

= Partners in Crime ( Doctor Who ) =

" Partners in Crime " is the first episode of the fourth series of the British science fiction television series Doctor Who . It was broadcast on BBC One on 5 April 2008 . The episode reintroduced comedian Catherine Tate as Donna Noble , who had previously appeared in " The Runaway Bride " . Donna and the Doctor ( David Tennant ) meet while separately investigating Adipose Industries , a company that has created a revolutionary diet pill . Together , they attempt to stop the death of thousands of people in London after the head of the company , the alien Miss Foster ( Sarah Lancashire ) , creates the Adipose , short white aliens made from human body fat .

The episode 's alien creatures , the Adipose , were created using the software MASSIVE , commonly used for crowd sequences in fantasy and science fiction films . The episode is stylistically different from other Doctor Who episodes ; " Partners in Crime " has no clear antagonist , and the creatures are in a different style to Doctor Who 's regular " big [ and ] scary " monsters .

" Partners in Crime " features the return of three supporting characters : Jacqueline King reprises her role as Sylvia Noble from " The Runaway Bride " ; Bernard Cribbins reprises his role as Wilfred Mott from " Voyage of the Damned " , to replace the character of Geoff Noble after actor Howard Attfield died ; and Billie Piper briefly reprises her role as Rose Tyler for the first time since the second series ' finale " Doomsday " , in a scene that was not included in preview showings .

The episode received many positive reviews . Most critics liked the special effects used to create the Adipose . Critics also praised Tate 's subdued acting in comparison to " The Runaway Bride " ; Donna was changed from a " shouting fishwife " to a more emotional person when she became a full @-@ time companion . Critics ' opinions were split over the episode 's plot : opinion on executive producer Russell T Davies ' writing ranged from " pure pleasure " to " the back of a fag packet " .

= = Plot = =

Donna Noble has become disenchanted with her normal life for two years since meeting the Doctor in " The Runaway Bride " . She finds herself regretting her decision to decline the Doctor 's invitation to travel in the TARDIS . She has started investigating conspiracy theories in the hope that she will find him again . She confides her regrets to her grandfather Wilfred Mott , who met the Doctor before in " Voyage of the Damned " .

The Doctor and Donna , neither one aware of the other 's involvement , both investigate Adipose Industries , which is marketing a special diet pill to the people of London . They find that the pill 's slogan , The Fat Just Walks Away , is literal . The pills use latent body fat to parthenogenetically create small white aliens called Adipose that spawn at night and leave the host 's body . The Doctor and Donna separately infiltrate the offices of Adipose Industries , each unaware that the other is there . Donna hides out in a toilet cubicle until they close , the Doctor stays in a storage room . As they explore the building , they suddenly encounter each other through opposite windows in an office . They are confronted by Miss Foster , an alien who is using Britain 's overweight population to create the Adipose babies for the Adiposian First Family . Miss Foster pursues the Doctor and Donna around the building , finally catching them in an office . She tells the Doctor that the Adipose lost their breeding planet and hired Miss Foster to find a replacement . The Doctor uses Miss Foster 's sonic pen and his sonic screwdriver to create a diversion and escape .

Miss Foster accelerates her plans , knowing that the Doctor will attempt to stop her . Throughout London , the Adipose begin to spawn and soon number several thousand . The Doctor and Donna prevent total emergency parthenogenesis occurring , which would have killed those who had taken the pill , and the remainder of the young Adipose make their way to Adipose Industries . The Adiposian First Family arrive in a spaceship and begin collecting their young . The Doctor tries to warn Miss Foster about her safety , but she disregards him and is killed when the Adipose drop her from their transport beam to her death , to cover their unsanctioned colonization efforts . The Doctor refrains from killing the young Adipose because they are children , to which Donna remarks that his previous companion Martha Jones made him more human .

At the end of the episode , Donna accepts the Doctor 's original offer to travel in the TARDIS . The

Doctor makes it clear to her that he only wants to be friends and nothing more , and she emphatically agrees . She makes a detour to leave her car keys in a litter bin , telling her mother Sylvia to collect them later . While there , she meets a blonde woman and asks her to help Sylvia find the keys . The woman turns out to be Rose Tyler , who fades from view as she walks away from the area . In the final scene , Donna asks the Doctor to fly by her grandfather , Wilfred . He sees her in his telescope and celebrates on his allotment .

= = Production = =

= = = Casting = = =

" Partners in Crime " features several actors returning to the series . Catherine Tate was offered the opportunity to return as Donna Noble during lunch with executive producer Julie Gardner . Tate , who expected Gardner would ask about appearing in a biopic , later admitted it was " the furthest thing from [ her ] mind " . Tate 's return was controversial amongst Doctor Who fans ; the criticism she received was compared to Daniel Craig after he was cast as James Bond . Howard Attfield , who appeared as Donna 's father Geoff in " The Runaway Bride " , filmed several scenes for this episode , but died before his scenes for the remainder of the season were completed . The producers retired his character out of respect , and dedicated him in the closing credits for the episode . Producer Phil Collinson suggested transferring his traits to the unrelated character Stan Mott from " Voyage of the Damned " , and rewriting his role as Donna 's grandfather . Executive producers Russell T Davies and Gardner liked the idea and recalled Bernard Cribbins to the role to re @-@ film Attfield 's scenes , with the character renamed as Wilfred ? a name Davies favoured for Donna 's grandfather ? in time for the credits of " Voyage of the Damned " to be changed .

= = = Writing = = =

Davies took a different approach while writing the episode . David Tennant and Sarah Lancashire noted the character of Miss Foster had good intentions but was morally ambiguous . The premise of the Adipose pill was equally ambiguous with rare side @-@ effects , but was a " win @-@ win situation " for anyone involved . Davies based the character of Miss Foster on Supernanny star Jo Frost and Argentine philanthropist and politician Eva Perón , and Lancashire compared her character to Mary Poppins . The Adipose are a different style to regular Doctor Who villains ; antagonists such as Lazarus in " The Lazarus Experiment " or the werewolf in " Tooth and Claw " were singular monsters designed to scare the audience ; the Adipose were written as " cute " to provide a " bizarre [ and ] surreal " experience .

Davies made some changes to Donna 's character . The character was " rounded ... out from being a shouting fishwife to someone who 's quite vulnerable and emotional " . Donna was written to provide a " caustic " and " grown @-@ up " attitude towards the Doctor , in opposition to Rose and Martha , who fell in love with him . Tate considered Donna to be more equal to the Doctor because her character did not romanticise him , allowing her to question his morality more easily .

= = = Donna 's mime = = =

In this production , the script requires Catherine Tate , as Donna Noble , to reintroduce herself to the Doctor in mime . The stage directions by writer Russell T Davies are as follows .

Donna does a little mime : " I came here , trouble , read about it , internet , I thought , trouble = you ! And this place is weird ! Pills ! So I hid . Back there . Crept along . Looked . You . Cos they ... "

Tate says Davies had suggested that she might come up with something on the day . She improvised her mime during filming .

= = = Filming = = =

The episode was in the fourth production block in the season , and was filmed in October 2007 . The out @-@ of @-@ sequence filming allowed producers to use props to " seed " later episodes ; ATMOS , a plot device in the episodes " The Sontaran Stratagem " and " The Poison Sky " , is referred to by a sticker on a taxi 's windscreen . As the episode mostly takes place at night , many scenes were filmed in the early morning .

The scene where Donna and the Doctor investigate Adipose was difficult to film . The scene took thirty shots to complete , and Tennant and Tate experienced problems avoiding each other on @-@ screen . The scene was filmed in Picture Finance 's call centre on the outskirts of Newport on an early Sunday morning , with the company 's telephonists serving as extras .

Exterior shots of Adipose Industries were filmed at the British Gas building ( Helmont House ) in Cardiff 's city centre . For health and safety reasons , Tennant was prohibited from performing his own stunts in the window cleaning platform . His only shot that required stunts was when he catches Miss Foster 's sonic pen , a shot that took several takes to perfect .

= = = Adipose = = =

The Adipose were inspired by a stuffed toy Davies owned . The name comes from the scientific name for body fat , adipose tissue . Davies ' brief outlined a " cute " child @-@ friendly creature shaped like a block of lard , similar to the Pillsbury Doughboy . Further consultation with post @-@ production team The Mill resulted in the ears and the singular fang each Adipose has . Stephen Regelous , who won an Academy Award for his software Massive , flew to London to supervise the creation of the crowd special effects . Regelous , a Doctor Who fan , was enthusiastic about helping The Mill with special effects , stating that " When I first found out that the Mill was working on Doctor Who , I was quietly hoping that Massive might be used to create hordes of Daleks or Cybermen and with series 4 , I jumped at the opportunity to be involved . " The Mill created two types of Adipose : extras with artificial intelligence and independent movement , and " hero " Adipose , which were hand @-@ animated .

= = Broadcast and reception = =

= = = Broadcast and ratings = = =

The episode was broadcast on 5 April 2008 at 18 : 20 , the earliest timeslot since the show 's revival in 2005 . Davies criticised the BBC 's scheduling department and claimed the show could lose 1 @.@ 5 million viewers . The show retained a similar time of broadcast for a further four episodes , before returning to around 19 : 00 @.@ from " The Doctor 's Daughter " onwards .

The preview version of the episode supplied to the press and aired at the press launch omitted the scene that features Rose ; before broadcast , only the production team , Tate , and Tennant had seen the scene . The scene contains Rose 's departure theme , " Doomsday " . Tennant commented " on the night of transmission ... the Radio Times won 't have told you it 's coming , it 'll come as a genuine [ ... ] prickle up the spine " .

Overnight figures estimated the show was watched by 8 @.@ 4 million viewers , with a peak of 8 @.@ 7 million , 39 @.@ 4 % of the television audience . The consolidated rating was 9 @.@ 1 million viewers . Doctor Who was therefore the most watched show on 5 April , although the Grand National had a higher peak with 10 @.@ 1 million viewers . The episode 's Appreciation Index was 88 ( considered " Excellent " ) , the highest for any television show aired on 5 April .

= = = Critical reception = = =

The episode received many positive reviews . John Preston , writing for The Daily Telegraph , called the episode an " undiluted triumph " . Opening his review , he said " last night 's episode

struck me as being as close to 50 minutes of pure pleasure as you 're likely to get on television " . He noted the episode 's clever tackling of the topical theme of obesity , and its mixture of emotion and special effects . In closing , he said " the dejected critic , denied even the smallest nit to pick , walks glumly away " . Scott Matthewman of The Stage lamented that the Adipose were not threatening enough . He liked the Adipose 's execution of Miss Foster , a " momentary pause in mid @-@ air , gravity only kicking in when the character looks down " , comparing it to Wile E. Coyote and Chuck Jones , which " [ was ] a nice little touch in an episode ... full of them " . He also appreciated Tate , saying that " David Tennant finally has a partner who is approaching an equal " . Sam Wollaston of The Guardian wrote that Tate was " not right for this role " and " too hysterical , too comedy , not cool enough " , and felt her inclusion was an attempt to trade on the popularity of her own series and " broaden the appeal of [ Dr Who ] still further " . He also found the music " a bit oppressive " but concluded that , despite these criticisms , the show was " still awfully nice television " . Keith Watson of Metro gave the episode 4 stars out of 5 . He admitted that despite his dislike of Tate , " she isn 't that bad " . His review of the Adipose was positive , citing them as a reason of the quality of the show . Closing , he said " it split [ his ] sides " .

Jon Wise of The People said " Doctor Who is a super @-@ galactic way of spending a Saturday night indoors " , and appreciated that Donna was not romantically interested in the Doctor , unlike Martha or Rose . Ben Rawson @-@ Jones gave the episode a wholly positive review , summarising it as containing " pure fantastic family fun , delivering a winning blend of action , comedy , poignancy and one unexpected shock cameo " .

The episode received several negative reviews . Andrew Billen , writing for The Times , lamented that Davies had " forgotten that Doctor Who 's main task is to send children scuttling behind sofas while entertaining their fathers with the odd philosophical idea , the occasional classical reference , a joke or two they would probably not wish to explain and a wee bit of space totty " . Billen also criticised the writing and acting , but commended Tate for a " toned down performance " . Alan Stanley Blair of SyFy Portal summarised it as " a runaway Saturday morning cartoon in desperate need to a solid story " . Blair found flaws with the comedy and the music in the episode , but was impressed with Tate 's acting and Piper 's cameo . Kevin O 'Sullivan of the Sunday Mirror criticised Tate and Tennant for overacting , and had concerns about the writing : " It didn 't exactly ooze tension . All we got in the way of terrifying space enemies was Sarah Lancashire hamming it up as an intergalactic super nanny , a couple of security guards with guns and lots of cute little fat babies . " Ian Hyland of News of the World criticised the child @-@ friendly storyline , comparing it to " the back of a fag packet " . He also criticised Tennant for appearing " jaded " and Tate for " still shouting " .

= = = Reviews = = =

" Partners in Crime " reviews at The Doctor Who Ratings Guide