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Review of the *Doctor Who* Episode “The Doctor’s Wife”

*Doctor Who* is about “an alien Time Lord... who travels through time and space in his TARDIS,” (About, 1). The episode “The Doctor’s Wife” is about the Doctor “reciev[ing] a message from an old Time Lord friend [that]... brings him, Rory Williams, and Amy Pond to another universe with an alien that eats TARDISes,” (Doctor’s/Data, 2-3). I absolutely love the entire show of *Doctor Who*. However, “The Doctor’s Wife” especially appeals to me because of how deep a lot of the dialogue is and how relatable it is to my life.

In the beginning of the episode, the Doctor receives a flying glowing “small white cube” which brings them “outside the universe,” (Doctor’s/Data, 3-4). Once they land, they find out that “the matrix- the heart and soul of the TARDIS- has completely vanished,” (Doctor’s/Data, 3-4). The episode takes place on a small rocky planetoid with dim green lighting that smells like armpits (Doctor’s/Richard, 5:27). When, the Doctor, Rory, and Amy leave the TARDIS, Idris- a tall white Victorian woman with long brown curly hair- runs up to them, spouting nonsense like “the little boxes will make you angry,” (Doctor’s/Richard, 5:20-5:45). Then, she bites the Doctor on the neck, and then says, “You’re going to steal me. No, you have stolen me. You are stealing me. Oh, tenses are difficult. Aren’t they?” (Doctor’s/Richard, 5:20-5:45).

I agree with Idris that tenses and time are troublesome things, for we always have something to do every day, every waking moment, as long as we are in school or have a job. The

methodical inhumane ticking and tocking of society makes it difficult to keep track of the days, months, and years as they pass. Sitting in a classroom or sitting in a cubicle with four walls around, there is always a clock to tell you how much time you have left. Spending time hoping for another time makes for easily forgotten memories. Eventually, the past blurs with the present and begins to fog your senses or hopes about the future.

After talking to the Doctor, Rory, and Amy, Idris “see[s] if there is an off switch” to her body and faints, and Auntie instructs Nephew- an alien with spaghetti for a face- to “take Idris somewhere she cannot bite people,” (Chrissie, 2-3). Idris is taken to the brig of a spaceship that crashed centuries ago on the small planetoid. Amy and Rory split up from the Doctor to return to the TARDIS while the Doctor searches for the Time Lord that sent him the hypercube (Doctor’s/Richard, 12:10-15:13). Using his telepathic powers, the Doctor is able to trace the voices of other Time Lords on the planetoid, but in doing so, he discovers that there are no Time Lords on this planetoid- just a “collection of Time Lord distress signal[s],” (Chrissie, 5). When Auntie and Uncle walk into the room where the Doctor discovered the collection, the Doctor tells Auntie and Uncle that “[they] gave me hope, and then [they] took it away. That’s enough to make anyone dangerous. God knows what it will do to me,” (Chrissie, 5).

I envy the character Idris in this episode because I wish I had an “off-switch.” I wish I could skip forward in time that way, by sleeping, instead of having to wake up and face every individual day. There are some days and moments that I wish had never happened; I wish I slept through them, but due to the fact that I am human and have obligations to my body, to my family, and to my society, I have to go out and face the day at some point. I don’t like obligations. I prefer situations where I do something, finish it, and can wipe my hands clean of it.

Actions necessitate obligations unto themselves because the effects of actions ripple out through society and require careful maintenance to prevent your intentions from being misconstrued.

I empathize with the Doctor's situation of looking for something, having hope, and then having it taken away. The most recent and troubling example of this for me is going to college. I left high school hoping that I would finally get to do things that empower me all the time, but that was sadly not the case. There are still things I must do that drain my soul. Even with bringing fifty-five credits to college, there are requirements that I have to fulfill to get access to the things I want and care about. The Global Leadership Initiative is a good example. I am in it because I want my passport paid for, a better chance of studying abroad with funding, and the ability to do a super cool interdisciplinary senior research project that might involve taking action on things I care about. However, to get and do these things, I have to take a freshman seminar class by the GLI program, attend lectures, go to advisory meetings, be in a leadership seminar, and a few miscellaneous other requirements. Jumping through hoops isn't fun, but I think it makes you value the experiences more. It isn't really hope that was taken away- more of an illusion: just the childish view of reality that I can go ahead and do things conflicting with the adult reality that procedures, requirements, and rules exist for a reason. That's where it hurts: the inner need and desire to take significant, relevant, and immediate action on things but the inability to do so.

Now that the Doctor knows what happened to the other Time Lords, he walks down a corridor in the space ship to find Idris and talk to her because he wants to know "how did [she] know about the boxes? [She] said they'd make me angry," (Chrissie, 6). When he enters the brig to speak with Idris, she answers the Doctor's questions by stating, "Do you not know me? Just because they put me in here?" (Chrissie, 6). At first, the Doctor doesn't understand and replies to

Idris, “They said you were dangerous,” (Chrissie, 6). She clarifies by saying, “Not the cage stupid. In here. (She touches her pointer fingers to her temples) They put me in here... Oh, what do you call me?” (Chrissie, 6). The Doctor finally understands and hesitantly asks, “the TARDIS?” (Chrissie, 6). Happy to see he gets it, Idris responds with, “Time And Relative Dimension In Space. Yes. That’s it. Names are funny. It’s me. I’m the TARDIS,” (Chrissie, 6).

For me, the quote “they put me in here” really resonates with me because of how I have been put in here in so many different ways. I have been put in a body. I have been put in a family. I have been put in a country, a society, an economy, and certain roles and stereotypes as well. The word “put” is quite fitting, too, because many of the things that I have been put in are things that I have no choice in the matter of, and I find that aggravating- not having a voice in such important matters. I have a body, la di da, which is in generally good condition, but I’m not sure I appreciate some of the genetics passed onto me- like heart disease and obesity. If I had a choice in the matters, I would choose parents with better healthier genes. Also, with regards to family, I would have chosen nonreligious parents or more open parents because going to church for twelve years of my life was rather painful and a waste of my time. Then, there’s the matter of country; I don’t like the United States that much. Our political process is slow, inefficient, and infested with special interest groups that are shouting over the will of the people. Our government is lethargic about accepting immigrants and makes the path towards citizenship terribly tedious. All of the United States’s contradictions piss me off and wish I wasn’t an American- the damn stupidity of our country. Even with the recent win for love in the United States, there are still stereotypes that LGBTQ people, like me, are put into just so I can fit into other people’s simplistic views of the world. Since I’m bisexual- just because of that label alone that I can’t control- people think I’m a slut which really offends me: I’m a virgin and I sure as

Hell am not letting anyone put their dip stick near my sugar pouch unless I absolutely love them and know they absolutely love me- no fucking exceptions, pun intended.

Later in the Doctor and the TARDIS matrix's conversation, she asks the Doctor, "Are all people like this? ... So much bigger on this inside," (Chrissie, 6).

People really are complicated and so much bigger on the inside. There's a lot to being human and being alive that confuses me so much that it sometimes, or actually rather quite frequently, becomes so difficult to express the fullness of my own thoughts- let alone understand myself- that I choose to simply not express them. The majority of my life has consisted of being stuck in the US education system, being a good student, and a good child that it has been rather difficult to protect and maintain the fire within me that keeps me going. Every summer, I experience a blossoming because I'm free to spend my time the way I want to and think the thoughts I want to think. I went through cycles like this of my fire growing during the summer and getting suffocated during school for several years. Then I got to college, and everything became a thousand times more complicated. I no longer have to be completely objective on assignments, so long as I am aware of when I am switching between objectivity and subjectivity and when I am mixing the two. It's the mixing that kills me. It's also the fact that my professors genuinely want to know what I think and want me to be honest about that I don't know what to do: there's no expectation ahead of time about what I'm going to say, write, or do. I'm finally able to be bigger on the inside all the time, and all I want to do is implode. The irony is so real.

While the Doctor is conversing with the TARDIS matrix, who is in Idris's body, Rory and Amy are locked inside the TARDIS machine which looks like a big blue police box. An eerie green light swirls up from the depths of the planetoid, circles around the TARDIS machine, and then inhabits it- releasing a dim green light (Doctor's/Richard, 18:30-22:55). A deep male

voice emanates from the TARDIS machine, and asks Rory and Amy, “Why shouldn’t I kill you right now?” (Chrissie, 8). Rory replies to the voice, who identifies himself as House, that “killing us quickly wouldn’t be any fun. And you need fun?” (Chrissie, 8).

That may be another reason I’ve stuck around this long. There’s no fun in just giving up and dying because you’re frustrated with your family, society, and the government. There’s a chance for change, a hope, and by golly, I do enjoy stirring the shitpot! I get a lot of fun out of being passive aggressive and rude with a purpose- offending the peoples. I haven’t done much of it lately, but getting people angry is a good way to make change happen. Anger shows that people care about something, and if I can trick people into getting in trouble for acting on their anger, then it forces them to think about their actions and why they care about that thing in particular. That, I think, is the key: to get people to think. Also, I just love being mischievous and being a troublemaker- it gets my gears going and is where I can show off my creativity.

The Doctor releases Idris from the brig, and they run out of the crashed spaceship to find that House has activated the TARDIS and taken Rory and AMY with him. On the dark planetoid, by themselves, the Doctor and Idris look around them and see “a valley of half-eaten Tardises” that could be used “to build a working Tardis console,” (Chrissie, 8). As they are looking, Idris tells the Doctor, “It’s impossible,” (Chrissie, 9). However, the Doctor defiantly responds to her, “It’s not impossible as long as we’re alive. Rory and Amy need me. So yeah, we’re going to build a Tardis,” (Chrissie, 9).

That kind of attitude and spunk is something I admire and aspire to have. It isn’t the idea that your friends need you that I like about this scene; I don’t believe anyone needs anyone else necessarily to live, but biologically, people have a need for community. So, if you want your sanity, you need others. What I like about it is the idea that as long as you’re alive, there is

always a chance that something may go right. I have a problem with believing too much in Murphy's Law that I need a gentle, or perhaps blunt, reminder that there is always a possibility out there somewhere that I have not yet considered.

The next two scenes consist of Rory and Amy running around the TARDIS machine to entertain House while the Doctor and the TARDIS matrix work on building a Tardis console to teleport into the TARDIS and save Rory and Amy (Doctor's/Richard, 23:46-34:34). After successfully building a Tardis console, the Doctor and Idris teleport into the TARDIS and meet up with Rory and Amy in a secondary control room (Doctor's/Richard, 34:40-36:00). When House realizes that the Doctor and Idris are back inside the TARDIS, he comments, "Doctor, I did not expect you," and the Doctor replies, "Well, that's me all over. Isn't it. Lovely old unexpected me," (Chrissie, 13).

Being unexpected is a skill. It requires creativity, ingenuity, and a little bit of illogical nonsense. I also admire the Doctor's ability to be unexpected because it is something I'm not particularly good at. Since I prefer being logical, it is easier for people guess what I might do, and I do not want that. Being predictable puts you at a tactical disadvantage, and I want to be in a habit of being mildly unexpected so that if I am ever put in a situation where I am at risk, I am more likely to survive.

After House deletes the room that the Doctor, Rory, Amy, and Idris are in, they are teleported the TARDIS machine's automated protocols to the primary control room (Doctor's/Richard, 36:15-38:10). Suddenly, Idris's body fails, and the TARDIS matrix is released from the flesh; the TARDIS matrix, a shiny bright yellow light, flows throughout the TARDIS machine, kills House, and takes its rightful place back inside the big blue box (Doctor's/Richard, 38:40-40:05). Before completely reintegrating with the TARDIS machine, the

TARDIS matrix briefly revives Idris's body to tell the Doctor, "I've been looking for a word, a bog complicated word but so sad. I found it now," (Chrissie, 13) The Doctor asks, "What word?" The TARDIS matrix responds, "Alive. I'm alive," (Chrissie, 13). The Doctor remarks, "Alive isn't sad," but the TARDIS matrix clarifies, "It's sad when it's over," (Chrissie, 13).

The TARDIS matrix's opinion on being alive is so very true. Life is one big complicated mess, and no matter how you spin it, life is always sad when it's over.

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