

= The Doctor 's Wife =

" The Doctor 's Wife " is the fourth episode of the sixth series of the British science fiction television series Doctor Who , which was broadcast on 14 May 2011 in the United Kingdom , and later the same day in the United States . It was written by Neil Gaiman and directed by Richard Clark .

In the episode , alien time traveller the Doctor (Matt Smith) and his companions Amy Pond (Karen Gillan) and Rory Williams (Arthur Darvill) receive a distress call from a living Time Lord , though all other members of the Doctor 's race were thought to be extinct . However , they discover that the call was bait to lure the Doctor to an asteroid outside the universe , where previously the energy of Time Lords ' TARDISes has been consumed by an entity called the House (voiced by Michael Sheen) . The matrix of the Doctor 's TARDIS is removed and placed in the body of a woman named Idris (Suranne Jones) , who proceeds to help them escape .

" The Doctor 's Wife " was originally intended to be produced as part of the previous series , but was pushed back due to budget constraints . Gaiman revised the script many times , having to add and remove characters and events as production saw fit . The episode was filmed in the autumn of 2010 and featured a makeshift TARDIS control room which was the design from a winner of a contest on the children 's programme Blue Peter . The episode was seen by 7 @. @ 97 million viewers in the UK and was met with positive reviews from critics . The episode won the 2011 Ray Bradbury Award for Outstanding Dramatic Presentation and the 2012 Hugo Award for Best Dramatic Presentation , Short Form .

= = Plot = =

= = = Synopsis = = =

While in deep space , the Doctor (Matt Smith) and his companions , Amy (Karen Gillan) and Rory (Arthur Darvill) , receive a communication cube containing a distress call from a Time Lord . Tracing the source of the call to a rift leading outside the universe , the Doctor deletes parts of the TARDIS to generate enough energy to traverse the rift . After landing in a junkyard on a solitary asteroid , the TARDIS shuts down and its matrix disappears . The three travellers explore the asteroid and meet its strange inhabitants : Uncle , Auntie , a green @- @ eyed Ood called Nephew , and an excited young woman named Idris . Idris fawns all over the Doctor , whom she calls " my thief " and then bites him . While Nephew locks up Idris , Amy and Rory return to the TARDIS . The Doctor follows the distress signal and finds a cabinet containing a large number of message cubes . Upon further investigation of Uncle and Auntie , the Doctor finds they are constructed of body parts from other beings , including Time Lords . They are controlled by the asteroid , called House , which is sentient and able to possess other technology around it . House led the Doctor there and removed the TARDIS 's matrix , initially intending to consume its Artron energy . Upon learning that the Doctor is the last Time Lord and that no more will ever arrive , House transfers itself into the TARDIS to escape from the rift . Amy and Rory are trapped inside as the House @- @ controlled TARDIS dematerialises .

The Doctor learns that Idris contains the personality of the TARDIS ' matrix and that they can talk to each other for the first time . Without House 's support meanwhile , Uncle and Auntie die , and Idris 's body only has a short time before it too will fail . Idris reveals that House had stranded many TARDISes before , and that its universe is hours away from collapsing . The Doctor and Idris work together to construct a makeshift TARDIS from scraps , and then pursue House .

Aboard the Doctor 's TARDIS , House threatens to kill Amy and Rory . He plays with their senses as they try to flee through the corridors , and then sends Nephew after them . Idris makes a psychic connection with Rory to give him directions to a secondary control room , where he and Amy are able to lower the TARDIS 's shields without House 's interference . This allows the Doctor to land the makeshift console in the secondary control room , which atomises Nephew . House deletes the secondary control room as he prepares to break through the rift , which the Doctor anticipates . The

TARDIS 's safety protocols transfer them to the main control room , where the dying Idris releases the TARDIS 's matrix back to the TARDIS , destroying House . A remnant of the TARDIS 's matrix , in Idris ' body , sadly states that she will not be able to speak to the Doctor again but will be there for him . Idris 's body then disappears as the TARDIS matrix is fully restored .

The Doctor installs a security field around the matrix to prevent it from being compromised again . Rory tells the Doctor that some of Idris 's final words were " the only water in the forest is the river " , which the Doctor doesn 't understand . After Amy and Rory leave to find a new bedroom (the original having been purged by House) , the Doctor talks to the TARDIS , and in response a nearby lever moves on its own , sending the TARDIS to its next destination .

= = = Continuity = = =

The Doctor refers to altering the control room 's appearance as changing the desktop theme , as the Fifth Doctor does in " Time Crash " . Like the Third Doctor in Inferno , the Doctor and Idris operate a TARDIS console without an outer TARDIS shell . The Doctor also jettisons TARDIS rooms to create thrust , as he had done previously in stories such as Logopolis and Castrovalva . The Doctor admits he killed all of the Time Lords , alluding to the events of the Time War . In The War Games , the Second Doctor contacted the Time Lords using a cube similar to those seen in this episode . The Doctor refers to himself as " a madman with a box " , reprising Amy 's and his own description of himself in " The Eleventh Hour " . The Doctor refers to Nephew as " another Ood I failed to save " ; in " The Satan Pit " the Doctor commented that he did not have time to save the Ood . Idris ' cryptic words , " the only water in the forest is the river " , are explained in the mid @-@ series finale , " A Good Man Goes to War " .

= = Production = =

= = = Writing = = =

The episode was written by Neil Gaiman . After Steven Moffat replaced Russell T Davies as the showrunner of Doctor Who , being a fan of Gaiman 's blog , Moffat met with Gaiman and Gaiman asked to write an episode . In an interview Gaiman stated " I came up with something that was one of those things where you thought that nobody 's done that before . " The episode was originally titled " The House of Nothing " before Gaiman sat down to write it , but that was changed to " Bigger on the Inside " . This title remained until about six weeks before the episode aired , but the crew was beginning to worry that " Bigger on the Inside " would give away the surprise that Idris was the TARDIS , so it was changed . " The Doctor 's Wife " was also a fake title attached to the 1984 serial The Caves of Androzani ; then @-@ producer John Nathan @-@ Turner had changed the title to that on his planning board in an attempt to weed out a suspected leak in his office .

Gaiman suggested they make an episode which centres on the TARDIS itself , which was not done before for the entire series since it began in 1963 . The original plan focused on the idea of the Doctor being pursued by an enemy inside the TARDIS , but went through several subsequent changes ; Gaiman changed the plan to focus on the companion due to the Doctor 's knowledge of his ship making it too easy for him to escape his enemy , made the TARDIS the threat rather than just a specific alien to avoid making it a simple ' cat @-@ and @-@ mouse ' game , and then included the idea of Idris to account for what happened to the TARDIS 's mind during this attack . The central idea was a " what if " scenario to see what would happen if the Doctor and the TARDIS got to talk together . Head writer Steven Moffat liked the idea of featuring the TARDIS as a woman , believing this to be the " ultimate love story " for the Doctor .

Gaiman began writing the episode before Matt Smith was even cast as the Eleventh Doctor ; Gaiman had envisioned David Tennant 's performance in the first draft , knowing Smith would play the Doctor differently . Despite this he had no issue writing the dialogue . The episode was originally slated for the eleventh episode of the fifth series . However , it was delayed to the sixth series

because of budget issues ; the eleventh episode would be replaced with " The Lodger " . Even so , Gaiman was forced to operate with less money than he would have liked ; for instance , he had to scrap a scene set in the TARDIS ' swimming pool , and instead of being able to use a monster of his own design he had to use an Ood .

The move to the sixth series also meant Gaiman had to include Rory , who had ceased to exist in the original slot in the fifth series . With Rory included , Gaiman had to " reshape " much of the second half of the episode , featuring Amy being on the run in the TARDIS . In the original draft where Amy was the only companion , Gaiman added a " heartbreaking monologue " by the character , further stating " you get to see what it 's like to be the companion from the companion 's point of view , and she got to talk about essentially in that version how sad it is , in some ways . One day something will happen to her , she 'll get married , she 'll get eaten by monsters , she 'll die , she 'll get sick of this , but he 'll go on forever . " At a certain point , Gaiman became tired of re @-@ writing drafts and asked Steven Moffat for help . Moffat wrote in what Gaiman called " several of [the episode 's] best lines " and rapidly rewrote several scenes when budget problems harmed filming locations .

= = = Casting = = =

In September 2010 , Suranne Jones announced she was cast a guest spot on Doctor Who as Idris for an episode of the sixth series of Doctor Who . Jones previously played Mona Lisa in The Sarah Jane Adventures episode Mona Lisa 's Revenge . Some time after appearing on The Sarah Jane Adventures , Jones was contacted to appear on Doctor Who at Gaiman 's request , because they were looking for an actress who " is odd ; beautiful but strange @-@ looking , and quite funny . " Moffat meanwhile described Idris as " sexy plus motherly plus utterly mad plus serene . " During a read @-@ through of the script , the producers asked her to " neutralise [her accent] a bit , " because they did not want Jones to " be a Northerner " or have a standard accent , but to act " kinda like the Doctor . " Later , in March 2011 , Gaiman confirmed Michael Sheen would also guest star in the episode to voice a character . Adrian Schiller previously appeared in the Eighth Doctor audio drama Time Works where he played Zanith .

= = = Filming = = =

" The Doctor 's Wife " was planned as the third episode in the 2011 series but the order was changed during the production process . Initial production occurred in September , with Gaiman visiting the set during the production period and filming for the associated Confidential . Additional filming took place in October 2010 , with guest star Suranne Jones having been filmed for green screen special effects . The scenes where Amy and Rory are on the run allowed the audience to explore the TARDIS outside the control room , something the producers had wanted to do for a while . A series of corridors was constructed and retained for future use . The episode also featured the return of the older TARDIS control room from the Christopher Eccleston and David Tennant era . Gaiman had originally wanted to reconstruct a console room from the original series , but the cost proved prohibitive . The set was retained after filming for " The Eleventh Hour " , but has since been removed to become part of the Doctor Who Experience exhibit . Arthur Darvill noted the floor of the older set had a cheese grater @-@ like quality to it , so when the scene called for the cast to fall on it , they found it uncomfortable to stay down for a long period of time .

" The Doctor 's Wife " features a makeshift TARDIS console , which was piloted by the Doctor and Idris . The console was designed by Susannah Leah , a schoolgirl from Todmorden , who won a competition on Blue Peter , a children 's programme that challenged its viewers to imagine a TARDIS console based on household objects . Leah 's design was selected by Moffat , Edward Thomas , the production designer for the previous series , and Tim Levell , a Blue Peter editor , along with final input among the three age @-@ group winners from Smith . Michael Pickwoad , the production designer for Series 6 , commented that Leah 's design captured the nature of " bits and pieces " of what TARDIS consoles have been in the past , as well as the nature of the makeshift

console needed for this episode . The drawing was redesigned faithfully by the production team into the prop for the show , including the use of a coat hanger to start the makeshift TARDIS . Leah was brought by Blue Peter to see both the set under construction and on location during filming of the makeshift TARDIS scenes , meeting Smith and the other actors and production crew . Character Options will release a toy playset based on Leah 's console later in 2011 . The House planetoid in the pocket universe was filmed on location at a quarry outside Cardiff .

= = Broadcast and reception = =

" The Doctor 's Wife " was first broadcast in the United Kingdom on BBC One on 14 May 2011 and on sister station BBC America in the United States on the same day . In the UK , the episode received overnight figures of 6 @.@ 09 million viewers , with a 29 @.@ 5 per cent audience share . It became the third highest broadcast of the night , behind Britain 's Got Talent on ITV1 , and the 2011 Eurovision Song Contest , which was shown later on BBC One . The episode received a final BARB rating of 7 @.@ 97 million with an audience share of 34 @.@ 7 % . It had an overall Appreciation Index of 87 , considered to be excellent .

= = Critical reception = =

The episode was positively received , with many praising Jones 's performance as the TARDIS . The Guardian 's Dan Martin said : " With so many wild ideas at play , this would have been so easy to get wrong ... yet in every sense it was pitched perfectly " . He praised Suranne Jones in particular , saying she was " electrifying throughout " . Martin later rated it the third best episode of the series , though the finale was not included in the list . The A.V. Club gave the episode a score of " A " , saying it was a " pretty terrific [episode] ... a brisk , scary , inventive adventure filled with clever concepts and witty dialogue . And a lot of heart when in the way it deals with an important relationship rarely addressed on the series " . He admired the cleverness of the " Idris / TARDIS " characterisation and found the relationship " quite touching " . Gavin Fuller of The Telegraph praised the acting of Smith , Jones , and Sheen , and called the episode " hugely enjoyable " . Neela Debnath of The Independent praised Gaiman for mixing " romance , tragedy and horror , managing to strike a balance while telling a simple story " , though she criticised the frequent deaths of Rory .

SFX magazine reviewer Russell Lewin gave " The Doctor 's Wife " four and a half out of five stars , labelling it as " non @-@ stop intrigue and carefully @-@ controlled suspense all the way " . He particularly praised Smith 's energetic performance , saying " he pings and fizzes around the screen like a Technicolor firework , lighting up every scene he adorns " . IGN 's Matt Risley rated the episode 9 out of 10 and concluded , " Sweet , touching , intelligent , different , utterly imaginative and accessible by both hardcore fans and newbies alike ? this is not only Doctor Who , but sci @-@ fi telly at its finest " . He also praised Gaiman 's script for being " a simple idea executed brilliantly " . Patrick Mulkern of Radio Times admitted he was unsure if he was going to like it with the " grungy setting , wacko characters and peculiar dialogue " , but ended up " captivated " . He particularly enjoyed seeing more of the TARDIS ' interior and called it an " instant oddball classic " .

Digital Spy 's Morgan Jeffery rated it four out of five stars , saying it " isn 't perfect , but you 'd be hard @-@ pressed to fault its ambition " . He was critical of Jones ' performance of Idris , as " her early eccentric behavior tends to grate rather than amuse " though her performance calmed down later in the episode . His other " slight criticism " was that Gillan and Darvill were " sidelined " , but praised their performances . Jeffery felt that the strength of the episode was in character rather than in plot , and cited the defeat of the House as a " slightly disappointing " deus ex machina .

The episode won the 2011 Bradbury Award for Outstanding Dramatic Presentation . It also won the 2012 Hugo Award for Best Dramatic Presentation (Short Form) .