

DUNGEON CRAWL CLASSICS

FROZEN IN TIME

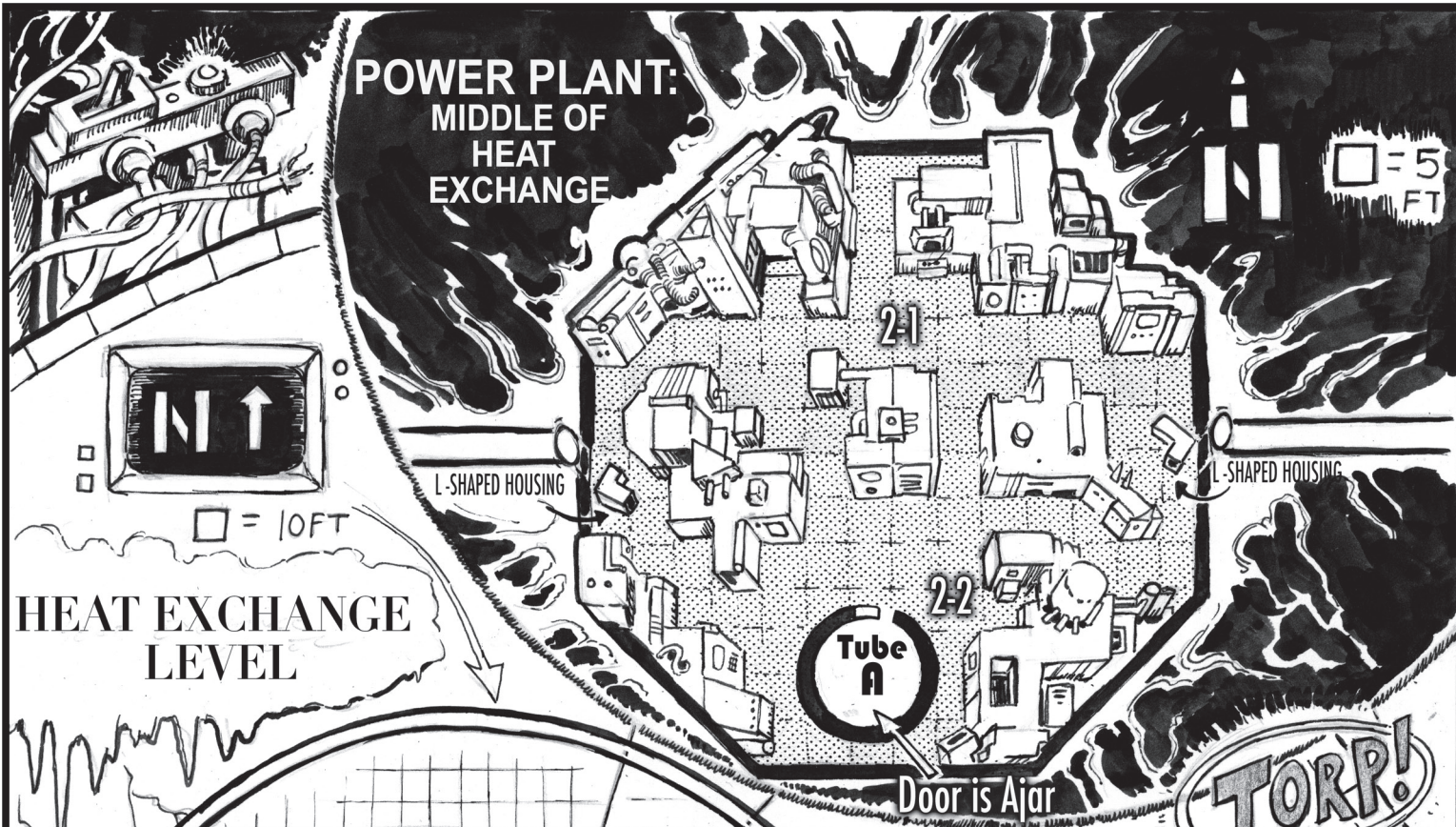
#79: A LEVEL 1 ADVENTURE
BY MICHAEL CURTIS



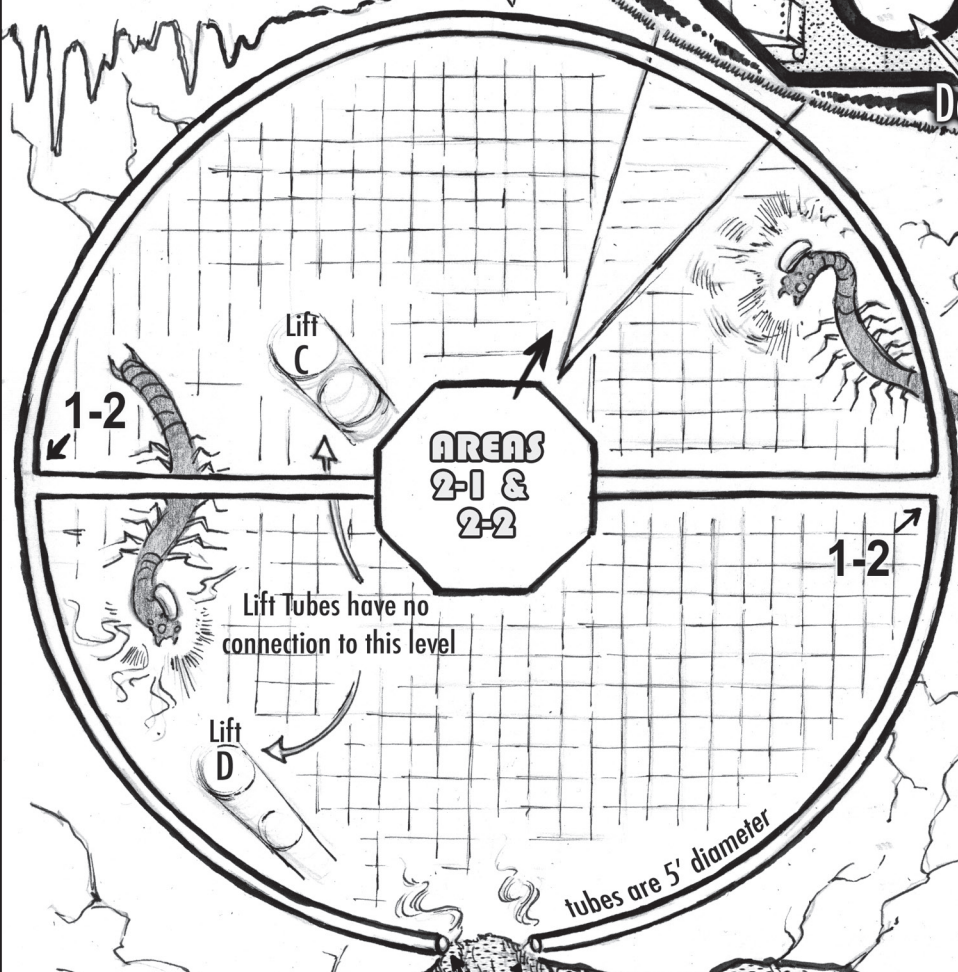
Plus: *The Forlorn North*
Mini campaign setting!

**POWER PLANT:
MIDDLE OF
HEAT
EXCHANGE**

□ = 5 FT



**HEAT EXCHANGE
LEVEL**



FROZEN IN TIME

A LEVEL 1 ADVENTURE

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INTRODUCTION

Remember the good old days, when adventures were underground, NPCs were there to be killed, and the finale of every dungeon was the dragon on the 20th level? Those days are back. Dungeon Crawl Classics adventures don't waste your time with long-winded speeches, weird campaign settings, or NPCs who aren't meant to be killed. Each adventure is 100% good, solid dungeon crawl, with the monsters you know, the traps you remember, and the secret doors you know are there somewhere.

"Frozen in Time" is an adventure designed for six 1st level characters which pits them against a most unusual adversary: a time traveler's secret hideaway. This adventure can also be used as a character creation funnel for judges seeking to run an atypical Dungeon Crawl Classics RPG campaign. Suggestions on both uses are provided below.



ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Zepes Null-Eleven was born in one of the rare civilizations where time travel was a reality, rather than a scientific possibility. Although the ability to jaunt along the time stream was not commonplace, it was known well-enough to require an elite cadre of soldiers, scientists, and law enforcement personnel tasked with the duty to protect the universal timeline from malicious tampering and the inadvertent meddling of over-curious time tourists. A natural prodigy, it was a simple matter for Zepes Null-Eleven to master the science of time travel and achieve placement within this exceptional group of temporal defenders.

Alas, it was this same prodigious intellect paired with Null-Eleven's immense ego that led to his disgrace. Zepes, considering himself superior to his comrades-in-time, chose to use his mastery of the time stream to line his own pockets. Jumping from epoch to epoch, Null-Eleven pillaged great works of art and captured rare animal specimens to sell to unscrupulous potentates, business tycoons, and the idle rich, all while staying one step ahead of justice at the hands of his former colleagues. Pursued endlessly (and enjoying the cat-and-mouse game), Zepes picked an unassuming backwater of the time stream to build his hideout and treasure house. That backwater was the same world and time the adventurers call home.

Null-Eleven constructed his hideaway deep inside a glacier, knowing that such a forbidding and persistent environment would protect it from discovery by not only his pursuers, but from the primitive civilizations present in that time period. Sophisticated security measures slaughtered any creature venturing onto the glacier containing it, and the entire ice sheet developed a sinister reputation amongst the barbarians who dwelled in the frozen wastes of the Forlorn North. Considered taboo by these tribes, legends sprang up that the glacier was home to "ice demons" that carried away any hunter entering their domain. Free from inadvertent discovery and far enough off the main routes of the time stream, Null-Eleven's secret base of operations was never discovered by his pursuers.

Unfortunately, even Zepes' command of time and his access to advance technology could not stave off the inevitability of death. Time and disease ultimately felled the great time thief, claiming the victory his opponents sought without success. Zepes perished inside his hidden vault, dying alone amidst his wonders.

Although its master was dead, the hideaway continued its vigilance against intruders and the glacier maintained its haunted reputation for centuries. However, although enduring, ice is not eternal.

Three days ago, a massive portion of the glacier's face collapsed in a thundering roar, terrifying the barbarian tribesmen who wintered near the thermal springs close by. When the last of the ice settled and the spray of frost and water subsided, two dark holes emitting green smoke were visible in the ice face. The tribe elders gathered in the Hut of the Ancestors to contemplate the meaning of this omen. Emerging the next day, the tribal leaders announced that the collapse might be a sign that the ice demons' power had finally broken and that a select group of champions need to enter those foreboding holes to discover if the icy devils were gone forever. The PCs have been chosen as those champions.

THE FORLORN NORTH

A MINI-CAMPAIGN SETTING

Publisher's Note: This adventure module was the first "science fantasy" adventure for DCC RPG and has proven very popular. I am very excited that it has reached the milestone of a second (and now third) printing. In honor of the second printing, I asked author Michael Curtis if there was anything he'd like to expand upon for the second printing. He answered that he wanted to continue to develop the setting that surrounds the adventure proper. Here, then, is a new addition to the adventure: The Forlorn North, a mini-campaign setting. Enjoy! – Joseph Goodman



owards the roof of the world lies a vast, untamed wilderness of frigid plains, shadowy evergreen forests, forbidding mountains, and gleaming glaciers. This primordial land is home to primitive tribesman, savage monsters, fading gods, and relics of antediluvian civilizations. This is the Forlorn North.

The Forlorn North is the default setting of DCC #79 Frozen in Time and that scenario is just one of many possible adventures that can occur within the region's confines. This section provides a capsule overview of the savage land, providing judges with additional information on the area surrounding the Ghost Ice should their players wish to further explore the Forlorn North or as a basic foundation for a campaign set entirely in the sub-arctic northland.

A FRIGID LAND

The Forlorn North is a huge expanse of permafrost plains and taiga running through the northern hemisphere of the world. It is comprised largely of evergreen forests, craggy mountain chains, icy rivers, lakes, and glaciers, and sub-arctic meadows that briefly bloom into explosions of color during the short summertime. It is a place of both pristine beauty and savage danger, and those creatures—both human and monstrous—who dwell are formidable and resilient beings.

During the long winter months, temperatures can plunge as low as -20° F and rise to 35° F on the warmest of winter days. Summer in the Forlorn North lasts a mere two months, but during this brief thaw temperatures can rise to almost 80° F for a few hours each day. Winds are far more active in the region than elsewhere, racing and howling out of the northwest year-round, bringing cargos of cold air down from the even icier lands near the pole. Despite the cold of the Forlorn North, heavy snowstorms are a rarity. Precipitation ranges 2" to 30" annually, most of which falls as rain during the summer months. But when snow does fall in the North, the accumulation lingers for months on end.

FORLORN FLORA AND FAUNA

The harsh environment of the Forlorn North would suggest a lifeless wasteland, but the truth is far different. Numerous species of plant and animal thrive in the region, in turn supporting the human and humanoid inhabitants that dwell here.

Trees are largely coniferous, with spruce, larch, pine, and fir trees predominating. Some deciduous trees—birch, alder, willow, and poplar—survive in areas that escape the worst of the winter freeze. Ferns, ramps, mosses, and lichens grow in the forests and craggy mountains, and a few species of berry bushes, notably lingonberry, cranberry, strawberry, cloudberry, and bunchberry, endure the climate, providing sustenance to bird, beast, and man alike. But not all flora is beneficial to life in the Forlorn North. Travelers should

be wary of chilblain lichen, which survives by siphoning heat from warm-blooded creatures, forcing them into a fatigued state and unable to escape the lichen's heat-draining power.

Fauna run the gamut from harmless to deadly in the Forlorn North. Smaller species of mammals such as beaver, squirrel, hare, and vole serve as prey for the wolves, bears, foxes, lynxes, snow tigers, and Wolverines that prowl the forests and meadows. Moose, elk, caribou, and wood bison graze in the woods and fields, providing the meat, bone, and hides so necessary for the nomadic human tribes of the North's survival. Towering over all these species is the woolly mammoth, who thunders through the land in migrating herds. Whales, seals, and walrus cavort in the icy oceans and along the rime-covered shores.

The streams and river of the Forlorn North teem with fish. Various species of whitefish, salmon, trout, pike, and even lamprey swim through the chilly depths or regularly migrate to and from the sea. Birds are seasonal in the cold lands, with most nesting birds departing before the winter months. Only ravens, eagles, buzzards, and other scavengers, as well as seed-eating birds like grouse and crossbills survive here year-round. Amphibians and reptiles are nearly non-existent here as they find it difficult to endure the long winters. Only the rare blue snake, ice salamander, frost-death toad, and wood frog endure.

MEN AND MONSTERS

Civilization as it is known in the warm southern climes is absent in the Forlorn North, but this doesn't mean all the inhabitants are bestial creatures. Man and other intelligence races call the cold wastes their home and can be either valuable allies or ferocious enemies to PCs exploring the north.

Humanity is by far the largest population of intelligent denizens in the North. Organized into small nomadic tribes, humans endure by hunting and gathering, possessing only Neolithic levels of technology. Although lacking the benefits of metalsmithing, their bone and flint-tipped weapons, combined with generations of wilderness lore, make them accomplished hunters, capable of taking down even the massive mammoths of the Forlorn North. The various clans move throughout the year, wintering in sheltered forests, caves, or adjacent to a rare hot spring. In the summer, the tribes follow the herds of mammoth, caribou, and elk to restock their larders for the next long winter.

Each tribe is overseen by a chieftain who is given his or her authority by a council of tribal elders, the clan shaman, fire-maker, and lore-keeper. Each tribesperson is responsible for specific duties within the group, such as hunting, gathering, animal herding, etc., and complete cooperation by all tribe members is key to the clan's survival. Upon coming of age, each youth undergoes a rite of adulthood that varies from tribe to tribe and sometimes from year to year. Passing this rite ushers the youth into full status as an adult of the tribe with all rights and privileges, including but not limited to permission to take a spouse and the right to speak before the council.

Magic is rare amongst the human tribes. Tribal shamans serve as priests and some can manifest divine spells if the spirit, entity, totem, or deity the clan venerates is supernaturally powerful enough. Arcane magic is far less common as the harsh life in the Forlorn North provides little time or opportunity to devote to