

= Asylum of the Daleks =

" Asylum of the Daleks " is the first episode of the seventh series of the British science fiction television programme Doctor Who , broadcast on BBC One on 1 September 2012 . It was written by executive producer Steven Moffat and directed by Nick Hurran .

The episode features the alien time traveller the Doctor (Matt Smith) being captured by the Daleks , along with his companions Amy (Karen Gillan) and Rory (Arthur Darvill) , who are about to divorce . They are sent by the Daleks to the Asylum , a planet where insane Daleks are exiled , to enable the Asylum to be destroyed before the insane Daleks can escape . The Doctor is helped along the way by Oswin Oswald (Jenna @-@ Louise Coleman) , a woman whose spaceship had crashed on the planet a year ago and has been trapped there since then .

" Asylum of the Daleks " incorporates many of the different varieties of Daleks seen throughout the programme 's 50 @-@ year history , and was intended to make the Daleks scary again . Coleman makes her first appearance in Doctor Who in this episode , before returning as the Doctor 's new companion in the 2012 Christmas special ; her appearance was successfully kept a secret from the general public prior to the episode 's broadcast , as her casting as the new companion had already been announced . The episode was watched by 8 @.@ 33 million viewers in the UK , and received attention on BBC iPlayer and international broadcasts . Critical reception was positive , though some critics questioned the circumstances behind Amy and Rory 's divorce .

= = Plot = =

= = = Prequels = = =

A prequel was released to iTunes on 1 September 2012 , and to Zune and Amazon Video on 2 September 2012 . In the prequel , a hooded messenger informs the Doctor that a woman , Darla von Karlsen , requests his help for her daughter . The messenger provides space @-@ time coordinates to the planet Skaro , home planet of the Daleks .

In addition , Pond Life is an earlier five @-@ part mini serial prequel to this episode , which was released serially in the week leading up to the premiere . The fifth part hints at Amy and Rory 's divorce .

= = = Synopsis = = =

In the ruins of Skaro , homeworld of the Daleks , the Doctor is approached by Darla von Karlsen , who requests his help in freeing her daughter from a Dalek prison camp . The Doctor 's suspicions are confirmed when Darla turns out to be a humanoid Dalek puppet and teleports him to the spaceship housing the Parliament of the Daleks . There he is reunited with a now divorced Amy and Rory , who have been similarly kidnapped from present @-@ day Earth , just after Rory has delivered Amy their divorce papers . The Doctor is surprised when , rather than exterminate him as he expects , the Daleks ask him for help .

The Dalek Prime Minister explains that they have a planet known as the Asylum - which the Parliament is currently orbiting - where they keep battle @-@ scarred Daleks that have gone insane . They are unwilling to kill these Daleks , as destroying such pure hatred would contravene their sense of beauty - something which sickens the Doctor . The Parliament has received a transmission of the Habanera Aria from the heart of the Asylum . The Doctor makes contact with the source of the transmission : a woman named Oswin Oswald , who states that she was Junior Entertainment Manager on the starliner Alaska , which crashed into the Asylum . Oswin claims to have been fending off Dalek attacks for a year , occupying herself by making soufflés , which intrigues the Doctor as he wonders where she got the milk and eggs . The crash had ruptured the planet 's force @-@ field , thus risking escape of the planet 's inmates . To prevent this , the Parliament wishes to destroy the planet remotely , but the force @-@ field is not ruptured sufficiently to allow that . The

force @-@ field can only be deactivated from the planet itself , but afraid to face such a mission themselves , the Daleks task the Doctor , Amy and Rory with doing so .

The three are given bracelets to protect them from the planet 's nanogene cloud , which would convert them into Dalek puppets to serve the facility 's security systems , before being dropped through the force @-@ field breach onto the surface of the planet via a gravity tunnel . The Doctor and Amy land close to each other , and are discovered by Harvey , another survivor from the Alaska . Rory , however , is dropped to the bottom of a long shaft into the Asylum . There he accidentally awakens some of its inhabitants , but is guided to a safe room by Oswin , who has accessed the computers . Meanwhile , Harvey guides the Doctor and Amy to his Alaska escape pod , where he attacks them after being revealed as a Dalek puppet , converted by the nanogene cloud . A similar fate has befallen the corpses of other Alaska survivors , who re @-@ animate and attack the Doctor and Amy , stealing Amy 's nano @-@ field bracelet just before the pair are saved by Oswin , who also guides them to Rory through a hatch in the bottom of the pod . Now unprotected against the nanogenes , Amy begins to be converted , experiencing memory loss and hallucinations .

The Doctor guesses that the Daleks will destroy the planet as soon as he deactivates the force @-@ field , but he realises that Rory 's hideout is a telepad , via which they can teleport onto the Dalek Parliament ship . Oswin agrees to deactivate the force @-@ field in return for the Doctor coming to rescue her . While the Doctor is gone , Rory tries to give Amy his bracelet . The Doctor had stated that love slows the Dalek puppet conversion , so Rory argues that he would be converted more slowly because he has always loved Amy more than she loves him , referring his 2000 @-@ year vigil in " The Big Bang " . Amy angrily replies that she loves him equally , but gave him up since she is unable to have children as a result of the events of " A Good Man Goes to War " . They realise that the Doctor had secretly slipped his bracelet onto her without telling them (since as a Time Lord he is probably immune to the nanogenes) to possibly get them to discuss their feelings .

The Doctor makes his way to Oswin , venturing through the " intensive care section " , which holds Daleks who survived encounters with him . They begin to re @-@ activate , but he is saved by Oswin , who deletes the Doctor from the Daleks ' collective telepathically @-@ shared knowledge , leaving them with no memory of him . The Doctor has never been able to hack into their hive intelligence , let alone remove anything from it , and is confused to how she has done so . The Doctor enters Oswin 's chamber , only to discover to his horror that she is really a Dalek . It turns out that Oswin had been captured by Daleks after the Alaska crashed on the Asylum and , to preserve her genius @-@ level intellect for Dalek use , was turned into a full Dalek rather than a standard puppet . Unable to cope with her conversion , her mind retreated into a fantasy of survival as a human . The Doctor had suspected that something was wrong from the beginning , however , as one of the things Oswin had kept herself busy with while in hiding had been making soufflés , which the Doctor noticed would be impossible to get the ingredients for . Oswin is nearly overcome by her Dalek personality at this revelation , but she still possesses human emotions and is unable to kill the Doctor . Her confrontation causes the Doctor to reflect that the Daleks ' many achievements ? including their parliamentary discourse and newfound diversity ? have been developed in fearful response to his threat to their existence . Oswin fulfils her promise of deactivating the force @-@ field , making her final request that the Doctor remember her as the human she once was : " Run . Run , you clever boy , and remember ... " . The Doctor returns to Amy and Rory , and they teleport back to the TARDIS just as the planet is destroyed . The Daleks fail to recognise the Doctor due to his removal from their hive intelligence . He jubilantly leaves the ship , and drops the reunited Amy and Rory back home . He then departs alone , delighting in the Dalek Parliament 's closing question to him : " Doctor Who ? " .

= = = Continuity = = =

Some of the Daleks are survivors of previous encounters with the Doctor on Spiridon (Planet of the Daleks) , Kembel (The Daleks ' Master Plan) , Exxilon (Death to the Daleks) , Aridius (The Chase) , and Vulcan (The Power of the Daleks) . The Special Weapons Dalek that appears in Remembrance of the Daleks appears in a cameo . In her opening speech , Darla refers to the

Doctor faking his death in the episodes " The Impossible Astronaut " and " The Wedding of River Song " . The concept of nanogenes - microscopic machines - is mentioned in the two @-@ parter " The Empty Child " / " The Doctor Dances " , also written by Moffat . In the closing exchange in the Parliament , the Doctor refers to one of his nicknames as " The Oncoming Storm " , first mentioned in the episode " The Parting of the Ways " . The final question of " Doctor who ? " , besides being a callback to the programme 's title , is the " question that must never be answered " that Dorium asks at the end of " The Wedding of River Song " .

= = Production = =

Executive producer Steven Moffat announced in 2011 that he intended to give a " rest " to the Daleks . The reason for the rest was that Moffat felt their frequent appearances made them the " most reliably defeatable enemies in the universe " . Moffat recalled that the Daleks were remembered for being scary , but due to their legacy as British icons they had become " cuddly " over the years and their true menace forgotten ; with " Asylum " he intended to make them scary again , reminding the audience of their intentions . He thought the best way to do this would be to show Daleks that were considered even madder than usual . Gillan admitted that she had not been scared of the Daleks before working on the episode . It is also the first Dalek story Moffat has written for the show ; he stated that he " couldn 't resist " the opportunity .

In March 2012 , it was announced that Jenna @-@ Louise Coleman would replace Gillan and Darvill as the next companion , first appearing in the 2012 Christmas special . It was Moffat 's idea to have her appear in " Asylum of the Daleks " as the character of Oswin ; it was not originally planned , and Coleman assumed it was part of her audition at first to see which character fitted her best . He intended to keep her appearance a secret , and thanked the press and fans that it was not leaked . Coleman 's scenes were filmed over six days on a closed set with a green screen which she acted to . Whether her later character was the same as Oswin was not confirmed at the time , but her appearance in " The Snowmen " makes it clear that there is a connection . Coleman played each version of the character as individuals with " trust that there would be a payoff " to her mystery .

" Asylum of the Daleks " was directed by Nick Hurran , who directed " The Girl Who Waited " and " The God Complex " of the previous series , as well as the fifth episode of the seventh series . " Asylum of the Daleks " contains many of the Dalek types that the Doctor has faced over the years , including the Special Weapons Dalek from the 1988 story , Remembrance of the Daleks . According to The Daily Telegraph , the production team located the remaining models of the various versions of the Daleks and shipped them to the studios in Cardiff Bay . This included a Dalek owned by Russell T Davies , Moffat 's predecessor . Executive producer Caroline Skinner knew Davies well and asked to borrow his replica . She stated that he was " thrilled " that it was canonised . The total number of different Daleks was around 25 , with models from 1963 to 2010 ; Skinner said that " there was just a real magic and sense of history about having them " . Moffat was concerned about how all the different Daleks would look together , but was pleased once he saw them ; he commented that the diversity made them look like a species , rather than identical robots . Many of the props were built from scratch . The snow scenes on the asylum planet were filmed in Spain during the production of " A Town Called Mercy " . Music featured in the episode are the " Habanera " from the Georges Bizet opera Carmen , which is used diegetically , and " Feel the Love " by Rudimental is also featured . The Doctor Who logo in the title sequence featured the texture of a Dalek , in keeping with the varied " blockbuster " themes for each of the opening titles of the first half of the series .

= = Broadcast and reception = =

" Asylum of the Daleks " was preview screened at BFI Southbank on 14 August 2012 , and at the MediaGuardian Edinburgh International Television Festival during 23 ? 25 August . On 25 August it was also screened in New York City and Toronto . The episode was broadcast to the public on 1

September on BBC One in the United Kingdom , BBC America in the United States , and on Space in Canada , and on 2 September on the ABC iView service . It premiered on 8 September 2012 on ABC1 in Australia , and on 13 September on Prime TV in New Zealand .

Overnight viewing figures for the UK showed that the episode was watched by 6 @. @ 4 million viewers , the lowest overnight figure for a premiere episode of the revived series ; however , viewing patterns indicate that fewer people watch Doctor Who live , and it won its timeslot . The final consolidated rating was 8 @. @ 33 million viewers , ranking third for the week on BBC One . It was also the most @- @ viewed episode on BBC 's online iPlayer the day that it aired , and ended September in the number one spot , with 2 @. @ 2 million requests . " Asylum of the Daleks " achieved an Appreciation Index of 89 , the highest for a series opener of Doctor Who .

Viewing figures in the US on BBC America showed that the episode was watched by 1 @. @ 555 million viewers . It was the # 1 cable program in its timeslot , and the most watched telecast in the history of the network . The episode also garnered a 0 @. @ 6 rating in the 18 @- @ 49 demographic . " Asylum of the Daleks " also was viewed 75 @, @ 000 times on ABC 's iView in Australia , a record audience , and 620 @, @ 000 watched the premiere on Space in Canada , Doctor Who 's second @- @ best ratings for the channel . On Prime in New Zealand , the episode attracted 171 @, @ 690 viewers , Doctor Who 's second @- @ highest rating on the channel and the highest rated show on the channel that day .

= = = Critical reception = = =

" Asylum of the Daleks " received positive reviews from critics . Dan Martin of The Guardian praised Moffat 's " script packed with ace curveballs and zappy dialogue " and Nick Hurran 's direction . Martin also notes that " more happened in the opening episode than has been covered in most recent two @- @ parters ? and events were also dealt with in a lot more depth . " He also was pleased that the asylum setting could explore the Daleks while making it reminiscent of the classic series . The Daily Telegraph reviewer Gavin Fuller gave it four out of five stars , describing it as a " confident opener " and highlighting the concept and set design of the asylum . He particularly praised Coleman , whom he called " the star of the episode " . Michael Hogan , also writing for The Telegraph , gave " Asylum of the Daleks " a slightly higher rating of four and a half stars out of five , also commending Coleman as well as many details of the script .

Neela Debnath of The Independent commented positively on the show 's continuing exploration of the Daleks and the more " adult tone " , praising the performance of the three leads . Radio Times writer Patrick Mulkern stated that it " ticks all [his] boxes as a Doctor Who fan of more than 40 years standing " , describing it as " clever , fast , funny , eerie , surprising and tearjerking " . Nick Setchfield of SFX gave the episode five out of five stars , calling it a " strong , cinematically @- @ minded series opener " which succeeded in making the Daleks scary . He also praised Coleman 's debut , Smith 's performance , the special effects , and Amy and Rory 's emotional subplot. io9 reviewer Charlie Jane Anders noted that the plot " is mostly just an excuse to explore the Doctor 's ongoing relationship with the Daleks , and to show how sad it 's gotten " . Both Anders and Mulkern (the latter citing a Doctor Who veteran , Katy Manning) noted that Oswin 's fascination with eggs , required for making soufflés , is really just a mental trick to block out the " exterminate " (" eggs @- @ terminate ") conditioning ; this literary device is woven throughout the episode as a series of subtle hints , as Rory is confused by a dormant Dalek , initially misinterpreting him as saying " eggs " .

Digital Spy 's Morgan Jeffery also awarded it five stars , though he felt Amy and Rory 's breakup was " a little difficult to buy " as it was resolved quickly , even if the situation was " sensitively handled " and " deftly performed " . Keith Phipps of The A.V. Club graded " Asylum of the Daleks " as a " B + " , also writing that he had a " quibble " with the Ponds ' marriage issue as it had not been foreshadowed , but ultimately felt that the episode " gets the season off to a great start while creating a sense that anything could happen " . IGN 's Matt Risley rated the episode as 8 @. @ 5 out of 10 , finding that the " only downside " was that " it felt less a tale about the Daleks than an adventure that just happened to have them in it " . Maureen Ryan , writing for The Huffington Post ,

felt it was a " ripping start to the season " that redeemed the Daleks from " Victory of the Daleks " . While she commended Gillan and Darvill 's acting during Amy and Rory 's emotional confrontation , she noted that they were not a couple that would break up because of infertility .

The episode was nominated for the 2013 Hugo Award for Best Dramatic Presentation (Short Form) , alongside " The Angels Take Manhattan " and " The Snowmen " .