

= Amy 's Choice ( Doctor Who ) =

" Amy 's Choice " is the seventh episode in the fifth series of British science fiction television series Doctor Who , first broadcast on BBC One on 15 May 2010 . It was written by sitcom writer Simon Nye and directed by Catherine Morshead .

In the episode , lead characters the Doctor , a time travelling alien played by Matt Smith , and his human travelling companions Amy ( Karen Gillan ) and her fiancé Rory ( Arthur Darvill ) , are in a trap set by the mysterious " Dream Lord " ( Toby Jones ) , wherein they repeatedly fall asleep and wake up in a different reality . In one , Amy and Rory are happily married but pursued by elderly people possessed by aliens , while in another they are on board the Doctor 's time machine , the TARDIS , where they anticipate being frozen to death by a nearby astronomical phenomenon . They must decide which is the real reality and die in the dream , to wake up in reality and escape the trap . At the episode 's conclusion , the Dream Lord is ultimately revealed to be a manifestation of the Doctor 's dark side and self @-@ loathing .

Nye wrote the episode to explore and to test Amy 's relationships with both the Doctor and Rory . Showrunner Steven Moffat suggested that Nye , a comedy writer by trade , build the episode around a split dream concept , and encouraged Nye to create a " monster " for the episode , which influenced his writing of the retirement home dream . The dream scenes in Amy and Rory 's village was filmed in Skenfrith , Wales and used CGI and prosthetics . " Amy 's Choice " was seen by 7 @.@ 55 million viewers on BBC One and BBC HD and received generally mixed reviews from critics . The most positive praised the episode 's surrealism and commended it as one of the year 's strongest scripts , but other reviewers felt the episode 's horror or monsters unsatisfying .

= = Plot = =

= = = Synopsis = = =

The Doctor , Amy , and Rory find themselves flickering between two realities , falling asleep at the sound of birdsong in one and waking in the other . In the first reality , Amy and Rory stopped travelling with the Doctor five years previously , are happily married , and Amy is heavily pregnant . They find themselves in their hometown of Leadworth being chased by the Eknodine , an alien race that have disguised themselves as the elderly of the town . The Eknodine are able to turn anyone into dust by blowing a poisonous liquid on them . In the other reality , they are trapped in the powerless TARDIS drifting towards a freezing cold star which will kill them . During one of their experiences in the TARDIS @-@ reality they are met by the " Dream Lord " , an apparition who tells them that he has created a dream reality in contrast to their actual reality . The three must determine which is the dream reality and kill themselves in it to return to the other reality . However , if they choose wrong they will be killed in both .

The Dream Lord keeps Amy awake in the TARDIS reality while the Doctor and Rory fall asleep and return to the Leadworth reality . The Dream Lord questions Amy as to whom she would choose between Rory and the Doctor . He states that she must choose between the worlds ; one leads to a peaceful married life with Rory while the other leads to adventure and excitement with the Doctor . Amy returns to Leadworth and rejoins Rory in defending her house from the Eknodine whilst the Doctor is trying to rescue people from Leadworth in a motor @-@ caravan . As Amy believes she is going into labour , Rory is sprayed by the Eknodine and turns to dust . Amy decides that she is willing to risk her own life for the chance of seeing Rory again and concludes the Leadworth reality is false . Amy and the Doctor drive the motor @-@ caravan into the house , leading to their assumed deaths . The three wake up again on the TARDIS where they are congratulated by the Dream Lord , who then reactivates the TARDIS . After the Dream Lord 's departure Amy and Rory are surprised by the Doctor when he directs the TARDIS to self @-@ destruct , apparently killing them all .

The three wake up again on the TARDIS , no longer in any danger . The Doctor realises both realities were false since the Dream Lord had no power over the real world and was a manifestation

of his darker side . The three were influenced by psychic pollen that had fallen in the TARDIS time rotor and heated up , creating the Dream Lord and the false realities . Rory comes to realise that Amy killed herself in the Leadworth reality out of love for him , and the two confess their love for each other . The Doctor sees the Dream Lord smile at him through his reflection .

= = = Continuity = = =

The Dream Lord describes the Doctor sarcastically as " The Oncoming Storm " , a name coined by his archenemies the Daleks , and first mentioned in the Seventh Doctor novel Love and War and subsequently on @-@ screen in " The Parting of the Ways " , where it was attributed to the Daleks . He also says to the Doctor , " You 're probably a vegetarian ! " in a butcher 's shop and calls him " veggie " , referring to The Two Doctors , in which the Sixth Doctor announced that he and Peri would eat a vegetarian diet from then on . The Dream Lord also teases the Doctor 's relationship with Elizabeth I. This began in " The Shakespeare Code " where Elizabeth I wished to behead the Doctor and continued in The End of Time , which alluded to the possibility the two were married . The marriage between the two was seen 3 years later in " The Day of the Doctor " .

= = Production = =

= = = Writing = = =

" Amy 's Choice " was written by Simon Nye , who is known for writing the sitcom Men Behaving Badly . Nye attended read @-@ throughs of previous episodes to capture the character and " voice " of the Doctor and Amy . Nye admitted to restraining himself in the change from comedy to science fiction , but said it was " fun " and " hugely liberating " . Showrunner Steven Moffat originally gave Nye the premise of the episode for it to fit in the series arc , which was to challenge the Doctor and Amy 's relationship . Nye states that Rory 's " death " scene is essentially where Amy realises her feelings for Rory . Nye wanted to prove that Amy really loved Rory , and he was " not just a cypher boyfriend or fiancé " .

Moffat suggested the idea of the dream split to Nye , who was also influenced by his own dreams and sometimes wondering if they were real . Nye believed that the dream world was consistent with other alternate universes within Doctor Who . Moffat also instructed Nye to come up with a monster , and Nye chose the elderly people possessed by the Eknodine , reflecting his own fear of old people as a child , but he made clear that he did not intend to make children scared of their grandparents .

= = = Filming and effects = = =

" Amy 's Choice " was the last episode of the fifth series to be filmed , and the editing finished the week it aired . The read @-@ through for the episode took place on 17 February 2010 in the Upper Boat Studios along with the read @-@ through for episode eleven , marking the final two read @-@ throughs for the series . The dream sequences taking place in the fictional town of Upper Leadworth were filmed in Skenfrith , Wales .

Karen Gillan had to wear a latex prosthetic stomach bump for the scenes which depicted Amy as pregnant . She claimed it made her feel more mature and act ridiculously , and cited it as her favourite part of filming the series . Arthur Darvill wore a wig for the aged Rory , which was trimmed to look " more masculine " and pulled back in a ponytail . The Eknodine were CGI and the scenes were simply filmed with the actors opening their mouths . The scene in which Rory hits Eknodine @-@ inhabited Mrs Hamil with a plank was filmed first of all with Darvill missing actress Joan Linder , and then again with Linder 's stunt double , whom he was allowed to hit . There was only one prop of the plank , and fortunately all the necessary shots were completed before Darvill accidentally broke it .

== Cast notes ==

Nick Hobbs , who appeared as Mr Nainby in this episode , previously played Aggedor alongside Jon Pertwee 's Third Doctor in the stories The Curse of Peladon and The Monster of Peladon . Hobbs has also previously appeared as a lorry driver in The Claws of Axos and operated the Wirrn prop for The Ark in Space .

== Broadcast and reception ==

" Amy 's Choice " was first broadcast on BBC One in the United Kingdom on Saturday , 15 May 2010 from 6 : 25 p.m. to 7 : 10 p.m. In the United States it was shown on sister station BBC America on 5 June 2010 . In the UK , preliminary overnight ratings for the episode totalled 6 @. @ 2 million viewers ; 5 @. @ 9 million on BBC One and 0 @. @ 3 million on BBC HD . Based on these estimated figures , viewership was about the same as the previous week . When final ratings were calculated , it was shown BBC One held 7 @. @ 063 million viewers , the sixth most viewed programme for the week , and 485 @, @ 000 viewers on BBC HD , the highest viewed programme of the week for that channel . This gave " Amy 's Choice " final consolidated ratings of 7 @. @ 55 million viewers . The episode was also given an Appreciation Index of 84 .

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

== Critical reception ==

" Amy 's Choice " received generally mixed reviews from critics . Gavin Fuller , writing for The Daily Telegraph , was positive about the episode , calling it " probably the strongest all @-@ round script we 've had this year , chock full of good lines " . He added , " The concept of aliens inhabiting elderly people and turning them psychotic was wittily realised , particularly the bizarre sight of them laying siege to Amy and Rory 's cottage with household and gardening implements " . He concluded that it " was one of those stories that you would only find in Doctor Who , and shows once again that the series can provide genuine thought @-@ provoking , interesting drama alongside its thrills and spills " .

Matt Wales of IGN rated the episode 8 @. @ 5 out of 10 and described it as " surreal , fantastical , intriguing , witty , emotional and , at times , genuinely unsettling " . Unlike Martin , he said it was " impressive enough on pacing alone " and made a " brisk , refreshing 45 @-@ minute episode " . However , he criticised the ending for being " glossed over so quickly " and found Upper Leadworth hard to believe . Keith Phipps , writing on The A.V. Club , graded the episode a B and stated it was " a solid ... entry in what 's been a generally terrific season of Doctor Who " . He praised Toby Jones ' performance as the Dream Lord , saying that " in lesser hands , he might have come off as a copycat version of Star Trek 's Q , but Jones makes the part his own " . However , he thought its weakness was the pace and " the retirement home @-@ dwelling bad guys , who ultimately seem like a geriatric , and not that frightening , variation on the same old shambling zombies . "

Daniel Martin , reviewing the episode for The Guardian , described it as " at least partially successful " . He praised Karen Gillan 's performance , saying that she " is capable of more than one @-@ liners and physical comedy ? and brings something to your eye , too " . However , he thought that the episode lacked ideas and storylines usually found in the show , and criticised the sitcom @-@ style dialogue . Patrick Mulkern , writing for the Radio Times , was " distinctly underwhelmed " , comparing it to " one of the more disappointing episodes of The Sarah Jane Adventures " . He " particularly disliked the demonising of elderly people " . Upon rewatching , however , although " previous gripes " remained , he did appreciate some the " more subdued " background music from Murray Gold , the script 's " tight structure and several amusing lines " , and " the realisation that , for the first time , the Doctor is travelling with a couple in love " .

SFX Magazine 's Jordan Farley gave the episode 3 and a half out of 5 stars , saying the direction "

never quite [ struck ] the right balance between absurdist humour and sinister nightmare " and the camera was " a little flat " with a strange angle . He was displeased with the discovery that it had all been a hallucination and stated that Rory 's death and other instances of horror " never shock in the way you might expect " . However , he praised Smith for being " on blindingly good form " while portraying the Doctor 's quirkier traits , considered that Gillan and Darvill were " fast becoming the most likeable companion couple in Doctor Who history " , and said Jones was " a lot of fun to watch " despite not seeming to be completely the Doctor 's dark side .

= = = Reviews = = =

" Amy 's Choice " reviews at The Doctor Who Ratings Guide