

= A Short Story About Love =

" A Short Story About Love " is the fifteenth episode of the fourth season of the Fox science @-@ fiction drama television series Fringe , and the series ' 80th episode overall . The series follows members of a Federal Bureau of Investigation " Fringe Division " team based in Boston , Massachusetts that uses " fringe " science and FBI investigative techniques to investigate a series of unexplained , often ghastly occurrences , which are related to mysteries surrounding a parallel universe . " A Short Story About Love " centered on a scientist extracting the pheromones of his victims , all male spouses , and using the resulting substances as a perfume to get close to their wives . While the Fringe team investigates , Peter learns more about the Observer September .

It was co @-@ written by executive producer J.H. Wyman and co @-@ producer Graham Roland . Wyman also directed , making the episode his directional debut . He sought to write a story that had love as a central motivation , and described it as " an episode that 's really close to me . " Guest stars featured in the episode included Michael Masee as the villain Anson Carr , Ona Grauer as Dianna Sutter , and Michael Cerveris as September .

First airing on March 23 , 2012 in the United States , " A Short Story About Love " was watched by an estimated 2 @.@ 87 million viewers , a decrease from the previous episode . It received mixed to positive reviews from television critics ; the villain attracted mixed reviews , and most praised the revelations surrounding a beacon that was last shown in a first season episode . In 2013 , it landed on several lists detailing the best Fringe episodes of the series .

= = Plot = =

The Fringe division tracks down a series of deaths of wives shortly after the passing of their respective husbands . Discovering traces of the husbands ' DNA on the bodies of the wives , Walter Bishop (John Noble) suspects that the killer is using pheromones taken from the husbands to get close to the wives , using the substances as a perfume . Further identifying castoreum within the pheromone mix , they identify the murderer as Anson Carr (Michael Masee) , a former and disgruntled employee of a perfume company inflicted with a rare skin disease . They arrive at Carr 's home to find another husband , already dead , in a dehydration chamber , and race to protect his wife , Dianna (Ona Grauer) . When no attack comes at the wife , Olivia Dunham (Anna Torv) realizes that her husband may have been having an affair , and races to the mistress ' home , stopping Carr before he can kill her . As he is taken away , he admits he was trying to discover what love was , scientifically , so that he could reproduce it and allow the entire world to share in it .

During the investigation , Olivia finds that the memories she is gaining from Peter Bishop 's (Joshua Jackson) original timeline are overriding her original memories . Nina Sharp (Blair Brown) becomes concerned and suggests that Olivia talk to Walter to help reverse the memory loss . During the case , in talking with the latest victim 's wife , Olivia realizes that she is truly in love with Peter . After the conclusion of the case , she admits to Nina that she will let the memory alterations continue , even if this means she will forget the times she spent with Nina during her childhood .

Simultaneous to these events , Peter has attempted to flee to New York City and points beyond to stay away from Olivia , fearing that staying near her would further erode her original memories . Walter calls him back , identifying that the Observer September (Michael Cerveris) had implanted something in Peter 's eye during the events of the previous episode . The small disc reveals a nearby address , where Peter finds a stash of September 's Observer equipment , including a GPS @-@ like device that leads him to a strange pod (as shown previously in " The Arrival ") . Peter is ultimately able to activate the pod , where September appears . September states the pod acts as a beacon , allowing him to return after the other Observers hid the universe from him . In response to Peter 's questions about trying to return to his own timeline , September states that Peter is actually home ; he was never truly erased from time as his love for his friends , and their love for him brought him back . September soon vanishes , and the pod buries itself in the ground . The episode closes as Peter and Olivia rejoin each other with a passionate kiss .

== Production ==

" A Short Story About Love " was co-written by executive producer J.H. Wyman and co-producer Graham Roland . Wyman stated that the episode had " scary " and " romantic " themes , and as the title indicated , was " all about motivation . Love is a great motivator , for good and evil . " He and fellow executive producer Jeff Pinkner believed the episode was " kind of like a perfect version of what a Fringe show is , " because it depicted " fringy " elements in the form of killings while using love and relationships as central plot drivers . Wyman added that it was a " culmination of what I could describe as ? it ? s a direction where we ? ve been heading and I think the fans will be really happy and satisfied . "

Co-showrunner Wyman also served as episode director , marking his television directorial debut . He noted his love of the experience , as it permitted him to grow closer with the series ' actors and " actually work with them on a level that [he hadn 't] before and really get down there with them . " Wyman was originally supposed to direct several episodes the previous year and earlier in the season , but found he was too busy . He explained , " Then an episode was coming up that we were thinking about writing and I really felt close to it . The opportunity came up where somebody had fallen out and I felt that this is the perfect time because everything was completely under control . It allowed me to go and do it . It 's an episode that 's really close to me . It 's about love and it 's about all the great things that we talk about on Fringe . "

Actor Joshua Jackson was pleased that Wyman directed , as he found it nice to have " somebody who 's in the writer 's room day in and day out and knows the show so intimately , come in and jump behind the camera and are just a font of information . " Seth Gabel was also happy with Wyman 's direction , as the two were able to discuss themes in the script as well as how Wyman planned to shoot certain scenes . Gabel remarked that the director " wanted to do this fun thing that actually related to Lincoln 's feelings about Olivia and how they were changing based on everything that 's been happening . We played so many things that weren 't in the script , that were between the lines in just looks , and he told me how he was gonna shoot it so I could really play with what the character was thinking and know that it would actually be seen in the end , and not end up on the cutting room floor because it wasn 't in the script . "

Guest actor Michael Massee appeared as Anson Carr , the episode 's villain . Wyman believed that the character was " terrifying " and " definitely one of the most frightening bad guys we ? ve had . " Other guest stars included Michael Cerveris as September and Ona Grauer as Dianna Sutter . The episode featured two pieces of music : " White Rabbit " by Jefferson Airplane and " The Friends of Mr Cairo " by Jon & Vangelis .

== Reception ==

=== Ratings ===

" A Short Story About Love " was first broadcast on March 23 , 2012 in the United States on the Fox network after a month hiatus . An estimated 2 @. @ 87 million viewers watched the episode , marking a decrease in viewership from the previous episode . " A Short Story About Love " earned a ratings share of 0 @. @ 9 / 3 among adults aged 18 to 49 , meaning that it was seen by 0 @. @ 9 percent of all 18- to 49 @- @ year @- @ olds , and 3 percent of all 18- to 49 @- @ year @- @ olds watching television at the time of broadcast . Among total viewers it placed in third for the night and second among adults .

=== Reviews ===

The episode received mixed to positive reviews from television critics . IGN 's Ramsey Isler rated " A Short Story About Love " with 8 @. @ 5 out of 10 , an indication of a " great " episode . While he criticized the episode 's " mystery @- @ of @- @ the @- @ week " for detracting from the episode 's

other storylines , Isler thought it improved when it began depicting Walter 's investigation of September . Other stated highlights of the episode included Noble 's performance and the reappearance of the beacon from an early first season episode , the latter of which he noted , " Fans have been wondering for years what that damn thing was and how it played into the story . " Isler concluded by observing that the story became " a little sappy " but was useful in " neatly " resolving the " ' is he or isn 't he ? ' drama that marked this season and set up the show to move onto the bigger task of crafting what could be the end of everything Fringe . " Andrew Hanson of the Los Angeles Times was pleased that little was revealed of the villain 's backstory , but believed the episode really improved once it focused on Peter exploring September 's apartment . Like Isler , Hanson was happy to see the beacon again , explaining that he " love [s] any time Fringe reaches back to the crazy science of Season One . "

Writing for The A.V. Club , Noel Murray gave the episode a B. He had an issue with the episode " reducing ' love ' to an abstraction , for the sake of making it into a plot @-@ driver , " but noted that " at least ' A Short Story About Love ' confines those wince @-@ inducing reductions to a couple of short scenes , and in service of propelling this season ? s ' displaced Peter ' arc to a place that it needs to be . " SFX 's Dave Bradley was more critical of the episode , opining that the love premise failed to " completely satisfy , at least not on a rational level " and that the " orange " universe explanation felt like " hand @-@ waving , a cheeky attempt to untangle the series ? continuum without any further universe @-@ hopping . " Bradley also noted that the plot surrounding the villain , a " mad scientist MacGuffin , " seemed rushed and the script and direction " jarringly unsubtle " , but that the episode featured good performances with " great details in every scene " .

Jeff Jensen of Entertainment Weekly named " A Short Story About Love " the fifteenth best episode of the series , explaining " The timeline reboot of season 4 frustrated some fans , but the premise yielded several truly cool capture @-@ the @-@ imagination ideas that made for provocative drama , most notably Fringe 's most romantic hour ... The fact that the episode also featured one of the show 's seediest creepazoids ? a serial killer who murdered men for their pheromones so he could make a perfume that allowed him to seduce their grieving female significant others ? was a bonus . lcky , but bonus . " Cory Barker of TV.com named the episode the 17th best of the series , saying , " Fringe has never been afraid of coming up with intimate , emotionally based ? and sometimes very hokey ? resolutions for its grand plots . Whatever you think about the choices the writers made in Season 4 , it 's hard to deny the emotional wallop this episode delivered . "