# Doctor Who’s Wish World episode confronts dystopia and authoritarianism ahead of finale



The latest episode of *Doctor Who*, titled “Wish World,” serves as a crucial entry point into the season finale, deftly intertwining character development and political commentary. Following a familiar pattern for the series, this episode not only answers lingering questions but also generates new inquiries that will set the stage for the concluding chapter. The episode, crafted by showrunner Russell T Davies, taps into the longstanding tradition of *Doctor Who* as a platform for social and political critique, merging these elements with an imaginative narrative.

In "Wish World," viewers are thrust into a dystopian realm reminiscent of a 1950s totalitarian society, governed by strict societal norms and an oppressive regime. The Doctor, played by Ncuti Gatwa, and his companion Belinda live under the guise of a traditional married couple, Mr. and Mrs. John Smith, accompanied by their infant daughter Poppy, a nod to past episodes that resonates with veteran fans. This constructed reality offers an unsettling reflection on themes of conformity and toxic masculinity, where characters are pressured to toe the line amid an environment laden with fear and surveillance.

At the centre of this authoritarian landscape is Conrad Clark, portrayed by Jonah Hauer-King, a right-wing influencer whose aspiration to carve a perfect society becomes a dark satire of current political narratives. His portrayal echoes the menace of figures like those found in George Orwell’s *1984* and Terry Gilliam’s *Brazil*, where the façade of benevolence masks a brutal regime. Clark's television broadcasts serve as a chilling reminder of the fragile nature of power; his character is both a product and a perpetrator of a reality where dissenters are conveniently erased from existence. This aligns with previous *Doctor Who* narratives that scrutinise authoritarianism, drawing parallels not only with dystopian literature but also with contemporary socio-political dynamics.

The episode’s exploration of societal dynamics extends to characters like Ruby Sunday, played by Millie Gibson, who embodies the outcasts in this rigid structure. Ruby’s growing awareness of the grotesque reality she inhabits highlights a recurring theme in science fiction: the marginalisation of the ‘imperfect’ within societal utopias. Such contrasts resonate with earlier *Doctor Who* episodes like “The Happiness Patrol,” which similarly delved into authoritarianism and the enforcement of happiness through oppressive means. This thematic lineage underscores the show’s ongoing commitment to address timely issues through its imaginative lens.

Moreover, as the narrative unfolds, viewers witness the gradual unveiling of the true architects behind this oppressive world—the Ranis, who manipulate events from the shadows. This twist not only adds depth to the plot but also positions the story to explore themes of power and agency as the Doctor prepares for a climactic confrontation. Russell T Davies is known for his tantalising reveals and character arcs that appeal to a broad spectrum of viewers, particularly those familiar with the series’ lore.

As “Wish World” draws to a close, viewers are left pondering the implications of this dystopian construct and its resonance with real-world power dynamics. The show's ability to weave urgent social commentary into its narrative fabric remains one of its defining features, ensuring that even in the realm of science fiction, audiences are prompted to reflect on their realities. With the stage set for the finale, the battle between the Doctor and the forces of oppression promises to captivate and inspire, reminding us of the enduring relevance of *Doctor Who* in navigating complex socio-political landscapes.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://bleedingcool.com/tv/doctor-who-s02e07-wish-world-answers-questions-goes-political/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://bleedingcool.com/tv/doctor-who-s02e07-wish-world-answers-questions-goes-political/), [[2]](https://tardis.guide/story/the-happiness-patrol/reviews/), [[3]](https://tardis.guide/story/the-happiness-patrol/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://bleedingcool.com/tv/doctor-who-s02e07-wish-world-answers-questions-goes-political/), [[4]](https://weminoredinfilm.com/2017/06/04/the-lie-of-the-land-was-doctor-who-at-its-most-political-since-the-happiness-patrol/), [[5]](https://bluetowel.wordpress.com/2021/10/28/doctor-who-dystopian-visions/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://bleedingcool.com/tv/doctor-who-s02e07-wish-world-answers-questions-goes-political/), [[3]](https://tardis.guide/story/the-happiness-patrol/), [[6]](https://www.doctorwhotv.co.uk/doctor-who-was-cleverer-104658.htm)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://bleedingcool.com/tv/doctor-who-s02e07-wish-world-answers-questions-goes-political/), [[1]](https://bleedingcool.com/tv/doctor-who-s02e07-wish-world-answers-questions-goes-political/), [[4]](https://weminoredinfilm.com/2017/06/04/the-lie-of-the-land-was-doctor-who-at-its-most-political-since-the-happiness-patrol/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://bleedingcool.com/tv/doctor-who-s02e07-wish-world-answers-questions-goes-political/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://tardis.guide/story/the-happiness-patrol/reviews/> - This page features reviews of the 'Doctor Who' episode 'The Happiness Patrol,' highlighting its political themes and dystopian setting. The episode is praised for its bold political commentary and unsettling atmosphere, drawing comparisons to George Orwell's '1984' and Terry Gilliam's 'Brazil.' The reviews emphasize the episode's unique blend of dark satire and surreal visuals, making it a standout in the series.
3. <https://tardis.guide/story/the-happiness-patrol/> - An overview of the 'Doctor Who' serial 'The Happiness Patrol,' which presents a dystopian society where happiness is enforced by a totalitarian regime. The story critiques authoritarianism and forced conformity, drawing parallels to real-world political systems. The episode is noted for its unique aesthetic and strong performances, particularly by Sheila Hancock as the tyrannical ruler Helen A.
4. <https://weminoredinfilm.com/2017/06/04/the-lie-of-the-land-was-doctor-who-at-its-most-political-since-the-happiness-patrol/> - This article discusses the political themes in the 'Doctor Who' episode 'The Lie of the Land,' comparing it to 'The Happiness Patrol.' It explores how both episodes use science fiction to comment on political issues, with 'The Lie of the Land' addressing themes of authoritarianism and media manipulation. The piece highlights the show's ability to blend entertainment with political commentary.
5. <https://bluetowel.wordpress.com/2021/10/28/doctor-who-dystopian-visions/> - A blog post examining various 'Doctor Who' episodes that depict dystopian societies, including 'The Happiness Patrol.' The author discusses how these stories use dystopian settings to explore themes of totalitarianism and societal control. The post provides insights into the show's approach to political allegory and its commentary on real-world issues.
6. <https://www.doctorwhotv.co.uk/doctor-who-was-cleverer-104658.htm> - An article analyzing the intelligence and depth of 'Doctor Who' episodes, including 'The Happiness Patrol.' It discusses how the episode uses a dystopian setting to satirize political correctness and ideological purity. The piece highlights the show's ability to address complex themes within its science fiction framework.
7. <https://them0vieblog.com/2017/05/28/doctor-who-the-pyramid-at-the-end-of-the-world-review/> - A review of the 'Doctor Who' episode 'The Pyramid at the End of the World,' discussing its political allegories and themes of fear and consent. The article draws parallels between the episode's narrative and real-world political situations, highlighting the show's use of science fiction to explore complex issues.