

= The Hungry Earth =

" The Hungry Earth " is the eighth episode in the fifth series of British science fiction television series Doctor Who , which was first broadcast on 22 May 2010 on BBC One . It was written by Chris Chibnall , who had previously written for Doctor Who and its spin @-@ off series , Torchwood . It is the first episode of a two @-@ part story , the second episode being " Cold Blood " , and features the return of the Silurians , a reptile @-@ like humanoid race last seen in 1984 's Warriors of the Deep .

In the episode , the Doctor ? a time travelling alien played by Matt Smith ? and his companions Amy Pond (Karen Gillan) and Rory Williams (Arthur Darvill) land in Wales in 2020 , where a drilling operation headed by Nasreen Chaudhry (Meera Syal) is drilling deep into the earth and disrupting a civilisation of Silurians who dwell beneath the earth . The Silurians cause holes to open in the earth , one of which consumes Amy . The Doctor and Rory capture one Silurian , Alaya (Neve McIntosh) , and the Doctor instructs Rory and a local family to not harm Alaya , as it could spark a war . He then takes Nasreen in the TARDIS to the Silurian civilisation to rescue Amy and a local boy .

Executive producers Steven Moffat and Piers Wenger contacted Chibnall and asked him to write a two @-@ part episode involving Silurians and a drill . Moffat wished to redesign the Silurians and worked together with Chibnall to create the idea of distinguishing prosthetics for their faces . Being in the fourth production block of the series , the episode was filmed in October and November 2009 , with location filming in Llanwynno , Wales . McIntosh then returned in the series as a recurrent actress , portraying Madame Vastra , another Silurian character . The episode was watched by 6 @.@ 49 million viewers on BBC One and BBC HD and received mixed reviews from critics . While some praised the horror , some noted that the story was very simplistic , and critics disagreed about the redesigned Silurians .

= = Plot = =

The Doctor , Amy and Rory land in the small Welsh village of Cwmtaff in 2020 instead of their intended destination , Rio de Janeiro . They encounter a mining operation led by Doctor Nasreen Chaudhry , who is studying minerals deep in the earth that have not been seen for over 20 million years . Nasreen is assisted by a local , Tony Mack , whose daughter and grandson , Ambrose and Elliot , are investigating the disappearance of bodies at the nearby church graveyard . An earth tremor causes the ground to open and sends Tony and Amy falling into it ; Tony is rescued but Amy is pulled under by unknown forces . The Doctor surmises that the minerals form a bio @-@ reactive defence system triggered by the drilling operation . The group is soon alerted to the presence of three life forms travelling up the drilling shaft from 21 kilometres (13 miles) below the earth , and they barricade themselves in the church . The Doctor explains Amy 's disappearance to Rory and assures him he will get her back .

The three beings are discovered to be reptilian humanoids , and in a scuffle , they capture Elliot and strike Tony with a venomous forked tongue ; the Doctor and Rory subdue one while the other two retreat with Elliot back into the earth . The Doctor realises the beings are a new form of Silurians , and that they have relented in their attack since both sides hold a hostage . The captured Silurian calls herself Alaya ; she is a member of the warrior caste , awoken by the drill . Alaya believes , as do all Silurians , that the Earth still belongs to them , that the drilling was a form of attack by the humans , and that they will defeat humanity eventually . Tony , suffering from the effects of the venom , says they should dissect Alaya , but the Doctor warns that it would be seen as an act of war . The Doctor decides to travel in the TARDIS down the drilling shaft to talk to the rest of the Silurians and work out a truce ; Nasreen accompanies him .

Amy awakens to find herself strapped to an examining table , near to where Ambrose 's husband Mo is also ensnared . Mo explains that the Silurians intended to vivisect her , as they have vivisected him ? awake . The Doctor and Nasreen arrive underground in the TARDIS ; the Doctor explains about the Silurians and says that he expects to encounter only a few of the creatures . The

show ends on a cliffhanger as the Doctor and Nasreen behold an immense Silurian civilisation in the caverns below the earth .

= = Production = =

= = = Writing and casting = = =

Steven Moffat contacted Chris Chibnall , asking him to return to writing for Doctor Who . Chibnall had previously written the Doctor Who episode " 42 " as well as episodes of the spin @-@ off series Torchwood . Moffat and executive producer Piers Wenger gave him the brief of Silurians , a drill , and that it was a two @-@ parter . The Silurians were villains who had previously appeared in the 1970 serial Doctor Who and the Silurians and the 1984 serial Warriors of the Deep . For research , Chibnall read the original novel Doctor Who and the Cave Monsters and watched the original serial , noting the freedom writer Malcolm Hulke took with the novel in things he could not have done in the television format . Chibnall wanted there to be a large Silurian city in contrast to the small human village on the surface . Knowing that the Silurians were not as popular and recurring as other villains , Moffat instructed Chibnall to bring the creatures to a new audience , and Chibnall decided to start out with knowing nothing about them and then introducing them in " the most exciting and scary way possible for people who 've never seen them before " . Chibnall also considered bringing back the Silurians ' amphibious cousins the Sea Devils , but decided that doing two races of monster was much tougher and the story was " so clearly about the Silurians and what the Silurians want " .

Chibnall , having enjoyed when the Doctor and his companion were separated , made the decision for Amy to be absent for most of the episode . Moffat also thought that , at the point in the middle of the series , it was appropriate to show the Doctor behave differently with other people . A deleted scene , parts of which were shown on the accompanying behind @-@ the @-@ scenes show Doctor Who Confidential , was filmed , depicting Amy discussing with the Doctor how she had seen herself with Rory ten years in the future , and if that would really happen .

With the absence of Amy , Chibnall thought that Nasreen became a " de facto companion " . Meera Syal , who was cast as Nasreen , had been a fan of the series since childhood and had been trying to secure a role in the show since its revival in 2005 and was pleased when she received it . Syal described her character as " a very high @-@ up , innovative geologist " who became good friends with the Doctor as the two admired each other 's passion .

= = = Filming and effects = = =

Moffat wanted the Silurians to be redesigned and without their former third eye , as Davros also had a third eye and he wanted the Silurians to be " completely different " . They were intended to be a different branch of the same species , and so the original Silurians still existed . Chibnall wrote for the redesigned Silurians to be beautiful and it was intended for the redesign to capture the actors ' features and allow them to give stronger performances and differentiate themselves . Chibnall believed that it complemented the theme in the two @-@ parter about how the humans and Silurians were alike and different . Due to the expensive prosthetics needed , extra Silurians wore face masks which prevented the need for every actor portraying a Silurian to receive the facial prosthetics . Chibnall also incorporated a poisonous tongue into the new branch of Silurians .

" The Hungry Earth " and the second part , " Cold Blood " made up the fourth production block of the series and were filmed in late October and November 2009 in the Upper Boat Studios and Llanwynno , Wales . In an interview , Syal stated that they did the location filming first . The drill itself was automatic and done by computer . For the scene in which Amy is dragged underneath the ground , Gillan stood on boxes and lowered herself into a stone compartment . Two pieces of rubber were at the opening of the compartment which expanded as she lowered herself down . A layer of soil was spread across the rubber ; Gillan 's ears were taped over to make sure the soil did not enter her ears . Gillan , initially scared at performing the stunt , put some of her fear and claustrophobia

into the scene as she expected Amy felt the same way .

= = Broadcast and reception = =

" The Hungry Earth " was first broadcast in the United Kingdom on BBC One on 22 May 2010 at 6 : 15 p.m. The time was earlier than usual to make way for the finale of *Over the Rainbow* , broadcast afterwards . Initial overnight ratings showed that the episode was watched by 4 @. @ 39 million viewers on BBC One , a 30 @. @ 8 % audience share . Based on this figure , it was the lowest @- @ rated episode since *Doctor Who* had returned to television in 2005 . When final consolidated ratings were calculated , it was shown that the episode was watched by 6 @. @ 49 million viewers ; 6 @. @ 01 on BBC One and an additional 0 @. @ 48 million viewers on BBC HD . The episode was the ninth most @- @ watched programme on the week ending Sunday 23 May 2010 , and the 20th programme across all channels . The episode also received an Appreciation Index of 86 , considered " excellent " .

" The Hungry Earth " was released in Region 2 on DVD and Blu @- @ ray on 2 August 2010 with the episodes " Amy 's Choice " and " Cold Blood " . It was then re @- @ released as part of the Complete Fifth Series boxset on 8 November 2010 .

= = Critical reception = =

The episode received mixed reviews from critics . Dan Martin , writing for *The Guardian* , said that the episode set up an " interesting quandary " but , although many elements were introduced , " not a lot actually seems to happen " . He was also critical of the family members and found he did not care about any of them besides Elliot and Nasreen , and although the scene in which Amy was pulled into the ground was " effective and poignant " , it left a lack of " Pond @- @ life " in the rest of the episode . However , he did commend the prosthetics department for their redesigned Silurians . Gavin Fuller of *The Daily Telegraph* was pleased that it " didn 't disappoint " him . He praised the choice to show the Doctor 's pacifism and Amy 's few but memorable " nightmarish " scenes . However , he was not favourable to Meera Syal 's performance and considered the Silurian 's redesign too " radical and divorced " from their original appearance , most notably the absence of their third eye .

Patrick Mulkern of *Radio Times* gave the episode a positive review , saying that it felt " like proper , classic *Doctor Who* " in terms of " gripping storytelling , terrific pace , spooky direction , a grand idea ... a small @- @ scale Earth setting in the near future , characters worth caring about ... plenty of meat for the three leads " and " a companion in real peril " . He particularly praised the performances of Syal and Smith . He also enjoyed the Silurian 's redesign , saying that the old one " would ... look ridiculous today " . Though he " missed " the old voice from Peter Halliday , he said he adjusted to Neve McIntosh . AOL TV reviewer Brad Trechak was positive towards the comparisons that could be made between conflicts throughout history to the human @- @ Silurian conflict , but called the episode a " wasted opportunity " . He felt that it was " more suspense and adventure than horror " , wishing that it was scarier , and also commented that it was " very simplistic " and did not re @- @ introduce the Silurians as well as it would have , had they been part of the overall storyline .

IGN 's Matt Wales rated the episode 8 out of 10 , assessing it as a " slender but satisfying success " . He said that the narrative was " simplistic " without much depth , but that the " strong supporting cast " and " sympathetic characters " made it a " refreshingly involving tale " . He also praised Smith 's Doctor , who " delivered admirably " and carried out the show with the absence of Amy . Ian Berriman for *SFX* magazine gave the episode three out of five stars , mainly displeased with the redesign of the Silurians , although he was positive toward their " venomous tongue lash " and costume . He also criticised the " clunky " scripting and questioned some technical aspects . However , he praised the scene of Amy being dragged into the earth , as well as Alaya 's hunt for Elliot in the graveyard and the interaction between the Doctor and Elliot .

== Reviews ==

" The Hungry Earth " / " Cold Blood " reviews at The Doctor Who Ratings Guide