

= The Unquiet Dead =

" The Unquiet Dead " is the third episode of the first series of the British science @-@ fiction television programme Doctor Who , first broadcast on 9 April 2005 on BBC One . It was written by Mark Gatiss and directed by Euros Lyn .

In the episode , alien time traveller the Doctor ( Christopher Eccleston ) and his companion Rose Tyler ( Billie Piper ) travel to Victorian Cardiff on Christmas , 1869 where there have been sightings of strange gas @-@ like creatures . The Doctor and Rose team up with Charles Dickens ( Simon Callow ) to investigate Mr Sneed ( Alan David ) , a man who runs a funeral parlour where it seems that corpses have come to life . It is revealed that the gaseous Gelth ( voiced by Zoe Thorne ) have entered Cardiff through a Rift , and wish to survive by taking over the corpses .

" The Unquiet Dead " is the first episode of the revival to be set in the past , and was intended to show the series ' range . The original brief and script included a focus on mediums and was grimmer in tone , but it evolved into a story about zombies and became more of a " romp " . Callow , who had researched Dickens as well as portraying him on multiple occasions , accepted to guest star in " The Unquiet Dead " because he felt the historical figure was written accurately . The episode also features a guest appearance by actress Eve Myles ; Myles would go on to play Gwen Cooper in the Doctor Who spin @-@ off series Torchwood from 2006 . As contemporary Cardiff , location of the Doctor Who production , did not have enough Victorian architecture , the episode was filmed in Swansea . Computer generated imagery ( CGI ) was used as the main visual effect for the Gelth . " The Unquiet Dead " was seen by 8 @.@ 86 million viewers in the United Kingdom on first broadcast . It attracted generally positive reception , although some reviewers criticised some plot points and lack of moral dilemma .

= = Plot = =

The Doctor attempts to pilot the TARDIS to Naples in 1860 to show Rose the past , but ends up in Cardiff in 1869 instead , on Christmas Eve . At a nearby funeral parlour , run by Gabriel Sneed and his servant Gwyneth , the corpse of the late Mrs. Peace has been taken over by a blue vapour . She rises from her coffin and kills her mourning grandson before lurching away from the parlour . Gwyneth , a clairvoyant , senses that the corpse is going to see Charles Dickens at a nearby theater . In the middle of his performance , the blue vapour leaves Mrs. Peace and scares the audience away . The commotion attracts the attention of the Doctor and Rose , who rush to investigate . Sneed and Gwyneth arrive and capture the corpse , but are confronted by Rose and end up kidnapping her as well . Meanwhile , Dickens accuses the Doctor of ruining the performance , but after the Doctor gushes over his literary genius , Dickens offers to help .

At the funeral parlour , Rose wakes up along with the newly @-@ reanimated corpses of Mrs. Peace and Mr. Redpath . The Doctor and Dickens arrive and break into the parlour just in time to rescue Rose . After hearing about the trouble with the corpses , the Doctor convinces Gwyneth to help him hold a séance to attempt to communicate with the dead . The blue vapors fill the room and reveal that they are the remains of the Gelth , a once @-@ corporeal alien race until they were devastated by the Time War . They plead with the Doctor to open the rift that exists in the basement of the parlour and allow them to cross over . The Doctor offers the Gelth temporary use of the corpses until he can transport them to a place where they can build new bodies , using Gwyneth as a bridge to cross the Rift .

Gwyneth stands in the middle of an arch and opens the rift , allowing the Gelth to cross over . The number of Gelth is much greater than anticipated , and their true motive is revealed : they intend to kill the living to give themselves more hosts and take over the planet . One of the animated bodies strangles Sneed to death , allowing another Gelth to possess his body . Dickens flees the parlour , and Rose and the Doctor are trapped in a part of the basement . Outside , Dickens realises that the beings are affected by gas and returns to the house . He extinguishes the gaslights and turns the gas on full , pulling the Gelth out of the bodies . The Doctor tells Gwyneth to send the Gelth back and close the rift , but she cannot close it or leave . Instead she takes out a box of matches ,

intending to ignite the gas and kill the Gelth along with herself . The Doctor determines that Gwyneth is already dead , and that by opening the rift , she had doomed herself . The Doctor , Rose , and Dickens flee the parlour just before it explodes and burns .

The Doctor and Rose head back to the TARDIS , and Dickens thanks them for their help . He decides to leave immediately for London to patch up things with his family , and to finish The Mystery of Edwin Drood . The Doctor and Rose say their goodbyes and disappear in the TARDIS , and the astounded Dickens walks away through the streets of Cardiff , greeting everyone he passes and quoting A Christmas Carol : " God bless us , everyone ! "

= = = Continuity = = =

When looking into Rose 's mind , Gwyneth is frightened and breaks off contact when she sees " the things you 've seen ... the darkness ... the Big Bad Wolf ! " The phrase " bad wolf " recurred in most of the stories in this season , culminating in the episode " Bad Wolf " and finally explained in " The Parting of the Ways " . The Doctor reacts visibly when the Gelth mention the Time War ; the event had been alluded to in " Rose " and " The End of the World " , when the Doctor told Rose that his people had been destroyed in a war . The Cardiff rift reappears in the episodes " Boom Town " and " Utopia " , and is a direct or indirect element in many of the alien encounters in the spin @-@ off series Torchwood , set in Cardiff . The events of the episode are referenced in The Unicorn and the Wasp , when Donna compares the absurdity of the episode 's events to " meeting Charles Dickens , surrounded by ghosts , at Christmas " . and " The End of the World " , when the Doctor told Rose that his people had been destroyed in a war .

= = Production = =

= = = Writing = = =

Executive producer and head writer Russell T Davies came up with the concept of " The Unquiet Dead " . As the third episode of the revived series , it was designed to continue to show the range of the programme by exploring the past , after the contemporary " Rose " and far @-@ future " The End of the World " . The episode also reintroduces the TARDIS ' habit of taking the Doctor to the wrong places , something that had not yet happened in the revived series . Davies felt that it was important for an episode to be set in Cardiff as that is where the new series is produced , and wanted the story to be set in Victorian times and feature Charles Dickens . Davies ' original brief also included " fake mediums " , and Gatiss originally set it in a " spiritualist hotel " , which had fake mediums ( such as a character named Mrs Plumchute ) on the lower floors and Mr Sneed on the top , though he was unaware he was a true medium . However , Gwyneth became a more popular character with the production team , and she took on much of the medium role . Gatiss was also more interested in possession and zombies . Mrs Sneed was another character that was cut out of the episode ; Gatiss believed she was unnecessary as Gwyneth was the " heart " of the story .

The working titles for this story included " The Crippeningwell Horror " and " The Angels of Crippeningwell " . The original draft was grimmer , including details about the previous death of Gwyneth 's younger brother , but in subsequent drafts the story became more of a " romp " . Gatiss stated that the name " Gelth " simply popped into his head . Gatiss was encouraged to personify the Gelth , which he originally questioned because he felt that monsters whispering " Doctor " was a cliché ; producer Phil Collinson remarked that perhaps it was a cliché because it worked well . The Rift was added into the plot to simplify the Gelth 's origins .

Gatiss originally resisted having Dickens star in the episode , as traditionally the Doctor only mentioned meeting historical figures , but he eventually warmed to the idea . As A Christmas Carol fan , Gatiss wanted to set the episode at Christmas . He later realised that Dickens ' journey in the episode mirrored that of Ebenezer Scrooge . In one scene , Gatiss wanted the knocker on a door behind Dickens to briefly show the Gelth 's face in reference to A Christmas Carol , but this visual

effect was not done . The episode originally began in the TARDIS , as Gatiss wanted the first glimpse of 1860 to be through Rose 's eyes . While this changed , Gatiss still wanted to show how great travelling in time is . It was scripted that snow would blow into the TARDIS when the doors opened , but this was cut because of budget reasons . Davies requested a scene in which the Doctor takes Rose to the future to see a world filled with walking corpses ? the result if they had left before defeating the Gelth ? but this was too expensive to film . During the scene in which the Doctor and Dickens are talking in the coach , the driver was supposed to shout down to them ( referencing a Dickens work ) and the coach was to crash , but this was also too expensive .

= = = Casting = = =

Simon Callow , who portrayed Dickens , was considered apt since he possessed extensive knowledge of the author and had experience playing the character and recreating his public readings . Callow contended that for him to agree to play Dickens , the script would have to be a sufficiently high quality . When he heard that the author was to feature in Doctor Who his heart " sank " as he felt fiction has a tendency to posit the author as " a kind of all @-@ purpose Victorian literary character and really understand little , if anything , about him , his life or his books " . Director Euros Lyn noted that the material being of interest to Callow was key to getting him involved . Promoting his role in Doctor Who , Callow stated that writer Mark Gatiss knew " exactly what Dickens is all about " and " very cleverly connects his idealism ... with the Doctor 's desire to save the world " . Callow was also pleased that the episode portrayed Dickens as he was towards the end of his life : ill and sad rather than energetic . In the 2011 episode " The Wedding of River Song " , Callow returned to reprise his role as Dickens briefly .

Eve Myles , who played Gwyneth , was initially not supposed to film the episode as she was booked for another role in theatre . However , her agent notified Myles of the role and Myles ' was keen to audition for the series due to its reputation and Eccleston being " one of my favourite actors of all time " . After inadvertently attending the audition in a T @-@ shirt emblazoned with an image of two naked women kissing under the slogan " I support Nudist Colonies " , Myles was convinced she had not got the part ; her appearance contrasted grossly with Gwyneth 's personality . After being notified of her success Myles did not want to prioritise between her theatre commitments and Doctor Who ; her agent decided that she would appear in the episode . Russell T Davies was enamoured by her performance , which he felt confirmed that the actress was " one of Wales 's best @-@ kept secrets " , and subsequently wrote her a lead role in the Doctor Who spin @-@ off Torchwood . Myles ' Torchwood character Gwen Cooper is intimated to be related to Gwyneth in " Journey 's End " after the Doctor asks Gwen about her family history . Alan David was cast as Mr Sneed ; Gatiss was pleased with the casting , as he had grown up watching David .

= = = Filming and effects = = =

Filming took place in September and October 2004 . Although the story is set in 19th century Cardiff , the production was actually filmed in Swansea and Monmouth , as there were not enough Victorian @-@ looking buildings left in Cardiff . Cardiff 's New Theatre was used for the theatre in which Dickens is telling a story at the beginning of the episode . An empty Victorian children 's home in Penarth was used for Sneed 's parlour . Based on research of Victorian morgues , the production team selected red and sepia as the main color scheme .

Small pieces of paper were sprayed as snow , which caused a problem as it scared the horses . However , the snow falling from the sky was a foam substance . The actors who played the dead bodies possessed by the Gelth had simple make @-@ up , with just shading and contact lenses and no prosthetics . The production team was mindful of the programme 's audience , and decided to not have any missing facial features . Originally , visual effects company The Mill planned the computer @-@ generated effects ( CGI ) to just be the " ethereal swirl " , but in the seance scene they ran into the challenge of animating the Gelth 's mouth . The Gelth turning red during the seance scene was a " last @-@ minute " change to the visual effects . The Mill overshot their quota of CGI for the

episode , and compensated with small swirls in shots that focused on other characters . The head speaking was in fact actress Zoe Thorne , who had been filmed separately and used as a template for animation . In other scenes , Thorne had the challenge of matching her voice @-@ overs to the actors who portrayed the bodies animated by the Gelth .

= = Broadcast and reception = =

" The Unquiet Dead " was first broadcast in the United Kingdom on BBC One on 9 April 2005 . In the United States , the episode aired on 24 March 2006 on the Sci @-@ Fi Channel . Overnight figures showed that the episode was watched by 8 @.@ 3 million viewers in the UK , an audience share of 37 % . When final ratings were calculated , figures rose to 8 @.@ 86 million . The episode also received an Appreciation Index of 80 . " The Unquiet Dead " received some criticism from parents , who felt that it was " too scary " for their young children ; the BBC dismissed the complaints , saying that it had never been intended for the youngest of children .

Doctor Who novelist and Faction Paradox creator Lawrence Miles posted a scathing review of " The Unquiet Dead " on the Internet within an hour of its broadcast , focusing on a perceived political subtext suggesting that asylum seekers ( the Gelth ) are really all evil and out to exploit liberal generosity ( the Doctor ) . He criticised the script for promoting xenophobia and " claiming that all foreigners were invaders " , especially as the top stories in the news were about immigration into Britain . The review produced considerable backlash on the Internet , mainly over his comments about writer Mark Gatiss . Miles was personally contacted and ran into trouble with his publishers . Miles deleted the review and posted a revision , though the original is still available on another of his websites .

Dek Hogan of Digital Spy stated he " really enjoyed " the episode and it was " beautifully dark " . He later described it as " a chilling tale " and " a cracker " . Now Playing magazine reviewer Arnold T Blumburg gave " The Unquiet Dead " a grade of A- , describing it as " spectacular " , though he noted there were " a few hiccups , such as the weak and convenient plot point that forces the Gelth ... to be drawn out of their human hosts by the mere presence of gas " . He also criticised Eccleston for making the Doctor appear an " ineffectual goof " , and noted that he played no role in the resolution . In 2013 , Mark Braxton of Radio Times described the episode as " a sparkling script , as crisp and inviting as a winter wonderland " , praising the magical atmosphere and the treatment of Dickens . However , he felt that " the spectral swirlings are all a bit Raiders of the Lost Ark " . In Who Is the Doctor , a guide to the revived series , Graeme Burk felt that " The Unquiet Dead " was " terribly , terribly disappointing " on first viewing , as Rose and the Doctor 's characterisation did not drive the plot and the story was reduced to playing it safe and being " ordinary " , as it just made the aliens evil instead of discussing their morality . Despite this , he wrote that the story was still enjoyable , with a " delightfully ludicrous " set @-@ up , " vividly realized " period setting , and the characterisation of Dickens . Burk 's coauthor , Robert Smith ? [ sic ] , called the episode a " complete mess " . He felt that Gatiss was attempting to recreate the classic series , but that it came across as " half @-@ hearted " . He felt that there was no moral dilemma and Sneed underwent an unsettling character change . While he noted that Eccleston and Piper were " excellent " , he felt that Rose and the Doctor 's developing relationship was not subtle .

= = = Reviews = = =

" The Unquiet Dead " reviews at Outpost Gallifrey

" The Unquiet Dead " reviews at The Doctor Who Ratings Guide