

## EARTHSHOCK



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*'Now I'll never know if I was right.'*

## SYNOPSIS

Earth, 2526

In the year 2526 on Earth, as a scientific expedition explored a newly discovered cave system rich in dinosaur fossils, they were attacked out of the darkness by mysterious beings. Of the eight scientists, only Professor Kyle made it out to the surface. She radioed for assistance from the army, and a squad led by Lieutenant Scott arrived.

The soldiers set up a scanning array designed to detect life forms at the cave entrance. When the scanner was activated, no life forms were detected inside. Scott's team decided to go down and investigate, Kyle leading them to the bodies. As the soldiers advanced through the caves, the scanner on the surface picked up strange readings. Walters and Snyder, the officers left at the surface, thought the scanner was at fault since the equipment was "ancient." None of the soldiers inside noticed they were being followed by two mysterious figures.

Dr Kyle led the soldiers back through the tunnels, explaining that the expedition had seemed "cursed"

from the beginning, with equipment frequently breaking or going missing. As they travelled, the lights that the scientists installed in the caverns failed briefly, leading to one of the troopers dislocating her shoulder. Scott sent her back to the surface, and Walters reported that he'd seen another of the mysterious signals on the scanner. The cave filled with strange noises, which Dr Kyle said she'd heard before just before the attack.

On the TARDIS, Adric complained that the Doctor did not respect or pay sufficient attention to him. A discussion between them degenerated into a shouting match, and Adric announced that he was tired of being an outsider and wished to return to E-Space and Terradon, the world his people originally came from. The Doctor told him that travelling to E-Space again was too dangerous, but Adric insisted that he was capable of doing the calculations necessary to do so safely.

The Doctor materialised the TARDIS inside the cave system, and announced he was going outside for a walk (because his argument with Adric had made him particularly angry). Tegan went out to help calm him down, while Nyssa told Adric to go ahead and work on the calculations so they could all discuss the problem rationally once the Doctor

had calmed down, before joining the others outside. They convinced the Doctor to apologise and at least look at Adric's calculations before dismissing the idea outright. Nyssa noticed some remarkably well-preserved dinosaur fossils on the cave wall, and the Doctor explained to her how such creatures once existed all over the Earth before many of them became extinct after a meteor impact 65 million years before.

On the surface, Walters detected the arrival of the Doctor on his scanner, pointing out to Scott that there were three new life forms in the caves and that one of them registered as having two hearts. Scott ordered his troops to ready their arms and set them to stun. Snyder noticed that the wounded trooper and her partner were making very slow progress and entered the cave herself to assist them. She was still searching for them when Walters saw another flare on the scanner, followed by the life signs of the two soldiers fading out, then Snyder's own. The mysterious figures had killed them, without ever appearing on the scanner.



Walters reported the disappearance of Snyder and the others to Scott. Scott ordered Sergeant Mitchell to take a couple of troops back in that direction while the others continued on in search of the three new "aliens." As Walters watched, another flare went off near Mitchell's group. Mitchell found the remains of Snyder, then saw the two figures and reported them to Walters, before being killed.

Meanwhile, Scott's team reached the site of the original attack, and Kyle noticed a new rockfall there. Realising the aliens were close, Scott ordered his troops to take up defensive positions. The Doctor and his group continued to explore, and as they entered the same cavern Scott immediately held them at gunpoint, demanding to know where they hid the bodies. The Doctor insisted they had

just arrived themselves, but Scott would hear none of it. Kyle suggested the bodies might be under the rockfall, and Scott put the companions to work clearing it away.



Doing so revealed a small metal hatch in the cavern wall. Scott ordered the Doctor to open it, but before he could even try the troops were attacked by the mysterious figures. They and the troops exchanged fire while the companions scattered for cover. Watching them, the Doctor deduced that they must be androids, explaining why they didn't register on the scanners. The androids scanned the troops, settling on the Doctor and transmitting his image back to their masters: the Cybermen!

The Doctor told the troops to concentrate their fire on one of the androids, and they were able to partially damage it, causing them both to withdraw but leaving the soldiers still pinned down. The Doctor theorised they might be protecting whatever was inside the hatch. Meanwhile, Adric wondered where his shipmates had wandered off to and came out of the TARDIS to find them. He nearly stumbled onto the androids, but the companions warned him away.

The Doctor told Scott to attack the hatch, hoping that the orders the androids had to protect it would conflict with their self-preservation programming and confuse them. The ploy was successful, and while one of the androids was motionless Adric struck it with a rock at the same time a trooper shot it, disabling it. The other android continued fighting on its own, but Scott was able to destroy it as well.

When the Cybermen's contact with the cave was cut off, they realised their plans needed to be hurried along before the Doctor learned what was happening. The Cyberleader ordered the activation of the device hidden inside the hatch: a devastatingly powerful bomb!



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The Doctor set about opening the hatch, which had been damaged by the troopers' weapons, and immediately recognised the bomb inside. However, at first he thought that it had been activated by him opening the hatch, and, blaming himself, determined to try to stop it while Tegan got everyone else in the caves into the TARDIS for protection. Once he realised that was not the case, he rushed into the TARDIS to jam the signal being sent to the bomb. Having accomplished that, he and Adric set about disarming it before the bomb's owner could override the jamming signal. Though the jamming was eventually defeated, it bought enough time for the Doctor to dismantle the bomb.



The Cybermen realised that no one on 26th century Earth had the technological skills to defeat their bomb, so someone must have helped them. The Cyberleader reviewed the android's recordings, and though he did not recognise the Doctor or any of his companions, he did see the TARDIS in the background and realised who these strangers must be.

The Doctor tried to get Scott and his team off the TARDIS so he could go out and find whoever was beaming the signal to the bomb, but Scott insisted that if Earth was under attack he was going to help defend it. While they traveled out into deep space in search of the signal, the Doctor and Adric apologised to each other for their earlier fight, and Adric admitted he actually did not want to leave the TARDIS at all.

In Sector 16, a freighter was docked at a space station near Earth. Security checks were tight because Earth was hosting a major interstellar conference. On board the freighter, Ringway (the security officer) and Berger (the pilot) discussed how delays caused by the general alert threatened

to make them miss their arrival deadlines, and consequently forfeit their bonuses. In fact, they were in such a rush that they had neglected to file any reports on three missing crewmen on their own ship for fear of additional bureaucratic delays. As the freighter's captain, Briggs, returned to the ship herself and got the freighter underway, the TARDIS materialised in her hold in search of the broadcast signal. The Doctor and Adric left the others inside while they took a look around.

The two wandered around the maze of corridors in the ship, with the Doctor making every effort to get noticed. Two security guards noticed them, but followed them at a distance while first Ringway and then Briggs were informed. The Doctor heard screams and, running to investigate, found the two guards dead at the same time that Ringway arrived to arrest them for murder. Despite their protests, he brought the pair to the bridge.



While Briggs questioned the Doctor and Adric, both the freighter and the TARDIS detected the sudden presence of a powerful magnetic field surge. Unknown to both, throughout the holds of the freighter Cybermen soldiers wrapped in clear plastic began to activate. Berger traced the power loss to Hold 4, and Briggs ordered Ringway to send a squad down to investigate. The Cyberleader, realising the power surge would be detected, ordered that it was time to take control of the ship.

Berger and the Doctor tried to convince Briggs to bring the freighter out of warp to investigate the problems, but Briggs pointed out that if they emerged from warp, Earth's security forces would stop the ship, and the resulting delays would lead to loss of bonuses and a heavy fine she was unwilling to risk. Ringway's team took up defensive



positions around the hold, assuming there were more stowaways inside. Around them, the security cameras began to go offline.

On the TARDIS, Scott tired of waiting for the Doctor and assembled his team to find out what was happening. Tegan insisted on accompanying them, while Nyssa and Kyle stayed behind to wait for word from the Doctor. From the bridge, the Doctor watched in horror as the remaining cameras picked up dozens of Cybermen marching through the hold. Ringway's forces engaged them in combat, but their weapons had little effect and the Cybermen began to slaughter them. Scott and his team heard the firing from a distance and, setting their weapons on "kill", made their way forward.

Ringway returned to the bridge and aimed a gun at Captain Briggs, revealing himself to be a Cyberman spy. The Doctor made a joking reference to the Cybermen's aversion to gold, and Adric tried to hide his own gold star badge, but Ringway saw him doing so and confiscated it. Berger hid behind a console, and when Ringway realised he'd lost track of her, the Doctor and Briggs were able to take advantage and overpower him, sealing the doors just before the Cybermen made it onto the bridge.

The Doctor pocketed Adric's badge, while Briggs insisted they only needed to hold out until the freighter reached Earth, at which point local security could handle the Cybermen. Adric asked how many of the mysterious silos the Cybermen had emerged from the freighter was carrying, and Briggs realised her ship was carrying fifteen thousand of them – an invasion force that would overwhelm Earth's defences.

The Cyberleader arrived at the bridge to oversee their efforts to cut through the bulkhead doors, insisting that the Doctor himself was to be taken alive. The Cybermen used a thermal lance to melt through the door. The Doctor tapped into the systems the freighter used to stabilise the containers holding the antimatter that powered the engines. When the door was softened by the heat, the Cybermen began to physically tear through, but the Doctor used the stabilising system to solidify the door with a Cyberman still stuck partway through.

Scott's team found the massacred remains of the security forces, then retreated into hiding just before being spotted by Cyberman sentries left behind. They massed their fire on two of the guards, knocking them down, and Tegan burst forth and

seized one of their weapons, using it to finish off the Cyberman at close range. Unfortunately, the other one escaped despite being wounded, and made its way to the Cyberleader. Realising the freighter had more humans on it than Ringway had told them, the Cyberleader ordered the activation of more Cybermen to defeat them. Meanwhile, the Cybermen placed explosive charges on the bulkheads to destroy them completely.

When the doors blew open, the blast wave knocked the Doctor and Adric down, and soon the entire bridge was controlled by the Cybermen. The Cyberleader immediately had one of his soldiers kill Ringway for deceiving them. He gloated that the Doctor would live just long enough to watch the Earth destroyed. The Cybermen installed a new control mechanism to the freighter's warp drive, locking out the navigational system and turning the freighter into a flying bomb that Earth's defence forces would not detect until too late.





More Cyberman smashed their way out of the storage silos in the holds, and Scott's team took cover to hide from them, but Tegan slipped past them and made her way towards the bridge on her own. Unfortunately, she did not make it far before being taken captive herself. Scott and his troops retreated back to the TARDIS. As they approached, Nyssa opened the doors, but two Cybermen emerged from the dark hold and attacked the troops at the door, forcing their way inside. A fire fight ensued, in which both Cybermen were killed, but Dr Kyle died as well. Scott claimed the two Cyberman weapons, and returned outside to try to retake the ship over Nyssa's protests.



The Cyberleader revealed to Adric that the conference on Earth was being attended by the leaders of many worlds, with the intention of signing treaties to unite their forces into an army large enough that the Cybermen themselves would not be able to defeat. Tegan was brought to the bridge, where the Cyberleader threatened her as an example to show the Doctor that his emotions, particularly of friendship, were a weakness. Once the ship's systems had been locked down, the Cyberleader ordered his troops to evacuate the ship so they could prepare to hunt down and kill any survivors after the freighter struck the planet. The Cyberleader used Tegan as a hostage to force the Doctor to bring him to safety on the TARDIS (since the main fleet was still too far away to pick him up), but ordered that Adric be left behind as he only needed one hostage. The Doctor protested, but Adric volunteered to stay, and the Doctor and Tegan returned to the TARDIS with the Cyberleader and his guard, who was ordered to search the ship.

Scott and his last couple of men made their way back to the bridge, where they surprised and overpowered the two Cybermen who'd been left behind as guards. Adric and Berger set to work

trying to disconnect the Cybermen's device from the drive so they could change their heading, while Scott and Briggs tried to fend off the last few from reaching the bridge.

The Cyberleader ordered the Doctor to lock onto the freighter and follow it to Earth. Adric's remarkable capabilities with mathematics allowed him to overcome the first of three computational locks on the device, and when Berger attempted to re-engage navigational systems the ship's drive malfunctioned, causing the freighter to begin to travel back in time. The TARDIS continued to follow it, and the Cyberleader tried to order the Doctor to reboard the freighter to deal with the humans but because of the warp jump the Doctor was physically unable to do so.

When Adric defeated the second of the locks, the freighter emerged from warp 65 million years into the past, but still locked onto Earth's spatial coordinates. The Cyberleader was satisfied; if the freighter destroyed the Earth in the past, that seemed just as good to him as destroying it in the present. However, the Doctor realised that the explosion of the freighter's antimatter engines in this period must have been the event that wiped out most of the dinosaurs, and indeed this explosion was meant to happen in Earth's history so the mammals could become the dominant species.

On the freighter, the humans scrambled to make it to escape pods before they entered the Earth's inescapable gravity well. Adric insisted he could still defeat the final lock, but Scott ordered him off the bridge, pulling him physically into the lift. As soon as Scott let go, though, Adric determined the way to defeat the lock and slipped away from them just before the lift closed for another attempt.

The escape pod called the TARDIS, and Scott told them that all but Adric had made it off the ship safely. The Cyberleader, realising he had failed, determined to kill the Doctor, but Tegan threw off his aim with his gun and the Doctor was able to jam Adric's gold badge into his respirator, crippling him. The Cyberleader fired wildly, damaging the TARDIS controls, and the Doctor wrested the gun away at last and shot the Cyberleader dead.

Back on the freighter, Adric was working on the final navigational lock when a wounded Cyberman left behind by the others made its way onto the bridge. It fired once at Adric but missed, destroying the lock interface, before expiring itself. Adric looked



helplessly at the damaged console, and then at the viewscreen showing Earth directly ahead. He clutched the belt he had gotten from his brother, knowing he was helpless.

The Doctor tried to repair the TARDIS controls in time to rescue Adric, not noticing that the remaining Cyberman had returned to the console room. Fortunately, Nyssa was able to grab the Cyberleader's gun in time to shoot it before it could kill the Doctor. However, the Doctor's efforts were for naught. As he and the other companions watched, the freighter exploded in Earth's atmosphere with Adric still on board.



register Nyssa as an alien, though it did the Doctor. Perhaps his two heartbeats specifically gave him away.

## 🌀 RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

While *Earthshock* as an adventure has a solid and reliable "Cybermen attempt to destroy the Earth" plot line, it is most well-remembered as the adventure in which Adric died. Player character death is a touchy subject and should be handled with great care by Gamemasters; players can become very attached to their characters and having one die can be quite traumatic, as well as terribly disruptive to the plans of the Gamemaster herself. Player character death is rare in Doctor Who: Adventures in Time and Space, and it should be; there should always be plenty of ways for players to fail or struggle that don't involve player characters dying (NPCs, of course, are a completely different question!).

However, the occasional reminder of mortality is sometimes dramatically appropriate, and so Gamemasters should occasionally consider discussing the possibility of such deaths with their players. When a character has completed a dramatic arc, or simply no longer seems to fit with the group, an agreed-upon death, perhaps one of heroic sacrifice, might be just the thing.

Beyond Adric's cruel fate, the adventure itself is a nice example of escalating threats. The opening scenes are wonderfully atmospheric, as the hapless NPC scientists and soldiers are cut down mercilessly by the mysterious figures. A skilled Gamemaster could present this as a quick scene "for the audience" before the players actually get involved, ratcheting up the suspense at the table. An even better technique might be to allow the players to take on the roles of the NPCs temporarily, with everyone knowing in advance they're playing 'redshirts' who are unlikely to survive. This not only allows the Gamemaster to show off her villains at their best, but gets the player characters personally invested in defeating them after taking the initial clobbering the bad guys deal out.

Once the Doctor has dealt with the androids and the bomb, there's a natural break in the story while the locale shifts to Captain Briggs' ship. Again, we begin with the suspenseful search of the cargo hold, where the Doctor and Adric promptly get captured and blamed for the mysterious disappearances. Once they reach the bridge, the magnitude of the problem is finally revealed and it's a dead run to

## CONTINUITY

- Why does the Cybermen's lock on the navigational system of the freighter cause the ship to become a time machine? Perhaps the time warp was generated by the ship's engines. The *SS Madame de Pompadour* (in *The Girl in the Fireplace*) was able to use its engines to tear holes in space-time. Perhaps with enough power and the right calculations, any ship with a hyperspace drive can be turned into a time machine, albeit an unreliable and dangerous one (in much the same way that any car can be a submarine if you roll the windows up tight and drive straight into the ocean).
- Adric is the first companion to die while travelling with the Doctor since Katarina and Sara Kingdom (*The Daleks' Master Plan* in *The First Doctor Sourcebook*).
- The 26th century army seems reasonably gender-integrated.
- Trakenites are sufficiently close to human physiologically that Lt. Scott's scanner didn't

the climax, where Adric makes the fateful decision to turn back and try to solve the lock puzzle one last time and the Doctor displays an impressive savagery in killing the Cyberleader.



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### THERMAL LANCE

This tripod-mounted gun can melt the interior doors of a spaceship in less than a minute, allowing the fiendish Cybermen to tear their way in.

**Traits:** Bulky, Delete, Restriction (takes time to build to full effect).

### FURTHER ADVENTURES

- Did the interstellar conference actually accomplish the alliance between multiple governments that the Cyberleader feared? If it represents an important milestone in interstellar relations, perhaps the Cybermen were not the only race interested in interfering. Either other local enemies, or time travellers wishing to reshape the course of history might also show up to cause troubles.
- There might be further possibilities here as well for the heroic Lieutenant Scott. Now that Scott knows his enemy, he can return to his own time and become a leader in the united front against the Cybermen. Presumably humanity and its allies win – by *Revenge of the Cybermen* (which occurs more than 300 years later) the Fourth Doctor notes they no longer have an empire, or even a single planet. Perhaps he might be encountered some years later as a veteran of a campaign against the metal menaces.
- That freighter had escape pods. Some of the Cybermen might have ejected moments before it smashed into Earth. If anything could survive in the nuclear winter caused by the impact, it would be the Cybermen. What could a few desperate Cybermen do in the wilderness of 65 million years ago? What if they entombed themselves to wait for civilisation to arise again, or started converting the native Silurians into Cybermen? For that matter, we've seen the Cybermen create non-humanoid cyborgs, like the Cybershades (see *The Next Doctor* in *The Tenth Doctor Sourcebook*) – can Cyber-dinosaurs be far behind?

## LIEUTENANT SCOTT



AWARENESS	4	PRESENCE	3
COORDINATION	3	RESOLVE	4
INGENUITY	3	STRENGTH	4

Scott was a Lieutenant in the army unit instructed to investigate the deaths of a team of geologists in a cave system. The investigation revealed a Cyberman plot to destroy the Earth, which Scott helped the Doctor thwart despite the tragic deaths of Adric, Dr Kyle and several soldiers under Scott's command.

### SKILLS

Athletic 4, Fighting 3, Knowledge 2, Marksman 3, Subterfuge 2, Survival 2, Transport 2.

### TRAITS

**By the Book:** Scott adheres to military doctrine.  
**Crack Shot:** +2 bonus to Marksman when making especially tricky or impressive shots.  
**Obligation (Minor):** To the military.  
**Military Rank (Major):** He's a lieutenant.  
**Quick Reflexes:** Always goes first in his Action Phase.  
**Tough:** Reduce all damage suffered by 2.

TECH LEVEL: 6      STORY POINTS: 3

## CAPTAIN BRIGGS



<b>AWARENESS</b>	3	<b>PRESENCE</b>	3
<b>COORDINATION</b>	3	<b>RESOLVE</b>	4
<b>INGENUITY</b>	3	<b>STRENGTH</b>	2

Captain Briggs commanded a freighter that was secretly used by the Cybermen to smuggle thousands of their soldiers through Earth's orbital security systems. She was so concerned about making her shipment on time (and avoiding the cash penalties for missing deadlines) that she ignored the disappearance of several of her crew until matters were far too late. Fortunately, the Doctor was able to defeat the Cybermen, though her ship was destroyed in the process.

### SKILLS

Athletic 1, Convince 2, Fighting 2, Knowledge 2, Marksman 2, Subterfuge 3, Technology 2, Transport 3.

### TRAITS

**Argumentative:** Captain Briggs doesn't listen to good advice.

**Obsession (Major):** The bottom line. Profit above all.

**TECH LEVEL:** 6     **STORY POINTS:** 2

## CYBERLEADER



<b>AWARENESS</b>	3	<b>PRESENCE</b>	4
<b>COORDINATION</b>	2	<b>RESOLVE</b>	4
<b>INGENUITY</b>	3	<b>STRENGTH</b>	7

This Cyberleader (there have been several) was tasked with disrupting the interstellar conference on Earth that would have united many worlds against them in the 26th century. Once he learned that the Doctor was responsible for his initial plan failing, he resolved not only to defeat him but to humiliate him personally. Despite his claims otherwise, he frequently seemed to betray emotions such as hatred and desire for revenge.

### SKILLS

Convince 3, Fighting 3, Knowledge 3 (Tactics 5), Marksman 2, Medicine 1, Science 1, Subterfuge 2, Technology 4, Transport 2.

### TRAITS

**Armour (Major):** Reduces damage sustained by 10.

### Cyborg

**Fear Factor 3:** +6 to intimidating others.

**Networked:** Connected to the other Cybermen.

**Slow:** Speed during Chases is 1.

**Technically Adept:** +2 to rolls to use complex devices.

**Weakness (Major):** Gold jams his internal systems, inflicting four levels of damage per round.

**TECH LEVEL:** 7     **STORY POINTS:** 8