

DARK CONSPIRACY

21

# ICE DÆMON™

Creede  
and  
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GDW

NUNIS-92  
AND



# ICE DÆMON™



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*I hate Texas. Sherman was right when he said if he owned Texas and hell, he'd rent out Texas and live in hell, 'cause it was hotter than hell in Texas. I've never been able to see why anyone in his right mind would live there.*

*Not only that, the weather is lousy. If you just wait a few minutes, it'll change—and always for the worse. Like yesterday.*

*When I woke up in the morning, I was drenched in sweat. I didn't even look at the thermometer; I knew it had to be at least 25 already. We all piled into the car and took off. It was too hot to use the air conditioner, and besides, they don't work worth a damn since freon went the way of the dinosaur. So even if it meant we'd get a facefull of water, we were glad to see a blue norther moving in. They always bring the temperature down, for a little while anyway, and if we drove fast and left the windows down, the air and spray might keep us cool until we hit someplace decent.*

*The one thing we didn't count on, in the middle of Texas in the middle of July, was getting snowed in. "Great," Charlie says, "next thing you know, we're gonna see some abominable snowmen."*

*Come to think of it, that was another thing we hadn't counted on...*

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Ice Dæmon

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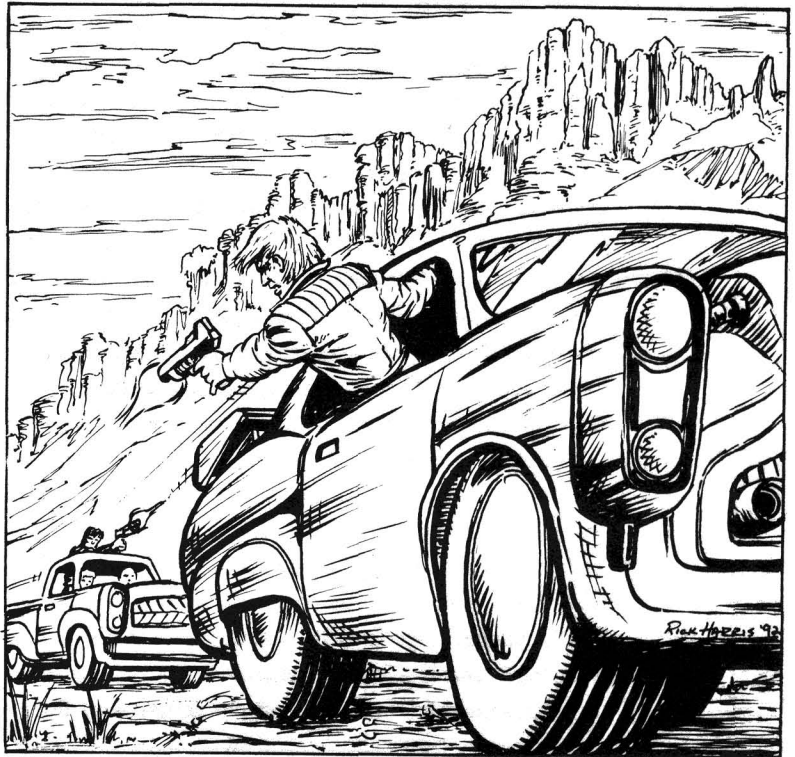
## INTRODUCTION

There's a good side to everything. For instance, the global warming of the last century or so has melted the polar ice, raising the level of the world's oceans an inch or two—but this also means that the disastrous freezes of the late 20th century which almost destroyed the United States' citrus crop have almost disappeared.

At the moment, however, the PCs might think they'd trade the world's entire stock of grapefruit for a little cool air. They're travelling across south Texas in the middle of July. The temperature outside their car is over 45 Celsius, and even with the air conditioning running full blast it's sweltering inside the car. With the humid air coming in from the nearby gulf, it's as oppressive as only summers in south Texas can be.

The PCs are travelling on a long, lonely stretch of highway in a county that's larger than some states. They have been travelling for some time, and the close quarters, poor air conditioning, heat and humidity are causing them to get on each other's nerves.

The heat is taking its toll on other drivers as well. Most drive faster than normally prudent, from a combination of boredom, heat stress and trying to get "poor man's A/C" (drive fast with the windows down to keep cool). Once or twice before the storm appears, the PCs should run into an irate driver. Imagining that the party has slowed him down, cut him off or otherwise inconvenienced him, he will retaliate with inflammatory comments, obstructive driving, or perhaps even violence. The referee should devise encounters appropriate to the



situation, requiring anything from tests of Vehicle Use (the driver swerves in front of them) to small firefights (the driver shoots at their car).

## Relocating The Adventure

Although this adventure is set in south Texas, the exact location is less important than the climate. For instance, if the referee wants to fit this adventure into an existing campaign, it can take place anywhere it doesn't snow in July. In the southern hemisphere, change the date to mid-January; in most areas of the tropics, the date could be anytime during the year. Of course, the psychological effect is greatest in desert and subtropical areas where snow is unlikely at any time of year.

Natives know that this is tornado and thunderstorm weather. Storms often form in the late afternoon, even when no weather system is present—but today looks like a typical south Texas summer day. Clear and hot.

At least it does until clouds begin appearing over the northern horizon. These are cumulus clouds with high tops, bright at the top but growing darker as they reach toward the ground—classic thunderstorm clouds. Storms in this part of Texas can be dangerous, but they also bring welcome relief from the heat and much-needed rain for the area's vegetable and citrus crops.

## METHODS OF TRANSPORTATION

This adventure assumes that the PCs are travelling by car. With slight changes, it can be adapted to other methods of transportation. For instance, if the party is travelling by train, the train will not slide off the tracks, but since snow-removal equipment is not stored this far south, the train will become snow-bound, allowing the characters to disembark and investigate the source of the cold.

While planes can skirt small storms, this one is too large for the PCs to fly around. Hint to the PCs that they should make an emergency landing along an unoccupied stretch of highway (or have the plane's NPC pilot make the decision, if appropriate). This is an Average test of Pilot (Fixed-Wing) skill.





## THE LOCAL FORECAST

If the PCs are listening to the radio, the local stations are primarily Tejano and country stations, some broadcasting in Spanish. These are the radio equivalent of corporate television, playing music and broadcasting inoffensive news stories for the proles and migrant workers in the area. Between songs, as the clouds begin to peek over the horizon, the announcer gives the local time, then says, "This just in from WeatherCorp, your source for the most accurate weather reports in North America! An unseasonal cold front is sending a blue norther our way. Over the last hour, the temperature has dropped 12 degrees in Austin and is falling in San Antonio, bringing relief from the heat wave. The front is scheduled to pass through the Brownsville area later this afternoon."

"The forecast for today: Thunderstorms late this afternoon, with continued rain for the next two days. Highs cooling down to the low 30s, with lows in the 20s. Better weather is coming, folks!" The announcer then goes into a corporate public service announcement and finally returns to the music.

Thunderstorms are often preceded by cooler air, and as the cool air reaches the player characters and the storm clouds begin to occlude the sun, the temperature drops. The car's overloaded air conditioning begins to work better, and suddenly the car is more comfortable. The PCs are eventually able to turn off the air conditioner and roll down the windows.

As the PCs drive on, however, the temperature continues to drop. Usually, at the approach of a thunderstorm, the air cools some 5 to 10 degrees. As the clouds continue their approach, the temperature continues to fall, becoming cool, then uncomfortably cold—even without the chill factor of the wind going past the car. If the characters have any way of determining external temperature they will realize that within the space of an hour the temperature has dropped from 45 Celsius to 7 Celsius—far colder than the radio announcer predicted. There are shows no signs of it leveling off.

## THE BIG CHILL

As the storm approaches, the wind speed increases and the PCs begin to see lightning and hear thunder. As the clouds approach, they can see the precipitation falling from the clouds—but somehow it looks different from the rain they

would expect from a normal thunderstorm.

Finally, when it gets close enough, they will be able to see that it is white and falling slowly. It's snowing! Migrant workers and the drivers of other vehicles stare in amazement as they watch the flakes fall from the sky. Children scream in delight, even as they shiver in their thin summer clothes.

Sometime in the next hour or two, the PCs must make a decision to either stop and wait for the storm to pass or to keep going and try to get through it the best they can. If they decide to stop, they will have problems: The few motels along this stretch of highway are already full, and the owners are turning people away (or charging lodgers an outrageous sum—say, \$500 each—to stay). The local residents' homes, most of them tar paper shacks, will offer no real shelter from the storm, though the residents will be more than glad to take lodgers at no cost.

If the PCs decide to drive on, they meet the storm well outside any cities. At first the snow is a minor annoyance; the PCs can manage by turning on the car's heater, and the road is still warm enough to melt the snow as it lands, even though it soon begins to stick to the land on the sides of the road. In fact, the scene is pleasant enough, if somewhat surreal. As freeze alarms sound and workers rush to attempt to save the crops on both sides of the road, families stop to have their pictures taken in the snow-covered orange trees. Children with no winter clothing rush around, throwing snowballs at each other and building snowmen.

Soon enough, however, the scene turns into a nightmare. As the snow continues to fall, the temperature continues to drop. The children begin to shiver and cry. Families huddle in the cabs of their pickup trucks—the truck's heater their only available source of heat. Workers rush to hose down the crops, hoping to save them by covering them with a layer of ice (which will be warmer than the outside air).

The roads, wet from the melting snow, quickly begin to ice over as well. Vehicles not prepared for the ice begin to skid out of control. Some drivers slow down or pull over to the side of the road; others, driving like the roads were clear and dry, skid off the road or into the path of the PCs' car. From the time the PCs first encounter the ice, have them make an Easy test of Vehicle Use (Wheeled) for every five minutes they continue driving; after an hour, have them make an Average roll every





minute. A failed roll means the vehicle skids out of control and into a ditch; an Average test of Mechanic or a Difficult test of Vehicle Use (Wheeled) is necessary to get the car out of the ditch. (If the PCs are in a plane, the plane is forced down; a train will stop in its tracks, unable to proceed due to the heavy snowfall.)

Whether the PCs stay with their vehicle or find shelter somewhere else, they will face a fundamental problem: how to keep warm. Six hours ago, everyone in the area—including anyone the PCs might be staying with and any other drivers on the road—was worried about how to cool off in the oppressive Texas heat. Now they have to figure out how to survive the cold. (When the PCs are forced—or decide—to stop for the night, the temperature outside is  $-6$  Celsius. After that, it will continue to fall, but slowly—perhaps one degree every eight hours.) PCs will only have blankets, stoves and other cold-weather gear if the players specifically state before the adventure that their PCs are carrying such items.

If the PCs have survival gear, waiting the storm out is an Easy test of Constitution. Otherwise, it becomes a Difficult test of Constitution. Failing the test means a character suffers 1-3 points of damage to the chest per 15 minutes of exposure. This test is necessary if the PCs are taking cover in an emergency shelter, migrant shack or their vehicle, but not if they are in a permanent building such as a motel. Although they will not be in immediate danger if they've taken shelter in a building, they will be uncomfortable. Heating systems are mostly inadequate. In fact, many buildings have no central heat at all. It's unnecessary in this part of the world.

The referee should have the characters announce their actions in getting out of the storm and take any resourcefulness and ingenuity into account in modifying the die roll for the test.

## Further Information

If the PCs have managed to secure reasonably comfortable accommodations (in a motel room or house), the referee should strive to create a feeling of claustrophobia and cabin fever. Going outside is unwise, but staying indoors is stifling—and by the way, did the PCs think to buy any food?

If they've managed to obtain shelter indoors, the PCs will have access to a TV set. Most of the channels are

carrying their usual mix of soap operas, celebrity news, exposés and similar drivel, but one will be of interest to the characters—WeatherCom, “all weather, all the time.” As they come across the channel, a vapid announcer is giving a rundown of the weather in North America. The PCs should immediately notice that temperatures everywhere in North America are in the teens to 30s, including in Texas—in fact, everywhere but in a small area centered on their location.

“The big weather story at the moment, of course,” the announcer continues, “is that freak area of cold in south Texas. The rainstorms that have plagued the midland for the last few days are turning to snow there, with patches of sleet and hail on the outskirts. Temperatures are even colder as the storm intensifies farther south. Here heavy snowfall and freezing temperatures are bringing transportation to a standstill. So far, meteorologists have no explanation for this bizarre weather, as crews have been unable to approach the area. We expect to know more in 12 to 24 hours. An Air Force reconnaissance jet is going up to investigate. We'll give you more on this severe weather situation as it develops, but now it's time for your local forecast.”

Normally at this point the station would give a brief weather forecast, but at the moment the TV screen simply says, “Forecasts suspended due to abnormal weather conditions”—meaning the local meteorologists have given up. Immediately afterward, however, a display of the local weather radar shows the extent of area precipitation coverage. Several kilometers north of the PCs' location, according to the display, there is an area of color which indicates severe precipitation—the color usually reserved for tornadoes and the most severe thunderstorms. The area is blinking on and off like a beacon.

This should make the PCs curious. If they look out the window (or step outside and look) in the direction the radar indicates, they will indeed see an area of very heavy snow—and they will also see a hairy, humanoid figure shambling off over the hill that seems to be the center of the heaviest snowfall. It looks almost human, but is covered with thick, white fur and does not appear to be wearing any clothes. (If the characters investigate within about a half hour of the sighting, see Stand of the White Wolves section on page 6.





## ALBERT VINCENT

**Experience:** Novice

**Attributes:** 6; INT 7, EDU 7, EMP 1

**Skills:** Vehicle Use (Wheeled) 6, Streetwise 4, English 10, Mayan 3, Spanish 7, Bargain 5, Luck 4

**Initiative:** 2

**Motivation:** *Jack of Diamonds*

**—Coward:** Albert is not a brave man and will always run or panic in the face of danger. **Ten of Hearts—Helpful:** Albert does

not like to see people in trouble. He will generally try to help anyone out of a difficult situation if it will not cause him undue trouble.

## FROM THE SHELTER

If the player characters have had to improvise shelter, they should suffer a bit, but not die (unless they do something stupid), before they hear an unearthly howl, similar to a wolf's howl, but throatier. The howl is coming from the direction of the heaviest snowfall, just over a hill from the player characters' position. If they look closely, at the top of the hill they can see a creature that looks like a wolf (they will have to make an Average test of Observation to see the wolf, because its white pelt blends in with the snow), but its muzzle seems unusually short.

As the PCs watch, they see the wolf turn as a figure step toward it. The figure is humanoid, but tall, and looks like it is completely covered in white fur. The humanoid and wolf then disappear over the hill, in the direction of the heaviest precipitation. An attempt to follow or track these creatures takes the players to the Stand of the White Wolves section below.

## WHEN ALL ELSE FAILS

It is possible that the player characters will be completely stuck, with no winter provisions and no way of leaving their shelter. (Even worse, they may be in danger of freezing to death after having failed their Constitution test.) If this happens, help arrives

in the form of Albert Vincent (see sidebar at left).

Albert's identity can be changed to fit the situation. If the PCs are in their car or another improvised shelter, he is a textbook good Samaritan who just happened to see them and stopped to help. If they are staying in one of the tar paper shacks alongside the road or in a hotel, Albert is a fellow traveller seeking refuge from the storm. Albert's role could also be filled by a generic or solid contact who happens to be nearby in a position to help. In this case, the winter clothing mentioned below will be available at half price.

In any case, Albert talks to the player characters, says he has a friend that might be able to help them out with some winter clothing—for a price. If necessary, Albert will offer the use of his vehicle, a simple ATV.

Albert's contact is located a mile down the road, toward the thickest part of the snowstorm. To get there safely requires an Average test of Vehicle Use (Wheeled). If this task is failed, Albert's ATV skids off the road into a ditch, and they must walk the remaining distance.

The contact has parkas, gloves and boots for the entire group at a cost of \$200 per person. The price is high, but the player characters' need is great. If the group doesn't have enough cash, the contact will barter at half the listed value of the trade goods.

Albert is very familiar with the local area and can help the PCs track the wolves and hairy humanoids. The weather doesn't bother him, he explains; he lived in Alaska for two years.

## STAND OF THE WHITE WOLVES

When the player characters decide to go out and investigate, they will see tracks in the snow, if they arrive within half an hour after the appearance of the wolves or humanoids. After that time, the tracks begin to be covered by snow and will require a Average test of Tracking to spot. After about two hours they are completely covered. This is a mixed set of tracks, with both canine and oversized, human-type footprints. The human prints show that the maker was barefoot, has a foot about 35 centimeters long, and has flat feet. The canine paw print has six toes.





As the player characters investigate, they hear a growl behind them, then one to the right. As they turn, they see a group of wolf-like creatures surrounding them. There are twice as many wolves as there are members of the party, and they are slowly advancing, closing the circle.

If Albert is with the party, he screams, bolts and runs. One of the wolves immediately attacks him, knocking him to the ground and biting as he screams. (If any of the PCs try to escape, the wolves will attack them as well.)

The wolves fight until either all of the wolves or all of the player characters are dead.

Once the attack has been resolved and the party has taken care of its wounds, it is a simple and obvious matter to find the tracks the wolves made when encircling the player characters. It will require an Easy test of Tracking to follow them back to a small opening in the side of a hill. However, while this opening provides good passage for the wolves, it would be much harder for a human to use this entrance (an Average test of Agility), and it would be clearly impossible for the large, shaggy humanoid they've been tracking to do so.

Any player character who realizes that there must be another entrance, if the shaggy humanoids live here, may attempt an Easy test of Observation skill at this point to notice another set of tracks. A PC party that does not make this logical connection must instead roll an Average: Observation test in order to spot the tracks.

Success in either case reveals another set of wolf tracks leading off around the hill, requiring an Easy test of Tracking to follow. After a while, this set of tracks is joined by more of the humanoid tracks, and together they



lead to another cave about one-fourth of the way around the hill from the wolf entrance. This cave is just over a meter wide

## SIT BACK AND WAIT

Of course, the PCs might not care to investigate the snowstorm, preferring to stay in the relative comfort of the motel or their vehicle until the storm ends. This will take two days, at which time snow will be piled up so high as to make it impossible for them to leave their shelter. Since there is no snow removal equipment in the area, and in the meantime the temperature will have dropped to about -12 Celsius, they could be there for a long time.

In addition, as the cold deepens, the ice wolves will begin raiding the local settlements (possibly including the PCs' settlement). These raids will get progressively worse and worse as time goes on. Use these wolves to impress the PCs with the need for action (see page 15 for ice wolf statistics).

If the players firmly decide their characters don't want to go out and try to find the source of these unusual events, despite the mounting threat of the wolves, then the referee should hint strongly that they could end up being responsible for the next ice age and countless deaths.

by three meters tall, wide enough for two humans to enter side by side, and is set at the foot of the bluff that forms this face of the hill. The concentration of tracks leading to this cave indicates that it must be the main entrance to whatever kind of base this is.

While the PCs are following the tracks around the hill, the wind blows unusually bitter and cold from the top of the hill. If they look carefully through the blowing snow and darkness (an Easy test of Observation, but they must specifically state that they are looking for something at the hilltop), they will be able to see a black, crystal-line shaft about four meters tall at the hill's summit—right in the center of the strongest portion of the snowstorm.

If the PCs try to climb the hill to get to the shaft, they will fail. Even if the snow weren't blowing, the air would get colder and blow harder the closer they got to the shaft, increasing the windchill factor to well below -75 Celsius. They should be able to figure out that the crystal column is important—but the answers lie in the cavern ahead of them.



## INTO THE EARTH

Upon entering the cave, the PCs will see that the cave has limestone walls coated with a layer of ice, and floors of well-packed snow. The passage slopes down for about 50 meters, then turns to the left. Light shines from beyond the turn.

The ice and snow that cover everything refract and scatter the ambient light, suffusing the entire passage with a blue glow. Any sounds that the player characters make are muffled by the snow-covered walls close around them. After the howling, biting wind outside, this area seems peaceful, even momentarily reassuring.

The player characters also notice that it is warmer here. Although the temperature is just below 0 Celsius, the absence of wind, makes the temperature tolerable for anyone wearing cold-weather protection.

## THE CAVE COMPLEX

The cave complex is mapped in detail on the inside of the tri-fold cover. The characters start out at the "x" at the bottom of the map. The following notes apply to all areas in the complex unless otherwise indicated.

The surfaces of the caverns are coated with ice. For the most part, the floors are icy as well, although portions of the floor in the central and portal areas are muddy from the effects of the constant activity. Ceilings are three to five meters high. The rooms are irregular in contour, with enough niches in the walls and irregularities in the floors to allow player characters to move stealthily. The edges of the rooms have numerous alcoves and concealed spaces, created by the ice-covered stalactites, stalagmites and columns that line these areas. It is possible to sneak most of the way around the perimeter of these rooms by slipping from one such hiding place to the next, based on the completion of the appropriate Stealth test (see *Sneakin' Around*, page 9).

The "corridors" between the rooms are more properly thought of as cavern tunnels, as they are similarly broken up by ice-encased boulders, columns, and other formations. These corridors average five meters wide and are frequently split into two or three narrower passages by these obstacles, allowing PCs many options to slip out of the way of a passing corporate or yeti group.

While passing through or spying on other locations from these corridors, the party is subject to encountering corporates and yeti wandering by in the course of their business. For every five minutes, roll 1D10. 1-2 indicates a passing corporate, 3-5 a passing yeti, and 6-10 no encounter. The corporates and yeti will make no effort to move stealthily, so if the characters are maintaining any kind of lookout they will have plenty of warning to attempt to hide (see *Sneakin' Around*, page 9, for Stealth tests).

All of the caverns are well-lit, though the lighting appears to be chemical rather than electrical.

## Yeti Reactions

For the most part, the yeti will ignore the humans. They will notice the humans, but tend to shoo them away rather than attack them, treating them as nuisances, not menaces. If the humans attack the yeti, however, the yeti will fight back. If any yeti witnesses a PC assault on a wolf or yeti and gets away to report it, the yeti will spread the word that these humans are dangerous and need to be eliminated. From that point, the yeti will attempt to eradicate them on sight, but will not actively seek out their prey.

This is because the yeti can't tell one human from another. The yeti will simply assume that the PCs are wandering corporates.

## Wolf Reactions

The PCs will not encounter any wolves wandering loose inside the cavern complex. The wolves perform the role of guarding the outside of the complex by attacking any intruders who come near, but within the caverns they are kept either inside a closed-off kennel or on leashes, controlled by yeti handlers.

However, for the sake of completeness, the referee should know that the wolves know all the corporates by scent, and would recognize any PCs as intruders and attack immediately. So long as a general alarm has not been raised, wolves under the control of a yeti handler will be restrained from attacking the PCs, as the handler would assume that they were mistakenly attempting to attack wandering corporates. Once the alarm has been given, however, a yeti handler would slip the leashes and allow the wolves to attack.





## Human Reactions

Any human encountered will immediately recognize the humans as intruders and raise a general alarm. If a human NPC succeeds in raising a general alarm, activities in the base will continue to proceed as described on the next few pages, but with the important addition that all NPCs will be on the lookout for intruders, raising the difficulty of each of the various Stealth tasks described below and in *Sneakin' Around* by one level, except for those which are already Difficult, which will remain at that level.

All humans in the complex are armed with Browning HP-35 automatic pistols and stun wands (see page 16).

## The Foyer

This area is smaller than most of the caverns—only about 10 meters square—and is empty except for its current occupants: two ice wolves and their yeti handler. They are silent, and will not be detected by the PCs before rounding the corner. As the PCs round the corner, the first in line will come face-to-muzzle with one of the wolves, who yips, jumps back, and then springs for the attack.

However, to the PCs' surprise, the yeti hauls the wolf in, preventing it from harming them. The yeti is clearly not interested in harming or obstructing them. They are free to pass into the cave system, should they overcome their surprise and attempt to do so. They may then wander the base at will, so long as they are not seen by the corporates or caught in the act of harming the yeti.

If, however, they respond too quickly and fire on the wolf or yeti before seeing the response, the yeti will deduce their hostile intent and loose the wolves, and attack the PCs himself. In this case, the PCs must not only quickly eliminate their opponents, but also dispose of the bodies and other evidence of the fight. Failure to do so will result in the general alarm being raised.

## The Central Chamber

This is the large cavern that connects the others together. As the PCs look in here, they will observe yeti and humans bustling through here constantly.

There are humans passing through here approxi-

mately every five minutes. With some timing and a successful Easy test of Stealth, the PCs will be able to cross, only being seen by yeti.

However, no sooner have they entered this area when they bump straight into a yeti, its fur slick with blood, carrying two mangled human bodies, one in a business suit and the other in technician's coveralls. Unless the PCs respond, the yeti will walk right past the group and proceed toward the wolf kennel (see map). The bodies are of corporates who rebelled against their Dark Minion master and are now wolf food.

There are six entrances other than the one through which the PCs entered.

## SNEAKIN' AROUND

The chance for the PCs to avoid detection in their exploration of the base varies depending upon location. Unless otherwise noted in a specific location, tests to avoid detection are as follows:

In a corridor (passing through or spying into another area): Easy test of Stealth.

In a room (staying out of sight at the perimeter): Average test of Stealth.

Hastily ducking behind an icy cave formation to avoid detection, although it may work, it should get a little hairy, and the referee should demonstrate this to the players from time to time.

For example, a PC has ducked behind a stalagmite to avoid detection by a passing corporate. However, just as the corporate passes the PC's concealed position, she stops to carry on a conversation with a colleague, leaning against the character's hiding place. All the while, a melting icicle drips cold water onto the back of the PC's neck.

Or an oncoming yeti carrying a large box has prompted a PC to slip behind a row of columns that separate one of the sub-passages of a corridor. The yeti, who cannot see around the box, uses the same passage and runs directly into the PC, who is knocked sprawling. The yeti is so close that the PC can smell its dank, wet fur, and see the debris clinging in the pelt, perhaps even a little dried blood. As the PC lays there, heart in throat, perhaps pulling a pistol, the yeti decides to back out of this passage and try another hopefully wider one.

Just because the players make their rolls doesn't mean they shouldn't sweat a little.



## The Greenhouse

This room is crammed full with meter-wide tables, all of which are virtually concealed beneath a load of hydroponics tubs. A few plants are rooted in soil. Some of the plants will be recognizable to the PCs, but many will be alien, ranging from tubers that resemble bright blue carrots to plants that look like a shrub that had been uprooted and replanted with its leaves in the soil and its roots quivering weirdly in the air.

There are three yeti going up and down the aisles, tending the plants. Occasionally, one of the yeti will tear off a leaf or piece of fruit from a plant and eat it.

These plants serve as food for the yeti in the compound. Some of them are still experimental—which explains why one tank has a bunch of daffodils (the yeti tried them and liked them), a clump of pampas grass (which they haven't tried yet), and some cacti (which are caving in and dying).

## The Mess Area

This is a lounge, with one large and four smaller round tables. Each table is surrounded by three to five chairs. When the PCs first visit, 10 humans are sitting at the tables, and eight yeti on the floor. The yeti are eating from bowls piled high with plant matter while the humans are eating prepacked military rations.

On the large central table are stacks of rations packets and large bowls of plant matter. Momentarily, a human arrives from the central area bearing refills for this table.

If the PCs enter this area, they will almost certainly be seen by the humans (a Difficult test of Stealth to avoid).

### HALF ASLEEP

If the PCs are spending a lot of time in the sleeping area rummaging around for useful items, have them make Agility tests at random intervals. Failing an Average test of Agility indicates that a character has knocked something over, causing a loud noise. One of the yeti half-awakes, becomes aware of the characters, and starts attacking. This yeti has been half-awakened from a violent dream, and perceives the characters as some horrific opponent from its dreams.

If the characters can subdue rather than kill the yeti, it will fall back asleep and no harm will have been done. If, however, the PCs kill it, the other yeti will be alerted that something dangerous is among them and will raise a general alarm.

## The Bunk Area

This area is filled with bunk beds separated by a light privacy screen running east-west across the middle of the room. The beds south of the screen are obviously for yeti. These are made from logs, with hollowed-out depressions to lay in. Some of the beds have straw or grass for padding. If all of the beds were in use, there could be as many as 500 to 600 yeti in the station, but the numbers the player characters have seen so far indicate that the actual number is probably closer to 20 or 30. PCs may deduce the fact that the station is expecting more yeti.

Waking a yeti from a sound sleep is not a good idea. If the PCs watch long enough, one of the yeti will come in, shake a sleeping yeti, then spring back as a massive, hairy fist flies at him. If the player characters try this on their own without first seeing this example, the surprise of the yeti's instinctive response requires an Average test of Agility to avoid being struck. Damage is 2D10, and the yeti will rouse to full wakefulness in 1-4 combat turns.

The beds north of the screen are standard corporate security (read: military) issue. The PCs will have seen a power cable along the corridor between this room and the portal area. Each of these bunks has a smaller cable leading from it to the power cable.

Each of the corporate bunks also has a small, glowing rod sticking out of a receptacle in the base of the bunk. These are the stun wands (see page 16) the corporates carry for security, and they are being recharged via the cables beneath the bunks that lead back to the heat exchanger power source in the portal area. If a PC touches the rod anywhere in the glowing area, he or she suffers the effects of a stun wand hit (see page 16). All of the exposed areas of the rods are glowing; in order to grab one safely, a PC must press a raised knob just above the rod, which exposes the handle.

## The Storeroom

Equipment of all sorts is stored here, divided into human supplies on the north side of the room and yeti supplies on the south. The human supplies include over-the-counter medication, military rations, blankets, spare uncharged stun wands, and even a few boxes of Browning HP-35 ammo.

Yeti items include wooden bowls, empty plant pots, and various shovels and pick-axes.

Four yeti guard the storeroom, but will not hinder or try to stop the player characters unless they see them trying to leave with an item of yeti supplies. If this happens, the guards





will attempt to take the item back, roughly handling the PCs if necessary. If the PCs succeed in leaving the storeroom with a yeti item, the guards will spread the word that the item needs to be returned, and that there are unauthorized intruders in the cave complex.

The yeti will not object if the PCs take any human items, however.

## The Kennel

The yeti keep their wolves here. Though the animals prefer to hunt and roam on the outside, the area outside the cave was too hot for them until the heat exchanger (see page 16) was activated. They now roam freely on the outside, but return here to sleep and be tended by the yeti. The rear wall contains a fissure, which leads to the wolves' private entrance on the surface which the PCs discovered earlier. They are confined to this area by a barred metal gate at the end of the corridor, next to which hangs several leashes.

When the PCs approach the kennel, the wolves begin to howl, filling the cavern with their din. The PCs will probably think that they've been discovered, and try to hide. However, so long as the alarm has not been raised, the worst that will happen is the yeti handler arrives in one minute, sees the PCs, then bellows deafeningly at the wolves to stop howling.

If the alarm has been raised, and the PCs are not hidden, the yeti will know they are intruders, and attempt to open the gate and loose the wolves on them.

There are 28 wolves currently in the kennel, some of which are gnawing on bones and bits of fabric. Two wolves are actually playing tug of war with a red piece of cloth which looks like a necktie. (If the PCs look closely, they can see that this is all that remains of the corporate bodies thrown in earlier.) Other wolves are out roaming the countryside.

## Portal Area

The central area is circular and about 100 meters across. A tunnel extends out from the east wall (to the data banks, see page 12), and a large secondary chamber (the control area, see page 12) extends out of the northwest side. In the center of the room is a large metal platform surrounded by equipment and power cables. To one side is a large control console with a number of chairs behind it. This is the dimension door and its control and power equipment.

PCs who succeed at an Average test of Intelligence will realize that this room is immediately beneath the crystalline column that they spotted earlier: The four artificial columns surrounding the platform do not merely support the ceiling. Judging from the power cables leading out of them to the equipment and the fact they go through the ceiling indicates they lead to something else—and their robust size indicates that something else is very heavy. A Difficult test of Physics will allow a player character to suspect that the column is actually drawing energy from the environment to power this equipment, and the cold they experienced is the result of that loss of energy.

If the PCs remain hidden, they will see the dimension door in action. As the PCs watch, human technicians at the console watch monitors, press buttons, and do other similarly scientific things. A set of lights above the platform begins to emit a deep blue glow, and the outlines of a piece of machinery appear on the platform. It appears to be somewhat unreal, sort of hazy. One of the techs makes some adjustments at his console, and the "envelope" widens to include the entire piece of equipment. As the PCs watch, the equipment solidifies, then appears on the platform. As various technicians dismantle the machine, two yeti begin moving the pieces off the platform and toward the control area. This example will show that the envelope size can be shrunk and enlarged at will; it must be possible to even make the envelope the size of the room.

After the newly arrived equipment has been cleared from the platform, the techs operating the control equipment change the settings. Two other yeti get on the platform, the lights come on again, and the yeti on the platform fade out, then disappear.

If the PCs find and understand the instructions in the computer data banks, they will be able, with some trial and error, to use the dimensional portal.

This dimensional portal is tied to a similar platform in the ice dimension that is home to the yeti, ice wolves, and the Ice Dæmon. Anything sent to or brought from there must go through these two platforms.

If the PCs enter the main open area of this room, they will be spotted unless they make a Difficult test of Stealth. To observe the portal's operation otherwise, the PCs must watch from the corridor or from behind and among the stalagmites and columns around the edge of the room as described in *Sneakin' Around*, page 9. If the PCs are spotted here, a general outcry will go up. In that case, refer to The Final Battle section, page 13.



## The Data Banks

This room contains several large computer consoles hooked into large processing units. Any PC with Computer Operation or Computer Empathy will recognize this place as having the same layout and equipment as a corporate data storage facility. A player character recognizing this would know that such facilities typically include computerized operations summaries and training procedures for equipment and tasks appropriate to that facility.

Within the computer, available through a Difficult test of Computer Operation or an Average: Computer Empathy task, are operating instructions for use of the dimensional portal generator. The reason for the difficulty of the task is because the time required to find the information, read, and learn it, makes it very likely that the PCs will be stumbled upon by one of the corporates during the attempt. If one or more of the PCs can distract the corporates, the difficulty of the task will be one level lower.

Use of these instructions requires an Electronics skill of 4+ to understand enough to even try, and is then an Average test of Electronics skill.

## The Control Area

This room is an extension of the portal area. There are consoles spread throughout the area with

human technicians sitting at most of them. One of the central features of the room is a "war board," looking like the glass plotting boards familiar to those who watch World War II movies. One side depicts the southern half of North America, while the other shows a foreign land mass.

Gathered in front of this board are three humans in cold suits and a one-meter-tall creature. This creature has fur over half of its body. The parts uncovered are scaled and chitinous, as if the creature were a large, furry insect. When it speaks, it is with an audible hiss, its voice coming from beneath a proboscis adorned with three-inch fangs. This is the Ice Dæmon.

As the PCs watch, the Ice Dæmon speaks quietly to one of the humans. To hear requires an Average test of Observation. It is speaking of plans to expand the operation to all areas warm enough for the heat exchangers to operate. As it speaks, it makes motions across the map, and small red lights go on to show future sites for the exchangers.

The PCs should rapidly come to the conclusion that they need to stop this right away—if they don't, not only will American agriculture be ruined, the planet's weather patterns will be changed, very possibly making the entire continent uninhabitable—by humans, at least.

If the Ice Dæmon is attacked or if the PCs are spotted, it will screech orders to the six humans in the room. Then it will leap into the portal area and step through the portal. One of the human techs will hit an alarm, and the PCs will shortly hear the howls of approaching yeti. If this happens, see The Final Battle, page 13.

## THE REAL STORY

Though the humans or yeti may seem to be in control, the power actually lies with the small creature, the highly intelligent Ice Dæmon. Several months ago, this small but brilliant creature entered this dimension through a dimensional portal. Through its empathic powers, it quickly took over a small megacorporation. Using scientists and technicians from the corp, it set in motion a plan to alter the climate of the Earth. Once complete, this change would allow it to dominate the entire world.

### NO TIME TO LOSE

Soon after discovering the dimensional portal, either while skulking about the base, or while continuing to spy on the operations of the portal, the PCs will witness an event sure to impress upon them the importance of what they have discovered. This will be particularly true if they had started to think about escaping to get someone else to handle the yeti invasion.

The PCs will be stopped by a veritable parade of yeti. Each is carrying a piece of equipment which looks like part of the heat exchanger/dimension door combination. The last group out the door consists of about a dozen yeti sweating and straining to move what looks like an obsidian obelisk—a heat exchanger column (see page 16). Assuming they can convince anyone to take the job, by the time the player characters can return, it will be too late: There will be other heat exchangers already en route to new locations. They have to act now.





## THE FINAL BATTLE

The Ice Dæmon has leapt through the portal, having given orders to kill the PCs. Six humans are present in both the control area and the portal room at the time. Every combat turn, a yeti enters the fray from the central chamber. The humans are armed with Browning HP-35 automatic pistols and stun wands. Of the humans, half are Novice technicians and the other half are Experienced security personnel.

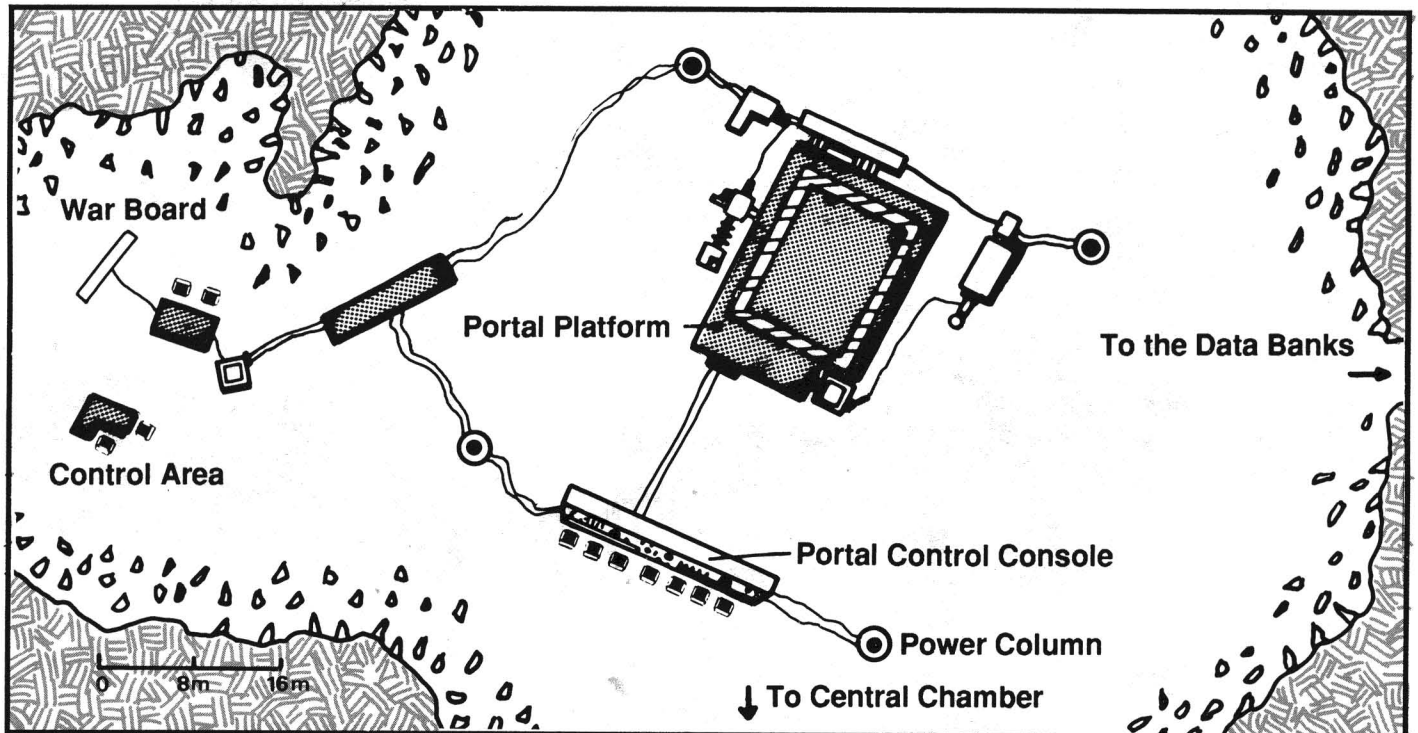
After two combat turns (one minute), the portal will begin to shimmer and the shadow of something really *big* will appear on the platform. It will take one turn to coalesce. This is an Ice Wym, sent by the Ice Dæmon to wreak havoc. It will appear and begin killing indiscriminately, tearing its way toward the PCs. Any surviving corporates and yeti will scatter, running from the room in panic.

If the PCs run from the Ice Wym, go to the section titled Retreat, page 14.

If the PCs do not run, it is unlikely—given the incredible size of the creature—that any of the PCs will care to face it in a stand-up fight. Rather, they will most likely dodge about behind equipment and ice columns, taking potshots at it with their weapons while trying to avoid its attacks. This sort of dodge-

and-fire combat will eventually enrage the Ice Wym (the referee should decide how long this takes, timing it to be dramatically appropriate). Once enraged, it will begin bellowing and thrashing about with its tail, knocking over anything standing, including the four heavy power columns. The PCs should notice the first column go down, then as the second goes down, they hear a groaning and rumbling sound. When the third goes down, rocks start falling from the ceiling, hitting and further enraging the Ice Wym. From this point, there will be one combat turn before it knocks down the final power column and precipitates a cave-in that buries it and the heat exchanger controls under several tons of rock and ice.

Once that happens, a hush will fall over what remains of the room, and the PCs will find that a hole has appeared in the ceiling, and the crystal heat exchanger column has fallen through it, the column's base now resting on the cavern floor. Most likely, the PCs will assume the adventure is over at this point, but they are wrong, because the rod continues to function. (In fact, the PCs immediately begin feeling the cold, taking 1 point of damage to each hit location every minute they remain in the room.)





## Turning off the Controls

If the PCs do not assume the heat exchanger has ceased functioning, and they decide to ensure that it is turned off, they will have to dig out the buried controls. Remembering the controls' location in the collapsed room requires an Average test of Intelligence; digging them out requires an Average test of Engineer or a Difficult test of Strength and takes 15 minutes.

Once the controls have been dug out, the PCs can attempt to deactivate the heat exchanger. The best way to do so is to set it to backfire (a Difficult test of Electronics). Another suggested method is to short it out by laying something conductive across the power leads to the crystal column. To get to the leads requires another Average test of Intelligence to remember their location, followed by a repeat of the tests above to dig them out. Once again, the digging process requires 15 minutes. Another method would be to blow up the rod. This requires large quantities of explosives and a remote detonator. To rig the equipment to explode requires an Easy test of Demolitions, assuming, of course that the PCs have the equipment available.

A more creative possibility is to open the dimensional portal, then set it to gradually swallow the area, giving the PCs

time to escape. Again, 15 minutes will be required to dig the controls out. When the support machinery is swallowed by the portal, the power will cut off, causing the portal to collapse with the machinery still inside it, including the crystal column. Setting the portal in this way takes five minutes and requires an Average: Electronics test using the instructions from the data banks.

Any of these options will cause the entire installation to destruct spectacularly. As the PCs escape, the entire complex will shake and rocks will fall constantly from the cavern roof. Once outside, the PCs will see the entire complex collapse, then explode. The air will begin to warm at once, becoming normal Texas weather within an hour. All the snow and ice will melt to slush and then to water, soaking quickly into the desert ground.

The threat will be over, but the Ice Dæmon will have escaped into its home dimension. It could be gone forever, or it could return to cause more trouble in another adventure at the referee's option.

## Retreat

If the player characters run from the Ice Wyrms when it first comes through the portal, they will successfully get out of the complex to be pursued by a large number of







yeti, wolves, and the Ice Wyrms themselves. Every 20 minutes, they will be attacked by either a patrol of five yeti with five wolves, a patrol of 10 wolves, or the Ice Wyrms. Which is encountered is up to the referee.

If the PCs retreat after the Ice Wyrms has caused a cave-in, but without having first destroyed the heat exchanger themselves, then the cavern will collapse, but the weather will continue to grow colder and the PCs will need to return and shut off the exchanger. They will find the crystal column lying amid a circle of collapsed stone. It will be exuding black light and throbbing audibly. The only way to destroy this column is to crack it (blow it up) with explosives. If the PCs have none, they can go back to Albert's contact. He will sell the PCs enough explosives to do the job, but will charge an exorbitant amount. The precise cost and the amount of explosive necessary are up to the referee. In the time since the PCs were last here, the temperature has grown extremely cold. As the PCs approach the column, they will feel this coldness progressively more severe; once within 10 meters of the column, each player character takes 1 point of damage to every hit location every combat phase. Once the PCs get to within three meters of the column, up from the ground will burst a seriously wounded—but really angry—Ice Wyrms. It survived the cave-in and is none too happy with the PCs. It will fight to the death. During the fight, it is possible to maneuver the creature into tromping on the column and cracking it. If this happens, a huge amount of energy discharges through the Ice Wyrms and up into the clouds. When the brilliant light clears, all that remains is a scorched mark on the ground where column and monster used to be.

If the PCs kill the Ice Wyrms, then they must blow up the column in the manner described above.

## AWARDING EXPERIENCE

Experience awards for this adventure are modest. For successfully completing the adventure, each PC should get between 2 and 3 skill experience points and 1 Initiative experience point. If a player character chose to take Albert as a solid contact, give him or her an additional experience point. Any other awards are at the referee's discretion.

## REFeree's INFORMATION

(Stats and illustrations of the four following creatures are printed on the perforated color game cards.)

## Yeti

These are the "abominable snowmen" of legend. They first showed themselves in the mountainous regions of Tibet. Legends spread quickly to China, surrounding countries, and as far as the US (Sasquatch or "Bigfoot"). They are the denizens of an ice dimension.

Although immensely strong and therefore dangerous to humans, the yeti are none the less seen here to be herbivorous.

These creatures are known to keep company with animals, wolves in particular. The "wolves" associated with yeti are not Earth wolves at all, but rather a similar species native to the yeti's ice dimension.

The yeti have few goals of their own, and are seen here as servants of more powerful ice beings. They are comfortable in temperatures below 5 Celsius, but can survive in temperatures up to 25 for short periods of time. They are as comfortable in barely freezing weather as in biting temperatures of -40 or lower. In fact, they grow more active at the lower temperatures.

Its white fur allows the yeti to blend easily into snowy environments. This natural camouflage allows the yeti to attack by surprise even in clear weather and on moderately flat ground.

## Ice Wolves

These creatures resemble Earth's arctic wolves, with a few subtle differences.

The most noticeable difference to anyone familiar with wolves (an Easy test of Biology) is that the ice wolf has a shorter and thicker snout than its Earth cousin.

Yeti value their wolves as guards and as pack and sled animals.

## The Ice Dæmon

This small creature is native to an as yet unexplored ice dimension. It cannot survive long in temperatures much above freezing, and for this reason it needs to install a network of heat exchangers if it is to dominate Earth. Though it has had immense success due to its immense empathic powers, it is not equipped for mass combat. For this reason, it employs its massive slave, the Ice Wyrms.

The Ice Dæmon physically appears to be some sort of fanged insectoid with large tufts of white fur and a thick blue-gray chitinous shell. It appears like nothing else seen on Earth.



Its goal is the conquest of the Earth. If defeated here it will escape to its home ice dimension to plot a new strategy. The struggle against the Ice Dæmon is not over yet. The PCs will find that they must keep an eye out for unseasonably cold weather for the rest of their lives.

Though highly intelligent, the Ice Dæmon's talents do not lie in the technical area. Thus, it frequently employs human aid. This aid is supplemented by that of its lesser servants, the yeti.

## The Ice Wyrn

This huge monstrosity is the slave of the Ice Dæmon, who uses it to fight battles in its stead. Ideally suited to this purpose, it has huge claws that inflict vicious wounds and a powerful tail studded with knife-like projections, and is very nearly invulnerable.

Nearly mindless, this creature has no concept of pain or surrender and will always fight to the death. Due to its low intelligence, it also has no concept of allies, and will kill indiscriminately once given the command to fight.

In appearance, the huge, spiky Ice Wyrn retains the insectoid resemblance of the Ice Dæmon and shares the same white and blue-gray coloration, but is 10 meters tall and has a snake-like shape. Its long muscular body is armored with sharp, chitinous plates, and ends with a spiked tail that it lashes as a weapon. It has only one pair of limbs, which are attached to its erect forebody, as hand/claws. Both of its limbs are covered with wickedly sharp, spiked projections which resemble scythe-shaped icicles.

When seriously injured or extremely confused, this creature will fly into mindless rage, striking out in all directions and destroying all objects within reach. Without its diminutive master, this creature would be a mindless killing machine with no direction at all.

## Ice Dimension DarkTek

**Heat Exchanger:** The heat exchanger is a fairly complex piece of machinery. The most visible portion of it, until the PCs entered the caves, was the crystalline shaft. The shaft appeared black because the reactions inside it cause it to absorb light.

The shaft acts like an antenna, transferring the molecular motion of the surrounding air into itself and converting that kinetic energy into electricity and other forms of power. This, of course, has the effect of cooling the air around it. Normally, all that would happen is the area around the antenna would get colder—the snow was

merely a byproduct of the thunderstorm.

In theory, the heat exchanger can produce an amount of energy limited only by the number of molecules in the atmosphere and their temperature. However, as the air around the exchanger gets colder, it becomes less efficient. It reaches maximum efficiency at about -10 Celsius.

The heat exchanger's crystal column is effectively indestructible, being reinforced by interdimensional energies from the portal generator. It will stop working if the temperature goes sufficiently low—approximately -100 Celsius—but is set to regulate its local environment to achieve maximum efficiency at -10 Celsius. Burning it would not work—it feeds off heat. If they want to destroy the exchanger, they will have to come up with a plan acceptable to the referee.

Buried beneath the crystal column are several bundles of heavy power cables that handle the tremendous energies of the device. They carry the power leached from the air down into the portal area through the four very large power columns around the room, which also serve to support the tremendous weight of the heat exchanger column itself. From these columns come a number of cables that channel the energy to the dimensional door and its control equipment.

**Ice Dimension Stun Wand:** Anyone struck by this stun wand must succeed a Difficult test of Constitution to stay

### Ice Dimension Stun Wand Statistics

Weapon	Range	Hit Mod	Damage
Ice Dimension Stun Wand	S	0	*

\* See text below for stun effects

conscious. Those who fail must make an additional Difficult test of Constitution at the start of every combat turn to regain consciousness. PCs who are conscious (or regain consciousness) suffer a -2 penalty to Initiative and Agility for one combat turn (outstanding success at the roll reduces this penalty to -1).

This weapon holds enough power for three attacks. After this power is exhausted, the weapon is useless—it's too light to be a melee weapon.

They are charged from the bunk bed sockets in the bunk area. These sockets are designed just for them and the stun wands can't be used with other power sources. Although similar in effect to human stun sticks, they don't work the same way. These weapons are a product of the same technology as the heat exchanger.

Price: N/A (-/-)

Wt: 0.35 kg



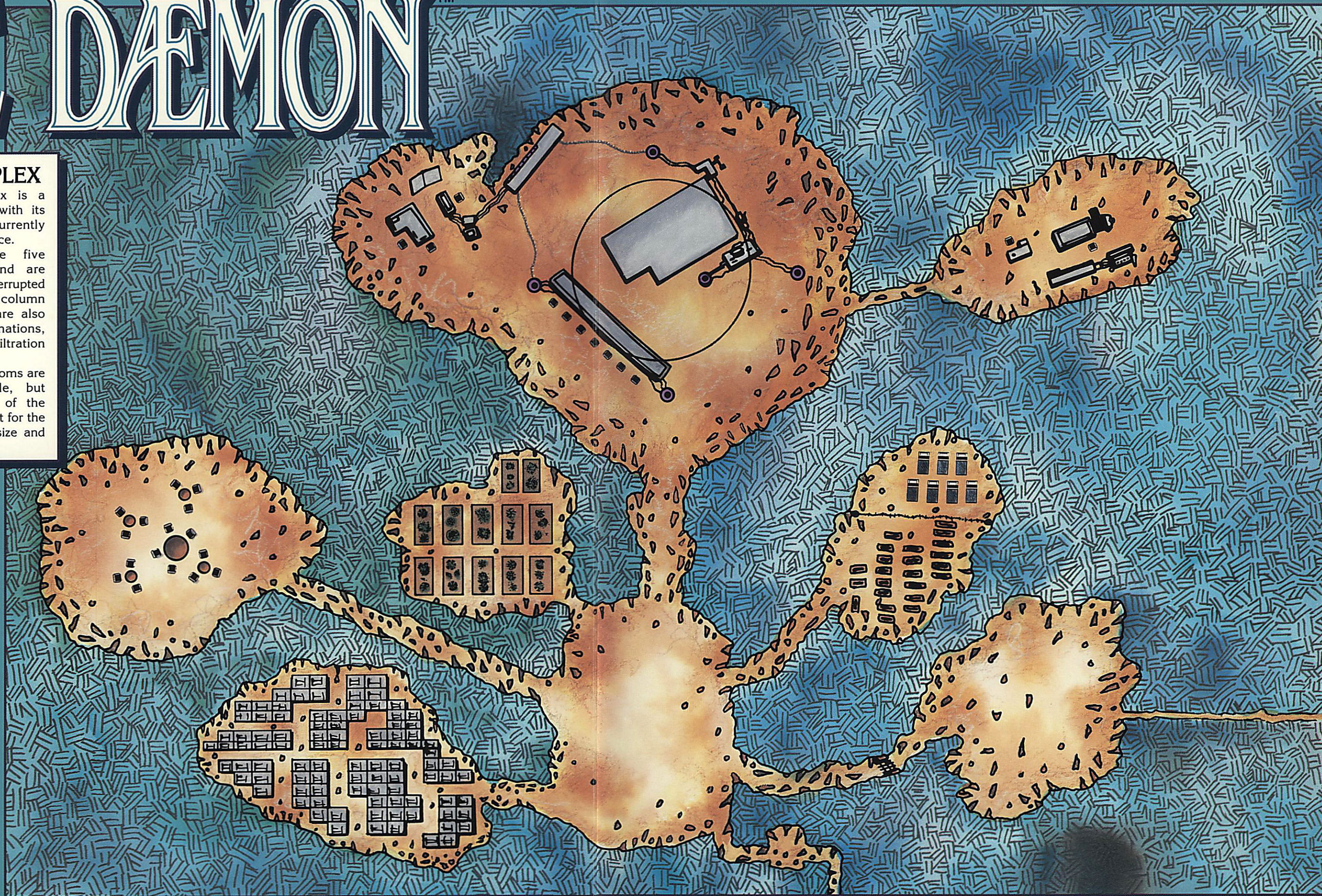
# ICE DÆMON™

## CAVE COMPLEX

The cave complex is a natural stone cave with its interior surfaces currently covered in snow and ice.

Corridors average five meters in width and are frequently split or interrupted by stalagmite and column formations. Rooms are also lined by such formations, making stealthy infiltration possible.

Details within the rooms are not drawn to scale, but suggest the nature of the room. Refer to the text for the exact details of the size and dimensions.





# ICE WYRM

Strength: 30	Empathy: 6
Constitution: 30	Initiative: 5
Agility: 5	Move: 3/10/20/35
Intelligence: 1	Skill/Dam: 7/5D10
Education: 1	Hits: 60/100
Charisma: 2	#Appear: 1

Special: The Ice Wym has 2 points of integral armor and the skill of Willpower 6.



# ICE DÆMON

Strength: 3	Empathy: 16
Constitution: 3	Initiative: 7
Agility: 12	Move: 4/12/23/40
Intelligence: 12	Skill/Dam: 10/8p2
Education: 7	Hits: 15/30
Charisma: 2	#Appear: 1

Special: The Ice Dæmon has the skills Dimension Walk, Human Empathy, Project Thought, Project Emotion, Willpower Drain, Animal Empathy, Dissolution, and Darkling Empathy at its Empathy level (16). It will use these skills to cover its retreat by forcing PCs to block other PCs (Project Thought) and hiding itself behind feelings of confusion (Project Emotion). When necessary, it will use Willpower Drain to soften any resistance. It will only use Dissolution or Dimension Walk as last resorts.

It has 2 points of integral armor.

This small creature is native to an as-yet unexplored ice dimension. It cannot survive long in temperatures much above freezing, and for this reason needs to install a network of heat exchangers if it is dominate Earth. Though it has had immense success due to its immense empathic powers, it is not equipped for mass combat. For this reason, it employs its massive slave, the Ice Wym.



# ICE MINIONS

## YETI



Strength: 12	Empathy: 2
Constitution: 14	Initiative: 4
Agility: 8	Move: 2/8/15/30
Intelligence: 5	Skill/Dam: 6/2D10
Education: 2	Hits: 30/60
Charisma: 4	#Appear: 1D6

These are the “abominable snowmen” of legend. They first showed themselves in the mountainous regions of Tibet. Legends spread quickly to China, surrounding countries, and as far as the US (Sasquatch or “Bigfoot”). They are the denizens of an ice dimension.

Immensely strong and therefore dangerous, the yeti have been rumored to be both carnivorous and herbivorous.

These creatures are known to keep company with animals, wolves in particular. The “wolves” associated with yeti are not earth wolves at all, but rather a similar species native to the yeti's ice dimension.

## ICE WOLVES

#Appear: 2D6	Constitution: 5
Attack: 95%	Agility: 9
Move: 15/30/60	Skill/Dam: 7/2D6
Initiative: 5	Hits: 9/14
Strength: 6	

These creatures resemble Earth's arctic wolves, with a few subtle differences.

The most noticeable difference to anyone familiar with wolves (an Easy test of Biology) is that the ice wolf has a shorter and thicker snout than its Earth cousin.

Yeti value their wolves as guards and as pack and sled animals.



# ICE DÆMON™

**F**or as long as the icy winds have blown across the arctic plains, it has hungered after humanity, its bite the kiss of frozen death.

Through the great ice age, the time of its greatest power, it hunted freely, its might unchallenged. But with the glaciers' disappearance, it retreated from the Earth.

Since that time, it has yearned to return, to sate its bloodlust once more. For this ancient and evil creature, the stars are right and the time is now. To stalk the Earth again and sheath the land in a glittering blanket of coldest ice, it returns.

## ICE DÆMON

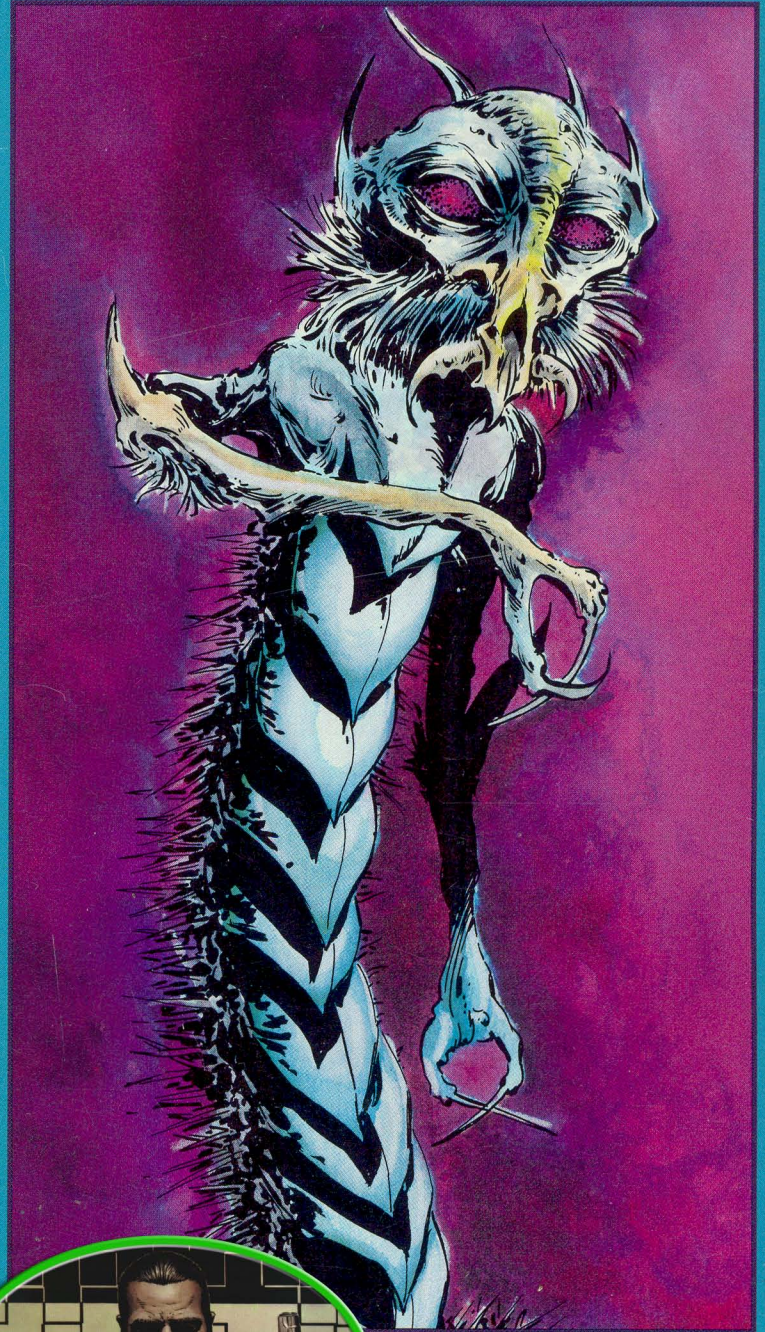
In this folio adventure set in an ice-ravaged southern Texas (in July!), referees will find a 16-page scenario booklet, an 11" x 17" full-color map of the Ice Dæmon's lair, and two full-color pages detailing four new Dark Conspiracy creatures.

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