the Rutan's approach. When the Sandminer sinks in THE ROBOTS OF DEATH, she remarks that the air smells different, and again the unusual smell of the air is the first thing she notices on leaving the Tardis in both THE SUN MAKERS and UNDERWORLD. An instinctive attention to body language gives her an unusual insight into the people around her, too: in IMAGE OF THE FENDAHL, she knows Ted Moss is lying when he says there are no ghosts in Fetchborough, and she can tell that Poul is different from the rest of the Sandminer crew in THE ROBOTS OF DEATH. Poul moves like a hunter, she says, watching all the time. She might as well have been speaking of herself, constantly tense, alert, taking in her surroundings in every detail. These are the skills of a huntress from a predatory jungle environment, tracking her quarry by its spoor, careful never to give herself away lest hunter and hunted should exchange roles.

Leela is not only a huntress but a warrior of the Sevateem, and her sensitivity extends even to knowing "the different sounds of death": in THE TALONS OF WENG-CHIANG, she can hear that Buller has been stabbed through the heart rather than killed by some other means. Trained for battle in a war community, she is always ready to use violence as an early option: in HORROR OF FANG ROCK, Lord Palmerdale is given a simple, stark choice between doing as he is told or having his heart cut out; her answer to everything, the Doctor tells her in THE INVISIBLE ENEMY, is to "knock it on the head". Strategy comes as second nature to her, and she has a respect for weapons that extends, in HORROR OF FANG ROCK, to risking her life to retrieve a dropped knife. A tribe at war has stoical attitudes to death and suffering, too: moments later in the same story, blinded by the flash of the exploding Rutan mother ship, she tells the Doctor to slay her - such is the usual fate of the Sevateem's old and crippled, the useless mouths who cannot contribute to the war effort.

What is notable here is how the scriptwriters, from Boucher and Holmes onwards, have turned the limitations inherent in a character part to positive narrative advantage. Leela the huntress and Leela the warrior has specific abilities which can be useful in a story: she can sense things that the Doctor cannot, and she can do things that the Doctor will not. In exploiting those abilities, to whatever degree, the scripts allowed her to retain her cultural background; and this in turn created further opportunities for characterization and subplots.

Like most people, Leela reacts to the things she encounters on her travels by trying to see them in terms she can understand: she assimilates the alien. This happens most often at the metaphorical tume.[72] In this respect, the character reflects the upgrading of **Doctor Who**'s target audience from children to 14-year-olds.[73] Another view is that the production aim was to cause sensation.[74]

However, there is a clash between the function of sex symbol and her characteristic of innocence.[75]

She has been seen as assertively female - 'that was the point of the way she dressed and the joke of her being a warrior' - but not sexual, in that 'she was too much of a child/animal'.[76]

The character has been seen as a liberated woman, the equal of any man.[77] In leaving the Doctor no say in whether she joins him, she exercises 'individual feminist choice'.[78] Louise Jameson: "I don't think equality even enters her mind. ... I have an aim and I go out and try to do it."[79]

However, certain things call into question the notion of her as a feminist heroine. Despite being intended for young girls to identify with, she also has a 'sexy' image for the adult male viewer,[80] and Louise Jameson has noted that in order to have a liberated woman character, it was apparently thought necessary to dress her in a leather leotard and little else.[81]

Moreover, she is portrayed as being too stupid for the Virus to take over in 'THE INVISIBLE ENEMY'.[82]

Sexism is encoded in her insofar as she is confined to the female stereotype that associates women with intuition (and men with reason); this is evident in her contrast with the Doctor.[83]

It is also evidence of double standards that she is allowed to knife people, behaviour which would never be allowed in a male hero.[84]

COSTUME

Jon Pertwee has been critical of the character, arguing that one character in a fantastical costume (the Doctor) was enough, and that anyway a woman wouldn't want to wear leathers if she had the opportunity to wear high fashion clothes.[85] Louise Jameson has denounced this argument as sexist.[86]

COMPARISON WITH PREVIOUS COMPANIONS

Graham Williams has said that, in her independence, she breaks the mould of **Doctor Who** companions.[87] Certainly at the time, she was perceived as a new departure, for several reasons. First, she is alien.[88] Secondly, she is more credible as a woman than her predecessors, especially Sarah: she has 'backbone' and isn't a screaming stereotype.[89] Michael Moorcock in particular praised her as a more positive companion. [90]

Not everyone agrees on this historiography, however. Terrance Dicks takes the view that she is simply 'developing the tradition of female independence' that began with Sarah.[91]

RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER REGULARS

She is lost between the Doctor and K-9: both represent intellect against her instinct. [92]

level of her dialogue: in UNDERWORLD, Idas moves "like a hunted animal"; the Fendahl's astral projection is comparable to the way lightning moves across the sky; and the Rutan glows "like a fungus in the forest". Sometimes it goes beyond these vivid little images of the jungle: whole societies are conceived in terms of her own. In IMAGE OF THE FENDAHL, for example, Ted Moss remarks that he was sent by the Council to cut the verges, and at once Leela takes him to be a warrior dispatched by this ruling body to deal with intruders. She jumps to such melodramatic conclusions most of all in THE TALONS OF WENG-CHIANG: London becomes "a big village" inhabited by the Tribe of Cockney; a boat on the river becomes a swamp creature about to attack; and it is inconceivable that a house like Professor Litefoot's could be without weapons to guard the approaches.

Leela misunderstands other cultures like this primarily in the two stories set in Victorian times, and, to a lesser extent, in the contemporary England of IMAGE OF THE FENDAHL. In alien and futurist settings, people seem to accept her more easily, and to ask fewer questions: perhaps it would have been too cerebral to have two unfamiliar cultures in collision with one another, but the result is that Leela often has less mileage in such stories. Victorian England suits her well because there are more rigid social conventions and taboos for her unwittingly to break: she doesn't know that one should eat with a knife and fork, not one's fingers, or that it is not done for a lady to change in front of gentlemen. No wonder a real lady of the time, Adelaide Lesage, finds her "positively grotesque".

When the Doctor first introduces Leela to Victorian England, he has to explain her away as a savage from South America, "found floating down the Amazon in a hat-box". People are rather prone to remember her in these terms; what they forget is that the Doctor's long-term aim is to teach the savage civilised values. The ongoing theme of Leela's education was one of the most important features of the concept: it reconciled a new and different regular character with the companion's traditional function as a vehicle enabling the Doctor to explain the plot to the audience. Instead of the usual question-and-answer method of line-feeding - the "What's happening, Doctor?" syndrome - the Doctor could guide Leela through his reasoning in the process of teaching her to think, exposing the plot's logical sinews in so doing. There is an especially good example in THE TALONS OF WENG-CHIANG: Litefoot and Jago have been kidnapped by the Tong, and he makes her think out why it would be better to wait for Greel at Litefoot's house rather than charge around London attempting to rescue them. The effective result may be the same as if he had just told her, but this way the process is more dramatically engaging for the audience, not to mention more satisfying for the actress.

In many respects, Leela is a very good pupil: her habitual acuteness makes her listen and think, and she has an enquiring mind, intelligent enough to be in the vanguard of the young atheist thinkers of the Sevateem. It is not long before she is reasoning out small, unobtrusively-set problems - that robots do not need chairs

"because they have no feelings", for example. The oral teaching of the Sevateem, who learn the Litany word-for-word as children, gives her a good memory for phraseology: in IMAGE OF THE FENDAHL, she speaks of the "Sonic Time Scan" long after even the Doctor has gone over to using shorter forms like "Time Scanner". This is not just a question of learning by rote: the Doctor insists on correct terminology - "main computer complex" instead of "Sacred Heart" in THE FACE OF EVIL - because it fosters an attitude of mind. "Nothing is inexplicable, only unexplained," he tells her, so he teaches her to think and speak in the terms of science rather than of superstition.

What she resists is the moral side of her education: when the Doctor tells her, in IMAGE OF THE FENDAHL, that she "really must stop killing people", her response is a baffled "Why?" It is unusual for a companion to have so abrasive a relationship with the Doctor as Leela's; and this abrasiveness is attributable as much to a two-way culture clash between them as to the off-screen acrimony between Tom Baker and Louise Jameson. Leela's cultural identity, born as she was into a tribe at war, lies in her savagery, the physical skills and attributes that distinguish Sevateem from Tesh. "I am a hunter," she tells the Doctor in THE INVISIBLE ENEMY; "You're a savage," he retorts. The two terms express different perspectives on the same thing: *savage* is just what self-consciously advanced races call less developed ones. "Perhaps," continues Leela; "I'm not ashamed of what I am." It may be that, by the Doctor's civilised standards, she is a savage, but she challenges the value-judgement inherent in the word. There is an early example of her own cultural values in THE ROBOTS OF DEATH when she remarks that the Doctor sometimes talks like a Tesh. He thanks her, but she denies the compliment: "It was not well meant." The insult is striking in itself; that it is misunderstood only increases the potency of the moment in showing the source of the friction between them.

Since the experience of Peri and the Sixth Doctor, it has been generally held that Doctors and companions should get on with one another. What makes it acceptable for Leela to bait the Doctor as she does (and sometimes for him to do the same to her) is that such moments are tempered with evidence of mutual respect and love. Neither of them is portrayed as a paragon of tolerance, so they argue often and forcefully - and in that they are an honest, if oblique, reflection of the tensions of family life. But at other times they are shown to have a high regard for one another: the Doctor trusts her acute senses, and she trusts his wisdom and experience. Constantly she accepts that "the Doctor can help" and "the Doctor will know", and though she soon learns that he is not "always right about everything", as she had thought in THE FACE OF EVIL, she continues to believe in him until proven wrong: when the Tardis lands on Fang Rock, her first remark is that she dislikes Brighton, not that his navigation is faulty.

This doubleness in her attitude to her education and to her mentor lays the foundations for a complex, developing subplot: the ascent of Leela. Philip Hinchcliffe had intended her to end up as a coutured, coiffured lady; but in THE INVASION OF TIME she is still in skins and asking for a pouch of Janis thorns amidst the gowned elegance of the Time Lords. Louise Jameson left the series because, as she has since said, she had run out of new ways to say, "What is it, Doctor?" The "big departure for Dr Who girls" ended up going nowhere.

In part, this reflected a failure in the discipline and development that the original concept demanded of the writers and production team. Few companions have offered so many opportunities, or so many limitations. It was easier to write an explanatory monologue for the Doctor than a scene in which Leela works something out, easier to keep Leela in skins than to plan the gradual stages by which she might grow out of savagery. And with the press taking an unprecedented interest in the 'sexy' leather costumes, putting her into proper clothes would lose the character her catchpenny thrill: it would disappoint the Dads. Events conspired to keep Leela in barbarism.

There was an advantage to keeping Leela a savage: if there was no requirement to develop the character beyond what had already been established, it needed only a few token references to maintain the image, and writers could devote their attention to their own stories. The result was that the character part disintegrated into a collection of disconnected fragments. Leela's education continued - she is taught to write her name in THE INVISIBLE ENEMY - but nothing came of it. Increasingly the character was underwritten and underconceived. Sometimes the details contradicted each other: in HORROR OF FANG ROCK, Leela says that her tribe slays its old, but also that its 'old ones' teach wisdom to the young. What was worse, a savage was easy for scriptwriters to patronize.

The sharp social comedy of THE TALONS OF WENG-CHIANG demands recognition of both points of view: if we feel that Leela eats meat from the bone simply because she is too backward to know better, there is no joke. Cross-cultural misunderstanding still provides some fine comedy in Season 15, such as the scene in THE INVASION OF TIME when Andred explains that Leela has no specific duties to perform at the Doctor's presidential inau-

The Doctor

Jameson: "The relationship is a bit cat and dog, with friendly banter. He puts me down, I put him down, but we still save each other's lives and have the odd hug at the end."[93] There is 'aggravation' between them.[94]

She brings out the Doctor's 'paternalistic' elements.[95] He is patronizing towards her.[96] There is much warmth in their relationship: she is evidently special to him, as we can see in her final scene.[97]

She is puzzled by the gap between his preaching and his practice over violence: thus she doesn't accept his principles, and rearms herself with Litefoot's bread-knife in 'THE TALONS OF WENG-CHIANG'.[98]

She thinks him too impractical to look after himself.[99]

Their relationship is moving.[100]

One problem is that, dramatically, she serves to normalize the Doctor by placing him in antithesis with a savage (like the viewing audience). This is especially so in his attitude to her violence, 'token resistance coupled with enjoyment of its results'.[101]

K-9

She has a 'bond of affection' with the robot dog.[102] Both of them try to put the Doctor down.[103]

He is a 'perfect foil' for her.[104] There is a contrast between her instinct and his logic.[105]

INTRODUCTION

Since she is alien, it is necessary

to establish her as a real person; this was done by presenting her family background, which is then severed. [106]

She joins the Doctor because "a life of peace and industry" does not appeal to her; she has an instinct that being with him will satisfy her desire for 'action and adventure'.[107]

DEVELOPMENT

Season 14

She is a developing character, "intelligent and impulsive enough to be in the vanguard of the young atheist thinkers in the Sevateem". Once she is stripped of her dogmatism, she begins "learning to think" (as the Doctor puts it in 'THE TALONS OF WENG-CHIANG'), and at the same time she is forced to emerge, rather more reluctantly, from a warlike and savage way of life.[108]

She is established as a "savage beauty with lightning reactions and ever- ready instincts, and loyal devotion".[109]

She is also strangely charming. [110]

Season 15

Graham Williams has been accused of betraying the original characterization by continuing with her as she was rather than developing and mellowing her as Philip Hinchcliffe had intended. The result is 'staleness and derivation', especially in 'HORROR OF FANG ROCK'.[111] She is no longer a developing character: she is treated as a stock 'sexy savage'.[112]

She grows into a parody of guration, but that it might help if she could avoid killing anyone; "I will try," says Leela, and Louise Jameson's brilliantly deadpan delivery redeems the flippancy of the moment. But too often the character is underrated by the scripts. The distinction between unintelligent and uneducated, central in Louise Jameson's interpretation of the character, was denied by Bob Baker and Dave Martin: in their work, Leela is at best "semi-intelligent" (the Doctor's assessment in UNDERWORLD), and in THE INVISIBLE ENEMY Professor Marius wonders if lack of intellect may be the reason she is immune to the virus. In HORROR OF FANG ROCK, Terrance Dicks rehashes some of the satire on Victorian social foibles of THE TALONS OF WENG-CHIANG, but Leela also serves him as a vehicle for cheap humour, misremembering "signal modulator" as "mognal sigulator" and Chinese-whispering "boiler pressure" into "boy-pressure"; the character's acute verbal attentiveness counts for nothing in these scripts. Dicks was later to be responsible for such printed fatuities as the point in **Doctor Who** and the Image of the Fendahl when Leela congratulates herself on her restraint in not killing a guard: "She was really getting quite civilised!" The line speaks volumes about the misuse of Leela by Dicks and by others: her dignity and her point of view are squeezed out of consideration, and what we are left with is not just a savage but a stupid one.

One reason why Tom Baker objected to Leela was, reportedly, that after carrying **Doctor Who** alone in THE DEADLY ASSASSIN, he didn't want to share the limelight (or the fun) with a co-star. No wonder he objected to Leela, a character who thought and acted for herself, who took a share in the story exposition, who didn't always treat the Doctor deferentially - a character, in short, who took more of the limelight than a companion usually did. Tom Baker's views notwithstanding, this was a shrewd move on the part of the production team. To be a "**Doctor Who** girl" is not an especially attractive prospect for a young actress; to bring talent to the series, things had to change. In that respect it worked: how many "**Doctor Who** girls" have come from a background of classical theatre with distinguished companies like the RSC and the Bristol Old Vic? But the erosion of the character after the first few stories pressed her back into the traditional role she had been devised to extend: a marginal, all-purpose foil for the Doctor. Leela may have begun as a bold innovation; but she ended as a mark of inertia. □

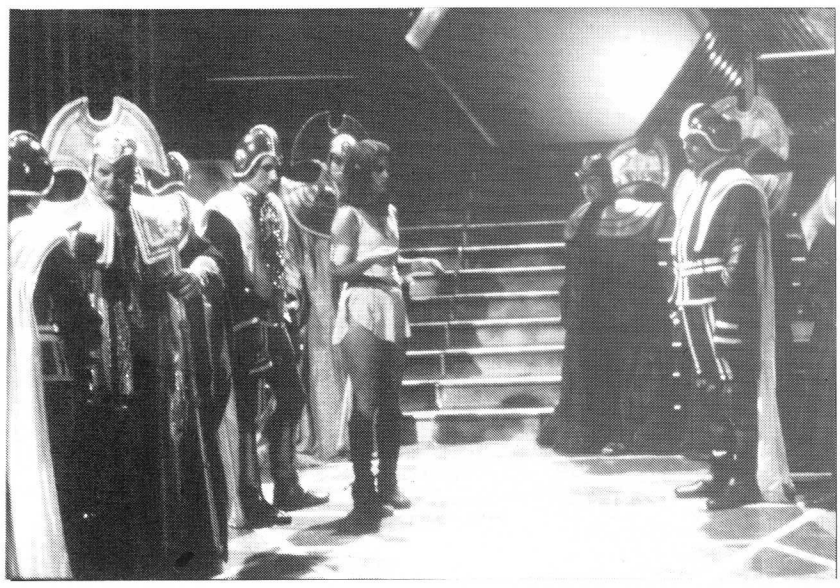
Footnotes

[1] Chris Boucher, *DWM Winter Special*, Nov 86, & *IN-VISION 19*, Oct 89
[2] Philip Hinchcliffe, *Fantasy Empire 16*, March 85
[3] Chris Boucher, *DWM Winter Special*, Nov 86, & *IN-VISION 19*,, Oct 89
[4] Holmes, *The Time Meddler 3*, Oct 81, & *DWM 100*, April 85
[5] Chris Boucher, *DWM Winter Special*, Nov 86, & *IN-VISION 19*, Oct 89
[6] Chris Boucher, *DWMWinter Special*, Nov 86, & *IN-VISION 19*, Oct 89
[7] Hinchcliffe, **Pebble Mill at One**, BBC 1. tx. 1-4-77; reprinted. *IN-VISION 23*, March 90
[8] Jameson, interviewed on **Swap Shop**, BBC 1. tx. 12-2-77
[9] Jameson, interviewed on **Pete Murray's Open House**, 8-9-77
[10] Hinchcliffe, *Daily Mail*, 27-10-76; Martin Wiggins, *Queen Bat 6*, Dec 86
[11] Hinchcliffe, *DWM Winter Special*, Nov 81, & *Fantasy Empire 16*, March 85; Jeremy Bentham, *IN-VISION 19*, Oct 89
[12] Pennant Roberts, *DWM 116*, Aug 86
[13] Jameson, *Radio Times*, Sept 78; Roberts, interviewed at **AggieCon 2**, July 84.
[14] Pennant Roberts, *DWM 116*, Aug 86
[15] Jameson, *Enterprise Incidents 18*, June 84
[16] Jameson, *Enterprise Incidents 18*, June 84
[17] Jameson, unidentified press cutting, 1977; interviewed at DWAS Convention, 6-8-77; *Radio Times*, Sept 78
[18] Jameson, interviewed on **Pete Murray's Open House**, 8-9-77
[19] Jameson, *Fan Aid 1*, March 90
[20] Martin Wiggins, *Queen Bat 6*, Dec 86
[21] Boucher, interviewed at **PanoptiCon 9**, Sept 88
[22] Eg *Daily Mail*, 27-10-76
[23] Williams, *DWB 23*, May 88
[24] John Tulloch & Manuel Alvarado, *Dr Who: The Unfolding Text*, Nov 83 (p.213)
[25] Dicks, *The Second Dr Who Monster Book*, Oct 77
[26] Jameson, *Weekend*, April 77
[27] Jan Vincent-Rudzki, *DWAS Yearbook*, May 78
[28] Chris Boucher, *IN-VISION 19*, Oct 89
[29] Jameson, interviewed at **Fan Aid North**, 2-11-85
[30] Richard Marson, *DWM 121*, Jan 87
[31] Richard Marson, *Aggedor 7*, Aug 84
[32] Pennant Roberts, *Arc of Infinity 1*, May 83
[33] Dicks, *The Invisible Enemy* novel, March 79 (p.45)
[34] Richard Marson, *Aggedor 7*, Aug 84 - eg, she can tell that the robot is not SV7
[35] Terrance Dicks, *Horror of Fang Rock* novel, March 78 (p.73)
[36] Jameson, *DWM 136*, March 88
[37] Gordon Blows, *DWAS Yearbook*, May 78
[38] Jameson, *Fan Aid 1*, March 90
[39] John Peel, *Files Magazine: Season 15*, 1986
[40] John Peel, *Oracle 2/1*, Oct 78
[41] Tim Robins, *23-11-63 6*, May
[42] Sean Gibbons, *Friends of Tom Baker 15*, Dec 78
[43] Richard Marson, *Aggeddor 7*, Aug 84
[44] Keith Miller. *Dr Who Digest 5*, May 77
[45] Tim Robins. *23-11-63 4*, Dec 78
[46] Tim Robins. *23-11-63 4*, Dec 78
[47] John Tulloch & Manuel Alvarado, *Doctorr Who: The Unfolding Text*, Nov 83 (p.213)
[48] Jameson, *Eye of Horus 9*, June 85
[49] Jameson, *MLG Megazine 21*, March 87
[50] Dicks, *The Second Doctor Who Monster Book*, Oct 77
[51] Terrance Dicks, *Horror of Fang Rock* novel, March 78 (p.19)
[52] Gordon Blows, *DWAS Yearbook*, May 78
[53] Richard Marson. *Aggedor 7*, Aug 84
[54] John Tulloch & Manuel Alvarado, *Dr Who: The Unfolding Text*, Nov 83 (p.213)
[55] *New Musical Express*, 29-1-77
[56] Justin Richards, *Fan Aid 1*, March 85
[57] John Tulloch & Manuel Alvarado, *Dr Who: The Unfolding Text*, Nov 83 (p.224)
[58] Graeme Curry, *Private Who 15*, June 89 (Example cited: TALONS OF WENG-CHIANG)
[59] Bob Baker, *Dr Who Review 3*, Dec 79
[60] Tom Baker, *DWM 92*, Aug 84
[61] David Maloney, *DWM 108*, Dec 85
[62] John McElroy, *DWAS Yearbook*, May 78; John Tulloch & Manuel Alvarado, *Dr Who: The Unfolding Text*, Nov 83 (p.213)
[63] Martin Wiggins, *Wheel in Space*, Oct 84
[64] Williams, in Tulloch & Alvarado, *Doctor Who: The Unfolding Text*, Nov 83 (p.213)
[65] Richard Marson, *DWM 121*, Jan 87
[66] Richard Marson, *Aggedor 7*, Aug 84
[67] John Peel, *Gallifrey 3*, March 78

[68] Martyn Waites, *Type 40 1*, Dec 78
[69] Dicks, *The Second Doctor Who Monster Book*, Oct 77
[70] Tom Baker, *DWM Winter Special*, Nov 86
[71] John Connors, *Tardis Special*, Dec 83
[72] Carolyn Watts, *Isis*, 18-2-77
[73] Jameson, *Titbits*, Feb 78
[74] Stanley Reynolds, *The Times*, 28-2-77
[75] Tim Robins *23-11-63 4*, Dec 78
[76] Paul Powell, *APC Net 4*, April 84
[77] Thomas Noonan, *Shada Special*, Dec 83
[78] Dicks, *Second Doctor Who Monster Book*, Oct 77
[79] Richard Marson, *Aggedor 7*, Aug 84
[80] Jameson, interviewed on **Nationwide**, BBC 1, tx 26-10-77
[81] John Tulloch & Manuel Alvarado, *Dr Who: The Unfolding Text*, Nov 83, p.213
[82] Jameson, *Enterprise Incidents 18*, June 84
[83] Stanley Reynolds, *The Times*, 10-10-77
[84] John Tulloch & Manuel Alvarado, *Doctor Who: The Unfolding Text*, Nov 83, p.213
[85] Fay Weldon, *Radio Times*, 1978
[86] Pertwee, *Jon Pertwee 3*, Aug 78; Matrix 2, May 79
[87] Jameson, *Fendahl 13*, Dec 80
[88] Williams, *Weekend*, Jan 78
[89] *Outer Space*, 1977
[90] Child interviewed on **Whose Doctor Who**, BBC 2, tx.2-4-77; John Stevenson, *Tardis 2/6*, Aug 77; Lorraine Brown, *Vortex 7*, Sept 78
[91] Michael Moorcock, *23-11-63 1*, May 78
[92] Dicks, *The Second Dr Who Monster Book*, Oct 77
[93] Tim Robins, *23-11-63 6*, May 79
[94] Jameson, unidentified press cutting, 1977
[95] Jameson, interviewed on **Nationwide**, BBC 1, tx. 26-10-77
[96] John Nathan-Turner, *Doctor Who: The Companions*, Sept 86
[97] Kevin Swann, *Eye of Horus 9*, June 85
[98] Paul Trainer, *Tardis 3/4*, Aug 78
[99] Martin Wiggins, *Citizen of the Universe*, Dec 83
[100] Terrance Dicks, *The Invasion of Time* novel, Feb 80, p.9
[101] Tim Robins, *23-11-63 4*, Dec 78
[102] Thomas Noonan, *Tardis 3/5*, Oct 78
[103] David Saunders, *Encyclopedia of the Worlds of Doctor Who, L-R*, July 90
[104] Richard Marson, *DWM 121*, Jan 87
[105] Tim Robins, *23-11-63 4*, Dec 78
[106] Tim Robins, *23-11-63 6*, May 79
[107] Mark Wyman, *Cygnus Alpha 12*, July 84
[108] Dicks, *Second Doctor Who Monster Book*, Oct 77
[109] Martin Wiggins, *Citizen of the Universe*, Dec 83
[110] Richard Marson, *Aggedor 7*, Aug 84
[111] John Peel, *Oracle 2/7*, April 79
[112] Richard Marson, *Aggedor 7*, Aug 84
[113] Martin Wiggins, *Citizen of the Universe*, Dec 83
[114] Tim Robins, *23-11-63 6*, May 79; Richard Marson, *Aggedor 7*, Aug 84
[115] John Peel, *Oracle 2/7*, April 79
[116] Paul Mount, *Tardis 3/1*, Feb 78
[117] *Frontios 4*, June 90
[118] John Peel, *Files Magazine: Season 15*, 1986
[119] Tim Robins, *23-11-63 2*, July 78
[120] Richard Marson, *Aggedor 7*, Aug 84
[121] Anthony Read, *DWM 118*, Oct 86
[122] John Peel, *Files Magazine: Season 15*, 1986
[123] John Peel, *Files Magazine: Season 15*, 1986
[124] Holmes, *DWM 100*, April 85

Leela in Doctor Who

The Face of Evil - Serial 4Q, written by Chris Boucher
The Robots of Death - Serial 4R, written by Chris Boucher
The Talons of Weng-Chiang - Serial 4S, written by Robert Holmes
Horror of Fang Rock - Serial 4V, written by Terrance Dicks
The Invisible Enemy - Serial 4T, written by Bob Baker & Dave Martin
Image of the Fendahl - Serial 4X, written by Chris Boucher
The Sun Makers - Serial 4W, written by Robert Holmes
Underworld - Serial 4Y, written by Bob Baker & Dave Martin
The Invasion of Time - Serial 4Z, written by David Agnew



her original self.[113] The writers misunderstand her and treat her as stupid; in THE INVASION OF TIME she regains a few of her old qualities.[114]

She softens, this is evident in the change of outfit and hairstyle in 'IMAGE OF THE FENDAHL'.[115]

She is uniformly characterized as 'angry'.[116] She has kept her bad temper from the preceding season, but has lost her intelligence; for example, taking her clothes off in HORROR OF FANG ROCK was stupid and out of character.[117]

She argues with the Doctor more often, and about more trivial subjects: they become 'childish squabbles'.[118]

Her decreasing role in stories reflects the toning down in this season of violence and sexuality, both elements of the character.[119]

EXIT

The production team considered killing her off (in THE SUN MAKERS, according to some sources), but decided against it for fear of traumatizing the audience.[120]

One reason why she wants to stay on Gallifrey is to continue her friendship with Rodan.[121]

She likes Andred because he respects her for her abilities. However, he is too shy to make a move, so rather than propose to him, she imposes herself on him.[122]

Robert Holmes has described the idea of marrying Leela off as a mistake.[123] □