

# SYNTHIA IN THE CYBER-CRYPT

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## The story

*2062, in a parallel universe not totally unfamiliar ...*

Although the alien technology discovered late in the war by Nazi Germany might have turned the tide had they been able to research it thoroughly, in the end it only benefited Colonel Fredersen of the 7<sup>th</sup> US Armoured Division. This ambitious young officer took the scavenged UFO components and several of the captured German scientists back to America, and the discoveries they made under his command soon led to huge scientific advances in many fields, including artificial intelligence, bionics, cryonics, computer design, and of course weapons. Enriched by civilian and military contracts, Fredersen set up “Paxcom” which soon become the world’s leading supplier of high-tech goods and armaments.

However, it was not long before many of these technological secrets were leaked to the Eastern Bloc, and a deadly arms race ensued. Even as Paxcom continued to sell ever deadlier weapons to NATO and its allies, his computers were predicting with certainty that World War 3 would soon break out. Determined not only to survive this disaster but also to thrive in the world to come – perhaps even to rule over it – he ordered the construction of Base Omega: a heavily shielded underground complex containing cryogenic chambers in which Fredersen and his close circle could sleep out the worst of the post-nuclear catastrophe, while generations of scientists would continue to

live and work within the base, further perfecting Paxcom's technology in order to prepare for their re-emergence into a likely barren and hostile world.

A hundred years after this base was first established, and long after the bombs had fallen, Professor Fairchild – Paxcom's current head of AI development – has created her masterpiece: the HEC-80 (Humanoid Environmental Custodian): latest in a long line of robots designed to assist the few remaining humans in making the Earth habitable again. Her prototype exhibits such advanced traits – not only intelligence but even signs of emotion – that she names it "Synthia" and redesigns it with a feminine frame. Determined though she is never to bring an actual child into this devastated world, it is some solace to have a "daughter" even of steel and silicon.

The base Geiger counters sense that the time to re-emerge is fast approaching, and automatically revive the cryogenic sleepers. When Fredersen discovers that the scientists have spent the last few decades researching purely peaceful fields, he is enraged, and orders most of their leaders – including Professor Fairchild – imprisoned, and their work decommissioned. Before she is taken to detention, however, she manages to order Synthia to hide. The remaining scientists, too afraid to protest, are put to work designing the war machines that Fredersen believes he will need to assert his dominance over whatever world awaits them. Intrigued by the possibilities offered by Fairchild's robotics research, he orders them to design a new robot in the HEC series, based on Synthia's model, just as intelligent and autonomous but immeasurably stronger and deadlier, the perfect super-soldier.

If you think this is a questionable idea, you'd be right ...

Not only powerful in its own right, the HEC-81 is also capable of infecting and controlling other machines with adaptive remote viruses. Its external frame has not even been assembled before, deranged with its own sense of power and superiority, it turns every machine in the base against their human makers and instigates a massacre. Fredersen and his personal guard attempt to put it down with laser rifles, but it simply causes them to malfunction and explode, at

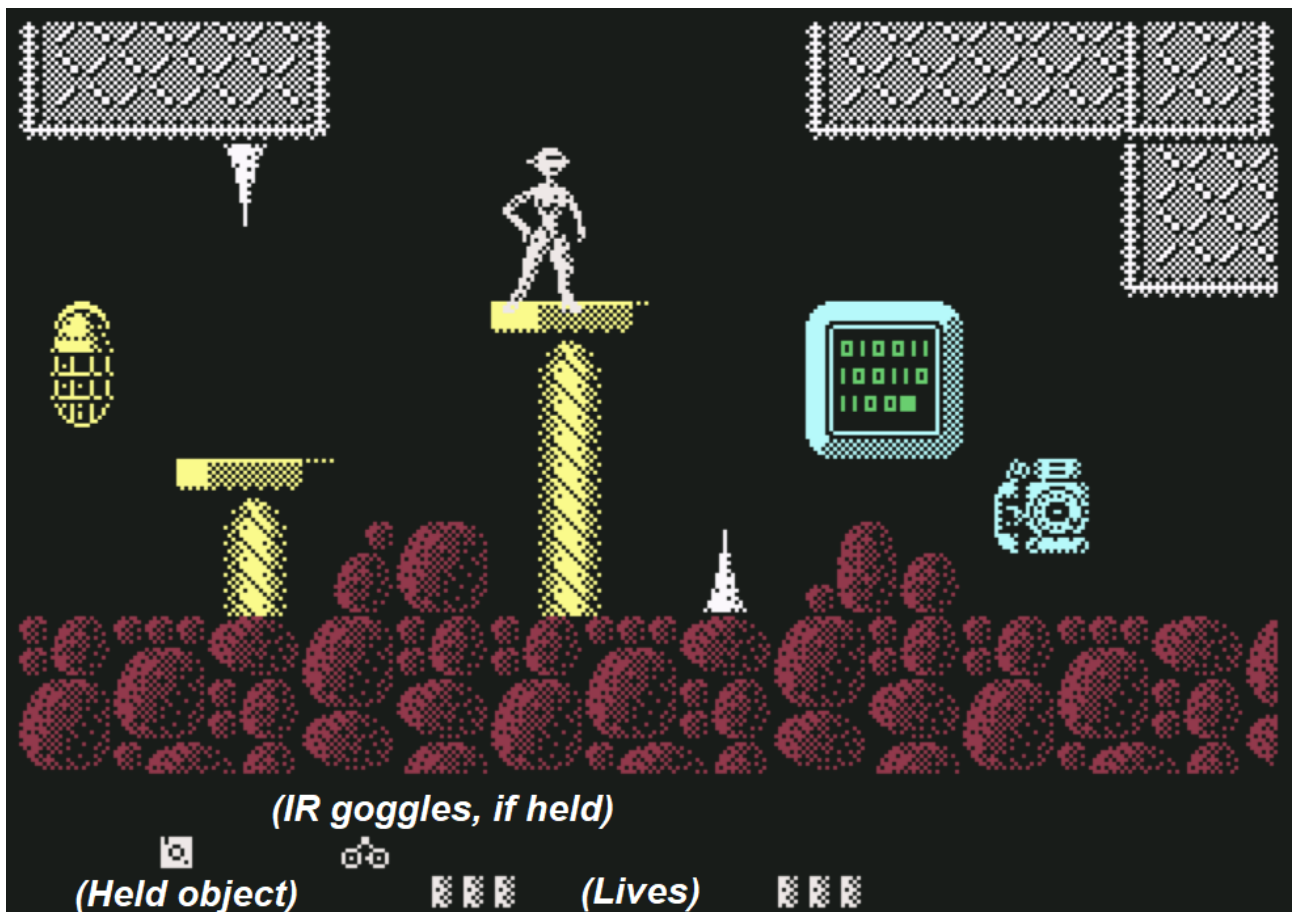
least finally ridding the world of the man who reduced it to this state. The few scientists who survive retreat, wounded and desperate, into the cryogenic section which is the deepest, most protected area of the base, but they know it will not be long before the monster they have created breaks through their shielding and quite probably renders their entire species extinct.

From her hiding place near the storage sections, Synthia hears the gunfire and explosions. She knows that her creator – her “mother” – is in danger, if not dead already, and this causes her great distress, but also confusion. Combat is not in her nature. What can she hope to achieve against this menace? Nevertheless, all she can do is try ...

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## The mission

TAKE NOTE: Although a SEUCK-engined game, shooting will not get you through this one. Synthia has no weapons, nor any means of defence against the base hazards other than her wits and agility.



The fire button is used either to collect objects, or to attempt to use the “held” object wherever you see a clue marker (a flashing question mark). The held object is displayed over your lives counter (the twin lines of power cells at the bottom of the screen). Only one object may be held at a time, with one exception (the infrared goggles) which is displayed separately when collected. However, an object may be collected any number of times from its relevant storage area, if you find you need to drop one object in order to take another.

The base contains many dangers:

**Electrified spikes** – Self-explanatory, a common hazard.

**Acid drops** – Particularly prevalent in the chemical section.

**Reactor vents** – Look out for the small pilot light. Harmless in itself, but it means a plume of superheated gas is not far away.

**Electrode traps** – Time your path through these carefully, as they emit a regular high-voltage arc.

**Borazon sawblades** – Can cut through anything, including you.

**Security lasers** – Too fast-firing to avoid, so think carefully.

**Electrodrone generators** – Rare, but deadly and advanced, these Tesla coil-like devices emit a holographic high-energy ball that is quite slow-moving, but can fly in any direction. Take particular care when moving between rooms, as the drone also has a short-range quantum jump ability and might well be waiting to meet you ...

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