

Van Helsing Season 5 Overcomes Production Challenges

The *Van Helsing* cast and crew shared the obstacles they had to overcome to allow season 5, the show's final run, to eventually return.

By Dave Vitagliano | July 24, 2020 |



Photo: Syfy

After witnessing the series' titular hero and devoted followers battle the vagaries of a global vampire pandemic for four years, *Van Helsing* prepares to return for its fifth and final season with a virtual appearance on a Comic-Con@Home Panel Discussion. Though short on specific plot details about the upcoming season, the cast and crew, nonetheless, give fans a behind-the-scenes look at the daunting challenges the show faces as the first television series to resume production in North America.

Of course, fans of the Syfy post-apocalyptic horror tale are most concerned with when *Van Helsing* will return to the air and whether the oft absent Vanessa (Kelly Overton) will resume her role as the chief vampire slayer after disappearing into a mysterious vortex in last season's seventh episode. Executive Producer Chad Oakes revealed that though the network likely won't make an announcement until September, its intention remains for the show to "return late fall, early winter – November, December and back on the air for season five."

Not surprisingly, for a series whose central plot threads center on a tightly bound family of vampire killers, the cast and crew of *Van Helsing* stressed the importance of the family atmosphere that enabled the team to return to work while other shows remain on the sidelines. Series lead Kelly Overton remembered her first opportunity to work with newcomer Tricia Helfer (The Dark One). "She was lovely to work with. It was a crazy scene. Going into the vortex and the abyss."

But for Helfer, who joined the show last season, the opportunity to interpret Dracula in a new light, brought a new set of obstacles. "To start a character with that scene (descent into the vortex with Vanessa), it's a little daunting. When you start a character, you kind of have to live in her a little bit."

Filming this scene also gave the younger actors a chance to learn from Overton and Helfer. Keeya King (Violet) couldn't help but notice that "watching Kelly, five months pregnant, that was epic. Here's this woman going full throttle, not holding back." Her sister in the series Nicole Muñoz (Jack) took it a step further. "It was an in-person master class."

For a series influenced by Bram Stoker's iconic characters, the chance to start filming last January in Slovakia afforded the actors rare opportunities. "To be in these old castles, you didn't have to use your imagination," Helfer explained. And though all were reticent to reveal any specific details from the new season, producer Morris Chappelaine teased that the European adventure provided "some of the most beautiful things we've ever shot."

Showrunner and executive producer Jonathan Lloyd Walker explained that even though they began shooting with scripts for the entire season in hand, the pandemic forced the writers to re-examine the stories once production resumed. After shutting down filming on March 15th, they "spent 12 weeks trying to figure out how to come back safely," Oakes said of the team now working on the show in British Columbia.

Series star Jonathan Scarfe (Axel) will not only return to help bring about an end to the vampire apocalypse, but will once again stand behind the camera directing four episodes in season five. Even though the panel wasn't able to address any direct fan questions, Oakes teased the issue of whether a series spinoff could be in *Van Helsing*'s future. "I don't want to jinx it. Never say never."

Executive producer Mike Frislev and the rest of the cast and crew of *Van Helsing* give fans hope that there is a way to defeat not only the vampires but Covid-19 as well, and we now wait for Syfy to announce a firm return date for Vanessa Van Helsing and her family of slayers.