

= A Good Man Goes to War =

" A Good Man Goes to War " is the seventh episode of the sixth series of the British science fiction television series Doctor Who , and was first broadcast on BBC One on 4 June 2011 and served as a mid @-@ series finale . The episode was written by Steven Moffat and directed by Peter Hoar .

The episode follows the cliffhanger of " The Almost People " , which reveals Amy Pond (Karen Gillan) had been operating a Flesh duplicate of herself and is in fact held in a remote location and about to give birth . Alien time traveller the Doctor (Matt Smith) and Amy 's husband Rory (Arthur Darvill) muster an army of allies and set out to find both Amy and her child , a girl named Melody Pond .

The episode reveals the recurring character River Song (Alex Kingston) is Amy and Rory 's child . River 's identity was kept in top secrecy , and only a few members of the cast and crew were issued the correct ending of the script . The beginning of the episode contained many different locations which were challenging for the production team . The main setting , Demons Run , was filmed in a military base and hangar in Cardiff . " A Good Man Goes to War " was watched by 7 @.@ 57 million viewers in the United Kingdom and received an Appreciation Index of 88 . Critical reception was mixed to positive , and the episode was nominated for the 2012 Hugo Award for Best Dramatic Presentation (Short Form) .

= = Plot = =

= = = Prequel = = =

On 28 May 2011 , immediately following the broadcast of " The Almost People " , the BBC released a prequel to " A Good Man Goes to War " . The prequel had Dorium talking to two Headless Monks . He gives them the brain of a Judoon , which contains a security protocol the monks need . Dorium tells them he knows what they are up to , as he has heard rumours around the area . He asks them , " All this , to imprison one child ? Oh , I know what you 're up to , I hear everything in this place . I even hear rumours about whose child you 've taken . Are you mad ? You know the stories about the Doctor ? The things that man has done ? God help us if you make him angry ! "

= = = Synopsis = = =

The Doctor (Matt Smith) and Rory (Arthur Darvill) have discovered Amy (Karen Gillan) , Rory 's wife and the Doctor 's companion , has been abducted from them and her place taken by an avatar made from " the Flesh " , a semi @-@ sentient being which can create near perfect replicas of other individuals , and are able to change their molecular structure to suit their surroundings or needs (" The Almost People ") , through which Amy has been experiencing events as if she were physically present . The Doctor has come to learn the real Amy is being held on a secret asteroid base called " Demon 's Run " , and collects several old debtors from across time and space to lay assault on the base , including Sontaran Commander Strax (Dan Starkey) , Silurian Madame Vastra (Neve McIntosh) and her human wife Jenny Flint (Catrin Stewart) , and the black market trader Dorium Maldovar (Simon Fisher @-@ Becker) . Rory , after collecting information on the base 's location from a Cyberman fleet , attempts to recruit River Song (Alex Kingston) from her Stormcage prison cell , but she refuses , saying she cannot be with the Doctor at this time as this battle is when he will discover her identity . Aboard the base , Madame Kovarian (Frances Barber) , who has been watching over Amy during her pregnancy and has taken her child , Melody , from her , prepares her human troops to fight the Doctor alongside the Order of the Headless Monks who reside at Demon 's Run ; the monks are literally headless and incapable of being fooled or intimidated . Human soldier Lorna Bucket (Christina Chong) , who met the Doctor as a young girl in the Gamma forests , attempts to befriend Amy , giving her a good luck token made of cloth sewn with Melody 's name on it in the language of the Gamma forests . Amy warns Bucket of the Doctor 's fury if she fights

against him .

Assisted by additional Silurian and Judoon forces , the Doctor and his allies launch a surprise attack and secure the base . The Doctor and Rory free Amy and retake Melody before Madame Kovarian can escape with her . As the Doctor celebrates , considering this his greatest achievement , Vastra and Dorium discover Kovarian has been scanning Melody and has found the child has both human and Time Lord DNA . The Doctor surmises Melody was likely conceived on Amy and Rory 's wedding night aboard the TARDIS (" The Big Bang ") , the baby 's DNA influenced by the time vortex . The rest of the Doctor 's allies regroup , and Amy and Rory tend to their daughter using an ancient wooden baby cot the Doctor claims was his own . Meanwhile , Bucket has arrived and warns the group of Kovarian 's trap , but they are too late , as the TARDIS is blocked by a forcefield . They are attacked by the Headless Monks , and several Silurians are killed immediately . Dorium is beheaded , while Strax and Bucket are fatally wounded in the battle . Meanwhile , Kovarian , well away from the base , contacts the Doctor , explaining they will be using Melody as a weapon in the war against him . She takes delight in telling him he has fallen into another trap , and " fooling [the Doctor] once was a joy , twice in the same way is a privilege " . The Doctor races to the hangar to warn his friends , unaware he is too late . At the same time , Kovarian appears to Melody in a hatch in midair , as she had to Amy 's Flesh duplicate , and tells the baby to wake up . The baby dissolves into the Flesh liquid , leaving Amy horrified and in shock .

The Doctor arrives too late to help his wounded allies , and so he and Rory console Amy . Lorna Bucket dies , remembering her childhood adventure with the Doctor . River appears , and the Doctor berates her for not helping . She tries to explain she could not have interfered in these events , and tells the Doctor what transpired was partially his fault , having been brought about by those who feared his reputation . The Doctor becomes angry and demands to know who she is . River shows the Doctor the cot , and The Doctor recognises River 's identity . Elated , he goes off on his own in the TARDIS to rescue Melody , asking River to return everyone to their proper time period . Amy , holding a gun at her , demands River explain what she said to the Doctor , and so River shows Amy and Rory the cot . Initially Amy believes River is referring to the Gallifreyan symbols engraved on it , but they cannot be read by humans even with the aid of the TARDIS translation system . Instead , River shows them Bucket 's cloth prayer leaf with Melody 's name , still in the cot . Amy tells River she knows her daughter 's name ; River tells her the people of the Gamma Forest do not have a word for " Pond " , as the only water in the forest is the river . As Amy and Rory stare at the prayer leaf , the writing is translated into English , revealing the child 's name : River Song .

= = = Continuity = = =

The Cybermen which appear in the episode are intended to be from Mondas , rather than the parallel Earth seen in " Rise of the Cybermen " / " The Age of Steel " . Rory wears the armour of a Roman centurion , as first seen in " The Pandorica Opens " / " The Big Bang " . " The Fat One and Thin One refer to the Doctor sending the Atraxi away from a planet before calling them back " for a scolding , " an incident which took place in " The Eleventh Hour . " " The only water in the forest is the river , " the phrase River uses to explain why the people of the Gamma Forest translate " Pond " to " River , " was first said to Rory by Idris in " The Doctor 's Wife . " In the seventh series opener " Asylum of the Daleks " it is revealed that Amy 's experiences on Demon 's Run rendered her infertile .

= = Production = =

= = Writing = = =

" A Good Man Goes to War " is the seventh episode of series six and also the 777th episode of Doctor Who , but there are no seven puns as the production team did not realise this until after shooting . The episode 's idea stemmed from lead writer and executive producer Steven Moffat

wondering if the Doctor , who was typically a pacifist , could be provoked enough to assemble an army . The Headless Monks were first mentioned in " The Time of Angels " , added to that episode 's script to help explain the monastic look of the Delirium Archive the Doctor and Amy were visiting . Similar troops also known as " Clerics " appeared in " The Time of Angels " / " Flesh and Stone " ; Moffat stated it seemed many armies in the future in Doctor Who were of religious origin . The possibility of the English word " doctor " originating from the Doctor was a notion made by Moffat on Usenet in 1995 .

Moffat had planned the revelation about River Song " for a long time " ; when creating Amy , he chose " Pond " for her last name to create a link . Moffat intended for the " answer to be as complicated as the question " . Moffat informed Kingston of the secrets of her character at the end of the previous series and she was not allowed to tell anyone ; Smith , Gillan , and Darvill were unaware of the identity of her character . River 's identity was kept in top secrecy ; the script read at the read @-@ through had a false ending , and only a select few were issued the real script .

The episode sees the return of several minor characters . Dorium previously appeared in " The Pandorica Opens " , while Henry and Toby Avery from " The Curse of the Black Spot " and the Spitfire pilot Danny Boy from " Victory of the Daleks " make cameos . Moffat said he planned writing in a cameo for John Barrowman to reprise his role as Jack Harkness , but Barrowman was busy filming Torchwood : Miracle Day and was unavailable . Originally the episode contained a scene with Ood Sigma , previously seen in " Planet of the Ood " , " The Waters of Mars " , and The End of Time , but it was cut from the final episode . Russell T Davies is still listed in the credits for creating the Ood .

= = = Filming and effects = = =

" A Good Man Goes to War " began shooting in mid @-@ January 2011 . The various sets seen at the beginning of the episode were challenging for the production team . A Cardiff alleyway was dressed to look like a Victorian street for a brief introduction scene with Vastra , while a hotel bar in Cardiff was used for Dorium 's nightclub . Demon 's Run was filmed in a military base and hangar in Cardiff . Steam was added to the set to give it a more spaceship @-@ like feel . The army of clerics was made larger with visual effects . The set used for the chamber Amy was kept in was the same used as the Oval Office in " The Impossible Astronaut " / " Day of the Moon " . Baby Melody Pond was played by twins , a common practice used in filming so that one twin can rest while the other is on set . The twins were three months old . Gillan and Darvill were both nervous about holding the infants , but they felt it added to their acting . Gillan stated the episode showed a different side of Amy and thought female viewers would sympathize with her .

The Headless Monks were played by stuntmen , and so the actors were free to improvise on their choreography when fighting them . For the scene in which the hoods of the Headless Monks are pulled back , a shoulderpiece was created for actors who were shorter than the ones who normally portrayed the monks . Dan Starkey , who plays the Sontaran Commander Strax , previously appeared as Sontarans in " The Sontaran Stratagem " / " The Poison Sky " (2008) and The End of Time (2010) . Neve McIntosh , who played the Silurian Warrior Vastra , previously played the sisters Alaya and Restac in " The Hungry Earth " / " Cold Blood " (2010) . Both Starkey and McIntosh underwent extensive make @-@ up and prosthetics for their characters .

= = Broadcast and reception = =

" A Good Man Goes to War " was first broadcast in the United Kingdom on 4 June 2011 on BBC One and BBC HD and in the United States on BBC America on 11 June 2011 . UK overnight figures showed the episode was watched by 5 @.@ 5 million viewers , a rise of a half a million from the previous week and coming in sixth place for the night . Final consolidated ratings showed the episode was watched by 7 @.@ 57 million viewers with an audience share of 31 % . It achieved an Appreciation Index of 88 , the joint highest for the series at time of broadcast .

== Critical reception ==

" A Good Man Goes to War " has received mixed to positive reviews . IGN 's Matt Risley rated the episode 9 out of 10 , describing it as an " epic " mid @-@ series finale which " opened with a grandstanding , wonderfully OTT pre @-@ credits tease and didn 't really let up from there " . He praised the spectacle and character development , but felt it led to a certain amount of " the odd rushed scene ... forgettable supporting [characters] , and little opportunity to develop the Headless Monks into anything particularly imposing " . Dave Golder of SFX gave " A Good Man Goes to War " four and a half out of five stars , feeling it " saved " the sixth series and offered " a satisfying slice of fantasy television which ticked lots of boxes : it featured dashing , daring storytelling which was bold and confident ; it looked fantastic , there were some hilarious lines and the performance of the star upped his wattage a couple of notches once again " . However , he was more critical of the Headless Monks and the direction of the battle at the end . Neela Debnath of The Independent was also favourable , praising the use of the cliffhanger and felt the complicated nature of the episode " draws people more into the show and gets them thinking about it " .

Gavin Fuller of The Daily Telegraph said the episode was good but lacked significant background motivation into the villains . Fuller also noted the revelation of River Song being Amy 's grown up child " is perhaps a narrative strand which would sit uncomfortably with a series where loss has often been brushed off as soon as the next couple of episodes " . However , he did have praise for the performance of Smith 's Doctor , commenting " the last few weeks have seen Matt Smith 's Doctor in a welcome generally more serious vein , which he kept up here , with leavening at the right moments where his alien lack of comfort with human emotions , although used to comic effect , rang very true , as did his awkwardness when discovering the truth about River " .

Dan Martin of The Guardian was less favourable , stating the producers " promised us a cliffhanger , and now we 're left the whole summer long to contemplate whether our favourite show can really have just dropped the ball . Oh there was plenty to love about this mid @-@ season finale , and even more to pick over . But as an hour of drama it was all over the place " . Because the episode was so fast @-@ paced with little being explained , he did not feel any emotional connection to the Anglican marines or Lorna Bucket . Unlike Fuller , Martin was not favourable to Smith 's Doctor , stating " the non @-@ event of the battle means the Doctor never really gets to show this dark side we 've been hearing so much about " and that Smith 's predecessor , David Tennant , " got angrier most weeks " . Martin did have praise for the final reveal of the episode , stating that although it had been " hidden in plain view from the very beginning as soon as it 's revealed Amy has called the baby Melody " , he was unable to make the connection and was suitably surprised . Martin later rated it the second @-@ to @-@ worst episode of the series , though the finale was not included in the list .

The episode was nominated for the 2012 Hugo Award for Best Dramatic Presentation (Short Form) , though it lost to Neil Gaiman 's episode " The Doctor 's Wife " .

Two of the new characters introduced in the episode , a 19th @-@ century crimefighter Silurian named Madame Vastra and her assistant Jenny have proven quite popular among fans , with numerous forums and SFX calling for the BBC to commission a spin @-@ off series . Steven Moffat stated in an interview that he did not have time to work on a spin @-@ off but was open to the possibility of the characters returning . Vastra and Jenny , as well as a revived Strax , were made a recurring part of the seventh series .