

= Love & Monsters =

" Love & Monsters " is the tenth episode of the second series of the British science fiction television series Doctor Who , first broadcast on BBC One on 17 June 2006 . It was written by executive producer and lead writer Russell T Davies and directed by Dan Zeff .

The series typically follows alien time traveller the Doctor (in his tenth incarnation , played by David Tennant) and his companion (s) (at this time Rose Tyler , played by Billie Piper) , who travel around time and space in a machine called the TARDIS . However , " Love & Monsters " follows a contemporary ordinary man named Elton Pope (Marc Warren) who becomes obsessed with a man called the Doctor and his strange blue box , and joins a group of like @-@ minded people in hopes of finding him . But when the mysterious Victor Kennedy (Peter Kay) joins the group , the fun stops and Elton discovers a darker side to his interests . Kennedy ultimately turns out to be a creature called the Abzorbaloff .

Due to the addition of a Christmas special in the production schedule , an episode had to be " double banked " with another story (in this case " The Impossible Planet " and " The Satan Pit ") for production to finish on time . With " Love & Monsters " , Davies was able to tell a story from a different character 's point of view to allow for only a small appearance by Tennant and Piper . The " Doctor @-@ lite " and " companion @-@ lite " structure has since continued in the programme . The Abzorbaloff was also incorporated into the episode by necessity , as it was the winner of a Blue Peter children 's competition to design a Doctor Who monster . " Love & Monsters " was watched by 6 @. @ 66 million viewers in the United Kingdom and was met with divisive reception by critics and fans . Some praised the complexities of the script , while others felt it was a parody or strayed into offensive humour . Kay and the Abzorbaloff also attracted divided opinions .

= = Plot = =

The episode is presented as an excerpt from the video diary of Elton Pope (Marc Warren) , a young man who is describing his encounters with the Doctor . Elton 's on @-@ camera narration forms a present @-@ day frame story to a series of flashbacks related to the Doctor . Elton recalls a chance meeting with the Doctor and remembers having seen the same man as a child in his living room one night . On the internet he discovers others , including Ursula Blake (Shirley Henderson) , who have also reported similar experiences with the Doctor . Elton and Ursula form a group known as LINDA , the " London Investigation ' N ' Detective Agency " . They are joined by three other people : Bridget (Moya Brady) , Bliss (Kathryn Drysdale) , and Mr Skinner (Simon Greenall) . LINDA meets in a library basement to discuss their experiences , but soon their meetings become more social in nature .

One day a man by the name of Victor Kennedy (Peter Kay) interrupts a meeting and points out that LINDA has lost focus . He reinvigorates the group 's efforts to locate the Doctor by teaching them spying techniques . Elton is given the task of getting close to Rose Tyler 's mother Jackie (Camille Coduri) . He manages to meet Jackie at a laundrette and is invited to her apartment . She tries and fails to seduce him , but when she finds a picture of Rose in Elton 's jacket she demands that he leave her alone . Meanwhile , Bridget and Bliss disappear from the group unexpectedly . Victor explains their absence by saying that they quit to move on with their lives . After a meeting Elton , Ursula and Mr Skinner stage a walkout . Victor persuades Mr Skinner to remain behind , but Elton and Ursula leave . Ursula realises she forgot her phone , and she returns with Elton only to discover that Victor is an alien being known as the Abzorbaloff . They see the faces of the former LINDA members and other victims protruding from Victor 's body . Victor manages to absorb Ursula , but Elton gets away from him .

Victor chases Elton into a dead end alley . Before the Abzorbaloff can touch him , the TARDIS materializes and the Doctor and Rose step out . Rose begins to chastise Elton for disturbing her mother Jackie before she sees that something is wrong . The Abzorbaloff tries to absorb Elton but the already absorbed members of LINDA use their willpower to hold back the Abzorbaloff 's body . The Abzorbaloff drops its cane , which Elton breaks at Ursula 's instruction . The cane contained a

field generator that kept the Abzorbaloff in control of its body , without it the creature dissolves into the Earth . The Doctor explains that he was at Elton 's house years ago tracking an elemental shade , but he was too late and the shade killed Elton 's mother .

In Elton 's concluding narrative , Ursula 's voice is heard and it is revealed that the Doctor was able to use his sonic screwdriver to keep Ursula 's essence alive . Ursula 's face is alive in a piece of paving stone that Elton keeps in his room . Elton explains that he and Ursula have an unconventional relationship and even have a love life .

= = = Continuity = = =

This episode contains flashbacks to the events of " Rose " , " Aliens of London " , and " The Christmas Invasion " ; some footage was reused , but most was restaged to be from Elton 's point of view . Rose remarks on the Abzorbaloff as being a little bit Slitheen @-@ ish in appearance ; the Abzorbaloff states that he comes from Clom , the sister planet of the Slitheen homeworld Raxacoricofallapatorius . Victor Kennedy mentions that Rose 's Torchwood files are missing because they were corrupted by a " Bad Wolf virus " , referencing both the recurring phrases of the first and second series . This line was included to establish why Torchwood does not know what Rose looks like later in " Army of Ghosts " . The copy of The Daily Telegraph that the Abzorbaloff reads has the headline " Saxon leads polls with 64 percent " . This is the first appearance of the name of " Mr Saxon " , a feature of a story arc in the third series . " That LINDA lot " is later mentioned by the Fifth Doctor in the Children in Need special " Time Crash " .

= = Production = =

Unlike the vast majority of Doctor Who stories , " Love & Monsters " has only nominal appearances by the TARDIS crew , and is not from their point of view . This was a production necessity because the Christmas special had increased the number of episodes to produce from 13 to 14 . As such , the production was " double banked " with " The Impossible Planet " / " The Satan Pit " so Tennant and Piper could film those episodes while another unit worked on " Love & Monsters " . The " Doctor @-@ lite " (and sometimes " companion @-@ lite ") structure has continued as a tradition , producing episodes such as " Blink " (2007) , " Turn Left " (2008) , and " The Girl Who Waited " (2011) .

As such , executive producer and writer Russell T Davies had to come up with a story that had a good reason to keep the Doctor and Rose out . Davies was inspired by the Buffy the Vampire Slayer episode " The Zeppo " and the Star Trek : The Next Generation episode " Lower Decks " , both of which focused on atypical characters . Davies described the episode , " It 's an experimental script . Not so experimental that people will run away screaming from Saturday @-@ night BBC1 , because you can experiment too much . People still want a bit of a monster and a bit of a thrill and a bit of the Doctor , so it still delivers as normal Doctor Who . But just as you think you know everything this programme can do , this puts a little bit of spin on it . " The episode had the working title of " I Love the Doctor " . The acronym " LINDA " was previously used on the British children 's television programme Why Don 't You ? , which featured the " Liverpool Investigation ' N ' Detective Agency " . Russell T Davies worked on the series for some years .

According to Davies , in an early draft , Elton would have been witness to more events in Doctor Who history : in this draft , Elton 's third birthday party was evacuated because of the Dalek invasion of Shoreditch (Remembrance of the Daleks) , his mother was killed by a plastic daffodil (Terror of the Autons) instead of an elemental shade , and he also would have been one of those who saw the Loch Ness Monster rising from the Thames (Terror of the Zygons) . Prior to the revival of Doctor Who , Davies had considered pitching this story idea to Doctor Who Magazine as a comics story . Davies had also considered making the viewpoint character of the story a woman but felt that he already had enough focus on female guest characters that series . Davies wanted Elton to be a " normal guy " and not geeky with a " funny voice " . It is noted Elton 's memory may not be entirely reliable , so whether events in the episode happened the way he remembers them is debatable .

Another necessity the episode had to fulfill was to include the winner of Blue Peter's "Design a Doctor Who Monster" competition. The winner, the Abzorbaloff was designed by nine-year-old William Grantham. Davies said of the monster, "I thought the Abzorbaloff was brilliant. It touches people, absorbs them and their face actually appears in the body? terrifying." According to producer Phil Collinson, William was disappointed with the rendering of the monster because he had envisaged it being "the size of a double-decker bus", but the production team was never informed of this. Peter Kay had written a letter to Davies after the new series began in June 2005, and Davies replied to him in September offering a guest spot in an episode. Kay was originally offered the part of Elton, but he felt the "UFO spotter type" was too similar to his character on Coronation Street and much preferred playing the "baddie". The creature that Elton sees at the start of the episode is credited as the "Hoix". Davies notes in the commentary that the name was invented only after the episode was shot and a name was needed for the credits.

Director Dan Zeff said of the tone the production team wished to capture, "Working with an inspirational design team, we wanted to emphasise a melancholy feel, an emptiness in the world around our characters? big urban spaces that once may have been full of life, but now lay abandoned, rusting, decayed. Amidst this, Elton and his fragile group of friends would almost feel cast adrift? increasingly vulnerable as they are led astray by the sinister Victor Kennedy." The episode features the songs "Mr. Blue Sky", "Don't Bring Me Down", and "Turn to Stone" by Electric Light Orchestra (ELO), Elton's favorite band.

= = Broadcast and reception = =

"Love & Monsters" was first broadcast in the United Kingdom on BBC One on 17 June 2006. Overnight ratings for the UK were 6.22 million, a 38.3% audience share. Its final audience figure was 6.66 million making it the 15th most watched programme of the week. The episode gained an Appreciation Index score of 76. This episode was released on a basic DVD together with "The Impossible Planet" and "The Satan Pit" on 7 August 2006. It was then rereleased as part of the Complete Second Series boxset on 20 November 2006.

"Love & Monsters" is noted for having a divided reception. Nick Setchfield of SFX rated the episode 4.5 out of 5, noting how it "finally gives Doctor Who a whole new vocabulary as a television programme." He wrote, "This may be Russell T Davies's smartest, funniest script. It's certainly the warmest, and somehow it feels like the most personal." While Setchfield was not a fan of Kay, he found his performance in this episode funny. IGN's Ahsan Haque gave the episode a score of 9.5 out of 10, particularly praising the dialogue. However, he felt that some of the sadder aspects "seemed out of place in what should have been a purely light-hearted comedic episode". Slant Magazine reviewer Ross Ruediger was positive towards "Love & Monsters", saying that "there's no reason the series can't do something this quirky and beautiful when an inspired mind conjures up such a scenario." Ruediger commented on the truths of meeting other fans on the Internet and praised the depth of Jackie's character.

In 2011, SFX named "Love & Monsters" as one of the best Sci-Fi TV Mockumentaries, saying that it worked as an example of the genre and was not too bad on rewatch. The article noted that criticisms of the episode ranged from "Kay's overacting and the silly Slitheen-esque monster to annoyance at how, well, lame the members of LINDA are." Louisa Pearson of The Scotsman noted that hardcore fans would dislike the comedy and the "panto" performance of Kay, but commented, "It's true, this episode came close to being a spoof, but it was actually quite nice to have a rest from the Doctor. Even saving the world gets boring sometimes." Arnold T Blumburg of Now Playing gave the episode a grade of D-. He was positive towards the first 30 minutes, which he described as a "touching little tale" with interesting characters, but called the final 10 minutes "a juvenile attack on the audience's intelligence and emotions" that ruined the episode with "a laughable monster and offensive humor at exactly the wrong moment". Digital Spy's Dek Hogan criticised Kay's performance, calling the Abzorbaloff "a marvellous idea and it's a pity his creativity was absorbed by a turn from a visiting comedian". In a review of the series, Stephen Brook of The Guardian stated that he "hated" the episode, describing it as a "parody of Doctor Who fans". The

scene where Elton says he and Ursula have " a bit of a love life " was criticised by some commentators , who felt that the resultant implication of having oral sex with a paving slab was unsuitable for Doctor Who 's large family audience ; others , however , dismissed this dialogue as a harmless joke that children would not understand . " Love & Monsters " was placed in 153rd position in Doctor Who Magazine 's Mighty 200 reader survey in 2009 , which ranked every Doctor Who story to that point in order of preference .