

= The Girl in the Fireplace =

" The Girl in the Fireplace " is the fourth episode of series two of the British science fiction television series Doctor Who . It was first broadcast on 6 May 2006 on the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) , was directed by Euros Lyn and is the only episode in the 2006 series written by Steven Moffat . Sophia Myles guest @-@ starred as the historical figure Madame de Pompadour . The episode is inspired by Audrey Niffenegger 's novel The Time @-@ Traveler 's Wife .

In the episode , the Doctor ? an alien time @-@ traveller played by David Tennant ? and his companion Rose Tyler (Billie Piper) and Mickey Smith (Noel Clarke) find time windows on a 51st @-@ century spaceship leading to 18th @-@ century France and a group of clockwork androids using them to stalk Madame de Pompadour throughout her life .

The programme 's executive producer Russell T Davies , who conceived the idea while researching for Casanova , described the episode as a love story for the Doctor . The episode was filmed in England and Wales . It was well received by most critics , was nominated for a Nebula Award and won the 2007 Hugo Award for Best Dramatic Presentation , Short Form .

= = Plot = =

The TARDIS materialises on a seemingly derelict spaceship drifting in space . The Doctor , Rose , and Mickey explore the ship and are puzzled to find an eighteenth @-@ century French fireplace . When he looks through the fireplace , the Doctor sees a young girl and asks who she is . She replies that her name is Reinette and that she lives in Paris in 1727 . The Doctor deduces that the fireplace is a time window , a device that allows direct access to another time and place . The Doctor steps through the time window and arrives in Reinette 's bedroom only to find that months have passed there . He discovers a ticking humanoid wearing eighteenth century clothing and a jester 's mask hiding under Reinette 's bed . After it threatens him with a saw @-@ like device that slides out of its arm , the Doctor tricks the creature into returning through the time window to the spacecraft , where he and his companions learn that it is actually an intricate clockwork android . The android teleports away , and the Doctor warns Mickey and Rose not to go looking for it . The Doctor returns to Reinette 's bedroom while Mickey and Rose arm themselves and go looking for the android . Returning to Reinette 's bedroom , the Doctor discovers that she is now a young woman . She flirts with the Doctor and they kiss , before she leaves to join her mother . The Doctor then realises that she is Madame de Pompadour , the mistress of King Louis XV .

Back on the ship , the Doctor and his companions find several additional time windows and learn that each leads to a different moment in Madame de Pompadour 's life . In one of them , the Doctor sees another clockwork creature menacing her and steps through the window to defend her . The Doctor tells Reinette to give the android orders , and it obeys her . It tells her that it is a repair android and that their spaceship was damaged in an ion storm . The androids did not have the parts necessary to repair the ship and killed the crew to use their organs for parts . The androids need one last part ; Reinette 's brain . Confused , the Doctor creates a telepathic link with Reinette , but is startled to find that she can also see into his mind . The androids capture Rose and Mickey and are about to harvest them for parts when the Doctor rescues them . The Doctor discovers that the androids plan to open a time window to Reinette 's life at the age of 37 , believing that her brain at that age will be compatible with the ship 's systems . The clockwork androids appear at a costume ball and take Reinette and her guests hostage . At one end of the room is an enormous mirror , which is actually a time window . The Doctor and his companions can see through it , but they cannot enter without smashing the window and breaking the connection as the androids locked it after the Doctor 's previous interruptions .

The androids threaten to decapitate Reinette , but the Doctor on horseback crashes through the mirror to save her . The androids give up and shut down when the Doctor tells them that they now cannot return to their ship to finish the repairs . Reinette tells the Doctor that she had her fireplace moved to Versailles in the hope that he would return . The Doctor finds that the fireplace is still an operating time window and uses it to return to the spaceship . He tells Reinette to pack a bag and

prepare to leave . The Doctor returns to the fireplace seconds later but discovers that seven years have passed in Reinette 's time . King Louis XV finds the Doctor , tells him that Reinette has died and gives him a letter in which Reinette expresses her hopes for the Doctor 's quick return and confesses her love for him . The Doctor returns to the TARDIS and watches the time windows close before leaving the ship . The TARDIS crew muse about the reasons the androids wanted Madame de Pompadour 's brain to complete their repairs , and the Doctor conjectures that the ship 's memory banks were damaged by the ion storm . When the TARDIS dematerializes , a portrait can be seen stating the birth and death date of Madame de Pompadour . As the episode ends , the lifeless ship drifts through space ; its name is SS Madame de Pompadour .

= = = Continuity = = =

While the episode appears to follow immediately from the previous episode " School Reunion " , Moffat says in the DVD audio commentary that when he wrote " Girl in the Fireplace " he had not yet read the end of " School Reunion " , hence the lack of Rose 's continuing animosity shown towards Mickey after he joins the TARDIS crew . After reading the Doctor 's mind , Reinette says " Doctor who ? " , a reference both to the series ' title and to the long @-@ running mystery about the Doctor 's actual name . She also says that it is " more than just a secret " , but does not elaborate further . Moffat said that he added the dialogue because he believes that because the Doctor does not tell even his closest companions his name , there must be a " dreadful secret " about it . Moffat also says that he did not include the word " Torchwood " (an " arc word " in the second series) in the script because Davies did not ask him to do so .

= = Production = =

= = = Writing and characters = = =

In 2004 , Russell T Davies ? Doctor Who 's executive producer ? was responsible for Casanova , a serial set in the 18th century . During his research , Davies become fascinated by Madame de Pompadour and wanted to include her in a story which also involved The Turk ? a clockwork man who played chess around the same period and which was later revealed to be a hoax . In early 2005 , Moffat ? who had written " The Empty Child " and " The Doctor Dances " for the series ? was assigned to write the story . Euros Lyn was later assigned to direct it . Sophia Myles stated in an interview on Doctor Who Confidential that she did not have to audition for the role of Madame de Pompadour , she was offered it .

In an interview with The Independent , Russell T Davies said the episode is " practically a love story for the Doctor ... It 's very understated , very beautifully done , but it 's nonetheless a Time Lord falling in love and Rose 's reaction to him falling in love with someone else . " Moffat was inspired by Audrey Niffenegger 's novel The Time @-@ Traveler 's Wife , though the episode 's structure is different from that of the novel . During the production , Moffat considered " Madame de Pompadour " , " Every Tick of My Heart " , " Reinette and the Lonely Angel " and " Loose Connection " for the episode 's title . " The Girl in the Fireplace " was planned as the second episode of the 2006 series , however when Davies realised how experimental it had become in Moffat 's hands , he decided to move it to fourth in the running order between " School Reunion " and " Rise Of The Cybermen " .

While Moffat was creating the clockwork automata he first decided to hide their faces with wigs , but when producer Phil Collinson told him this would severely limit camera angles , and that it could appear comical , the androids were given carnival masks to wear . Neill Gorton of Millennium Effects designed the androids and they were constructed by Richard Darwen and Gustav Hoegan .

= = = Filming = = =

Filming for the episode took place between 12 and 27 October 2005 . The scenes set in Versailles

were filmed elsewhere ; the first scenes filmed in which Reinette 's body is taken away from city were filmed at Culverhouse Cross in Cardiff , Madame de Pompadour 's sitting room and bedroom scenes were filmed at Tredegar House ? a 17th @-@ century mansion in Newport , Dyffryn Gardens in the Vale of Glamorgan was used as the set for the palace gardens , and Ragley Hall near Alcester was used for the ballroom scenes . The scenes on the spaceship , which were shot by the second unit , were also filmed in Newport .

Two horses were used in the episode ; one was used for the scenes in close quarters on the spaceship , and another for jumps . According to Doctor Who Confidential , the horse was not allowed into the ballroom for the climactic scene . Thus , the elements of the Doctor riding through the mirror , the horse , the mirror breaking and the reactions of the extras in the ballroom had to be filmed separately and then composited together with chroma key . Tennant 's head was superimposed upon that of the stunt rider in post @-@ production . Initially , the programme 's staff considered the use of special effects but realised this would be very expensive and rejected the idea .

= = Broadcast and reception = =

" The Girl in the Fireplace " was first broadcast in the United Kingdom on BBC One on 6 May 2006 . The final rating for the episode was 7 @.@ 90 million , making it the thirteenth most watched programme on British television that week . It received an Appreciation Index of 84 , considered " excellent " . The episode 's script was nominated for the 2006 Nebula Award , and " The Girl in the Fireplace " won the 2007 Hugo Award for Best Dramatic Presentation , Short Form .

Writing for IGN , Ahsan Haque praised Tennant and Myles ' acting , the episode 's pacing and the " extremely touching " story . He wrote that " with a little more attention to temporal details , this episode would have been considered as one of the series ' greatest moments " . In particular , Haque wrote that the episode would have worked better had the writers explained more precisely why the Doctor could not use the TARDIS to visit Madame Pompadour before she died . Metro said the clockwork androids were one of the " most memorable villains " while The Guardian 's Daniel Martin said , " The Girl in the Fireplace " is " one of the most acclaimed episodes from the Davies era " .

Ross Ruediger from Slant Magazine wrote that the episode " may be the crowning achievement " of Doctor Who 's second series . Ruediger called it an episode " for the new millennium " as he thought it " could never exist under the banner of the old series . " He called it a " thought @-@ provoking piece " , and wrote that episodes like this could not be broadcast every week since it " would be too taxing on the average viewer 's brain " . IGN 's Matt Wales ranked " The Girl in the Fireplace " the third best Tennant Doctor Who story , calling it " one of Doctor Who 's most touching adventures " .

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