# BBC dismisses viewer complaints over gay Doctor Who kiss



In recent weeks, the BBC has addressed and dismissed complaints from viewers regarding a particular episode of the long-running sci-fi series Doctor Who. The episode in question features a historic same-sex kiss between characters portrayed by Ncuti Gatwa and Jonathan Groff.

The contentious Season 14 episode, titled 'Rogue,' was first broadcast on June 8 and is set in the British Regency period of 1813. This episode showcases Gatwa as the Time Lord and Groff as a bounty hunter named Rogue. The story, which draws inspiration from the popular series Bridgerton, portrays a burgeoning romantic connection between the Doctor and Rogue, complete with mischievous flirting and a poignant sacrifice.

As the episode unfolds, Gatwa’s Doctor and Groff’s Rogue engage in same-sex dancing at a Regency ball, a scene that not only shocks the other guests but also culminates in a dramatic farewell kiss. Rogue sacrifices himself to save the world, sealing the emotional moment with a kiss to the Doctor, marking the first explicitly romantic same-sex kiss involving the Doctor on the show.

Two viewers expressed their discomfort with the episode, citing “inappropriate sexual innuendo” and suggesting that the content was "unsuitable for children." One complainant specifically noted concern over the rapid development of the romantic connection between the characters.

However, the BBC’s Executive Complaints Unit (ECU) has dismissed these concerns. In a ruling issued on Thursday, the ECU characterised the sexual innuendo as mild and appropriate for Doctor Who’s young audience. “The ECU considered the sexual innuendo to be towards the mildest end of the spectrum and in any case likely to go over the heads of children,” stated the unit.

Furthermore, the ECU explained that the rapid progression of the relationship between the characters was driven by the necessities of the fast-paced plot and was unlikely to be perceived by viewers as a realistic model for relationships beyond the show's fictional context.

Doctor Who has previously explored same-sex romantic elements with supporting characters, but this episode marked a significant departure by featuring the Doctor themselves involved in an explicitly romantic same-sex interaction. Notable previous instances include John Barrowman’s Captain Jack kissing Christopher Eccleston’s Doctor in a 2005 episode, and the implied romantic tension between Jodie Whittaker’s Doctor and her female companion Yaz, played by Mandip Gil.

The episode was penned by Russell T Davies, a celebrated writer known for advancing gay storytelling on television through series like Queer as Folk and It’s a Sin. Davies’ involvement brought an intimate and nuanced portrayal to this historic moment for *Doctor Who*, continuing his legacy of inclusive and pioneering narratives in television.