

Alliances are forged and a secret is revealed on the eve of an ancient celebration.

The heroes intercept a desperate cry for help originating from the extreme western corner of the Ice Kingdom of Naquk—a vast ice-sheet known as the Ku'ar. There they discover a group of ill-equipped giants who have been cut off from their village by an avalanche, leaving their children and the infirm on their own. The heroes are tasked with finding a way into the isolated valley and defending the village against voracious sea creatures and mysterious visitors who arrive in the night!

WHISPERS ON THE WIND

Whether actively scanning for radio transmissions or receiving word directly from a Freeman contact, the party learns that immediate assistance is required in Naquk. It seems that as part of an annual midwinter celebration, all of the healthy adult giants from the village of Vembyn ventured out across the ice to acquire a rare *limpid spike* (a tree-shaped structure comprised of ice and feather frost) to grace the village square for the commemoration of Crystal Fest. While away, an avalanche choked the valley, blocking access to the village. With little equipment or weaponry on-hand, the giants are now unable to bypass the snow, ice, and rock before Vembyn falls victim to an approaching threat. While the giants of Naquk are strongly allied with Emperor Ming, aiding this village could very well strengthen the relationship between them and the Freeman.



THE WHITE AND DRIFTED SNOW

If the heroes wish to meet with the giants, they find them huddled together unarmed and underdressed for the frigid weather, desperately trying to survive in the cold. Due to their number and sheer physical size, there is no way the rescuers can bring all the giants aboard their rocketship, and even so, they are reluctant to leave any brothers and sisters behind. Reward heroes who come up with other ways of helping the giants. Perhaps they deliver giant-sized cold weather clothes, blankets, tents, and other gear to the giants, or they might present them with some sort of Mongotech heating gizmo.

The leader of the giants is Juang, a brawny warrior who has clearly lived a rough life out on the ice. His face is horribly scarred from past bouts of frostbite. He steps forward, greets the party with a low bow, and explains their situation:

"As part of our winter celebration of Crystal Fest, it is customary for the adult members of the village to venture out across the ice to acquire a limpid spike within the frozen forest and return with it by sundown. As a display of fortitude, we must make this journey unarmed and, as you can see, wearing little more than skins. As we walked back to Vembyn carrying the most majestic spike we have ever seen, the ice-shelf shook and an avalanche choked the valley before us. Remoba, our resident scout, raced to the top of the fall and reported back via radiophone that the situation beyond the ridge is dire. It seems the ground has split and ice-crabs are emerging from the water below. If those creatures reach the village, they will make short work of our people there. With nightfall upon us and no weapons to speak of, there is little chance of us reaching the village in time. Won't you help us?"

Should the heroes opt to head directly to the village, bypassing a face-to-face meeting with the giants, the above can be communicated via radiophone. Juang emphasizes that time is of the essence.

The quickest and safest way over the towering wall of debris is via rocket. If the heroes opt to climb (assuming they have climbing gear), they find themselves facing plummeting temperatures, chilling gusts, and potential whiteouts from increasing snowfall. The lighting is Dark and the heroes must make -4 Survival rolls to navigate (see **Illumination Penalties** in *Savage Worlds*). Should they venture out and attempt the climb, these conditions alone should motivate the party to return to the ground and make the trip via rocketship.

Once the group successfully passes over the icfall, they spot the tiny village of Vembyn a couple Mongomiles ahead. Upon approaching, it appears two colossal ice-crabs have already reached the village. The rescuers can see occasional muzzle flashes from ray guns from various groups already engaged with the creepy crustaceans.

- **Naquk Villagers (12):** Use the Naquk Giant profile in *Flash Gordon*, but reduce their Strength to d8, and both Fighting and Shooting to d6. Half of the villagers carry ray gun pistols (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6+2, RoF 1), the other half wield huge long swords (Str+d10).

COLOSSAL ICE-CRAB [2]

Resembling enormous, pearlescent crabs, these carnivorous, swift-moving crustaceans occupy the waters beneath and around the Ice Kingdom of Naquk. They occasionally crawl up onto land to snatch prey.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+4, Vigor d8

Skills: Athletics d8, Fighting d8, Notice d8

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 15 (3)

Special Abilities:

- **Armor +3:** Ice-crabs have thick exoskeletons.
- **Claws:** Str+d8.
- **Environmental Resistance (Cold):** +4 to Vigor rolls to resist cold, subtract 4 from cold-based damage.
- **Size 6 (Large):** These massive crustaceans can weigh over 12 tons.

BRING ON THE CLARIFIED BUTTER!

After the ice-crabs are killed or driven off, there are some wounded Naquk in need of aid, but a few unscathed villagers set to work harvesting crab meat for the upcoming celebration.

A rescue mission may be undertaken to bring the band of adult giants back to the village, or they can arrive later on their own with the limpid spike in tow, which they quickly erect in the center of town, topping it with a large, eight-pointed star of glowing white sapphire—The Luminex!

THE NIGHT VISITORS

After the defeat of the crabs, a terrible storm arrives, forcing the heroes to remain as guests of the village. In the middle of the night, the village is “invaded” by a party of unarmed snowstalkers demanding the return of the Luminex. The snowstalkers, thin, yeti-like humanoids, want to reclaim the Luminex, a star-shaped relic of fine crystal that the giants stole several generations ago. A non-aggressive race, the snowstalkers took advantage of the avalanche in hopes the distraction would give them the opportunity of securing the star without a fight.

Use the **Social Conflict** rules (see *Savage Worlds*) with a -2 Persuasion for the heroes. Assuming peace is negotiated, the two parties agree to a seasonal sharing of the Luminex, and the leader of the snowstalkers uses *telekinesis* to levitate the crystal back to the top of the limpid spike where it illuminates and warms the surrounding village.

Should negotiations go poorly and the heroes resort to attacking the snowstalkers, the villagers follow their lead. The creatures defend themselves, but they withdraw from combat if any of them suffers a Wound, disappearing into the hills with a promise to return.

Either way, the heroes are gifted with crimson robes edged with white fur and welcomed as honored guests. As everyone in Vembyn celebrates the arrival of Crystal Fest, the stars come out overhead.

SNOWSTALKER [1 PER HERO]

These hairy, giant-size humanoids could best be described as resembling the emaciated yetis of Tibetan lore, but with coats of wispy, pale green fur. They have large, bioluminescent, violet eyes, the result of living in Dim (and sometimes even Dark) conditions, compounded with their inherent psionic abilities.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Athletics d6, Fighting d6, Notice d8, Persuasion d6, Psionics d8, Stealth d10

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 10 (1)

Edges: Arcane Background (Psionics)

Special Abilities:

- **Armor +1:** Thick fur.
- **Claws:** Str+d6.
- **Environmental Resistance (Cold):** +4 to Vigor rolls to resist cold, subtract 4 from cold-based damage.
- **Low Light Vision:** Snowstalkers are used to the darkness of the underworld. They ignore penalties for Dim and Dark Illumination.
- **Powers:** *Entangle* (living ice), *protection* (frost armor), and *telekinesis* (snow vortex). **Power Points:** 10
- **Size 3:** Snowstalkers are roughly the same size as Naquk giants (12'-15').

THE LUMINEX

The Luminex is a large, eight-pointed star composed of flawless white sapphire (equivalent to a Large Power Crystal) that remains perpetually energized (for as long as it remains intact), radiating both heat and light in an 8" radius. For generations, the Luminex was the centerpiece of the snowstalker home caves, but some years back, a giant raiding party invaded the tunnels and stole the Luminex, leaving the snowstalkers in darkness. If Ming were to ever learn of its existence, he would most certainly demand it be immediately procured for his palace!