

PINEBOX, TX

MIDDLE SCHOOL



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CHAPTER 01

BACK TO SCHOOL

PINEBOX MIDDLE SCHOOL

"One child, one teacher, one book, one pen can change the world." — Malala Yousafzai

Welcome to Pinebox, Texas! Or, for those who are already familiar with this fair city via their experiences with our popular setting *East Texas University* (where college students face down the dual threats of getting a university education alongside dealing with supernatural horrors), welcome back!

This time, we concentrate on the tweens of East Texas, whose lives revolve around their families, the oh-so-short gaps between classes, the rare holidays, and those glorious months of summer vacation.

Unlike the thousands of college students who routinely populate the ETU campus at the north end of town, you and your friends spend your days learning the three R's within the hallowed—though somewhat decrepit—halls of Pinebox Middle School.

Sure, family, friends and getting an education are all important, but the kids know better than anyone that something ain't right in this Texas town. Dark secrets and ancient mysteries abound, and things that go bump in the night call the fields, forests, and abandoned buildings of Pinebox home. While that's nothing new, it sure seems like the two worlds have been colliding now more than ever, resulting in mysterious sightings, unexplained disappearances, and gnarly, suspicious deaths.

Adults just don't understand, wrapped up in their grown-up lives and worrying about grown-up problems. Following the rules and playing it safe is for the little kids. You're practically a teenager now! Who cares about a curfew? You've got things to do!

THE KIDS ARE ALRIGHT

In this setting, the player characters are enlightened adolescents between the ages of 11 and 14 (6th through 8th grade) who are enrolled at Pinebox Middle School. For most kids in Pinebox, the greatest threats they face are pop quizzes, overly-enthusiastic dodgeball games, and troublesome school bullies. For your characters, these are minuscule challenges compared to the horrors that occasionally rear their disfigured heads on abandoned farmsteads or in the dusty alleys and dense forests beyond the city.

Being a kid doesn't grant you special protection from nightmarish adversaries. The dark forces in Pinebox are indiscriminate in their victims, even if in this setting the extent of consequences is left entirely in the hands of those gathered around the game table.

MODERN PROBLEMS

Pinebox Middle School is set in the modern day in a small town in East Texas. Unlike many of its inspirations (movies and TV series which are often set in past decades), *Pinebox Middle School* embraces the conveniences, and the inconveniences, of modern living. Cell phones do exist, security cameras are ubiquitous, and schools and parents take any threat of violence by or against children very seriously.

Nevertheless, the supernatural horrors of *Pinebox* most assuredly also exist. True to a common trope for horror settings, most who live there are quick to deny the truth, and slow to act, leaving the brave and intrepid young heroes to take matters into their own hands (and we love 'em for it).

While *East Texas University* focuses much of its attention on those times of the year when the heroes are living on-campus and attending classes, in *Pinebox Middle School*, the kids are year-round Pinebox residents. This means dividing their time between the "school year" and seasonal (winter and summer) breaks when they have the run of the city. Their adventures extend well beyond school walls.

PINEBOX MIDDLE SCHOOL

The mission of the Pinebox Independent School District, an innovative learning community strengthened by its diversity, is to provide students the opportunities to confidently share their talents, improve the skills needed for their future, and establish values that allow them to become responsible citizens who can successfully compete in a global society.

At the corner of Highway 96 and Cane Bottom Road, there's a large, rectangular sign of gray brick set above a bed of washed limestone gravel that reads "Pinebox Middle School" (the brushed aluminum "S" has been missing for over a decade). About a half-mile from this intersection, set back from the road on a 100-acre lot, sits Pinebox Middle School (formerly

Thomas Jenson Junior High). Surrounded by a ring of mature live oaks, this large, tan brick building is a struggling, though above average, public school that serves approximately 1,000 students in grades 6–8.

The Pinebox Independent School District serves the town of Pinebox and all of Southern Golan County, while their rival, the Ninevah Knights of the Ninevah Independent School District serves the northern half of the county. Middle school offers a diverse curriculum and several additional programs covering the arts, music, sports, and much more. There's also a well-maintained library on-site, as well as a theater, gymnasium, sports fields for football and soccer, and courts for basketball, and tennis.

The school mascot is the Crow (unofficially nicknamed "Clacky"), an echo to ETU's use of the Raven (as an honorific to Texas legend and hero, Sam Houston, who was known as "The Raven" by the Cherokee).

PINEBOX. TEXAS

On the surface, Pinebox seems pretty boring.

There is just not a lot to do for middle school kids. Many local kids join the Junior Ranger Program, at least for a year or so, hiking the trails near the Golan Mounds State Park, fishing on Lake Greystone, or going on camping and hiking adventures throughout what remains of the Big Thicket of East Texas.

Pinebox is a small town with an average-sized university, but that simply means half of the combined population of 30,000 or so vanishes over the summer when the high temperatures and 90% humidity combine to smother the area with a 120-degree heat index. Throw in the masses of mosquitoes, wasps, hornets, fire ants, spiders, and snakes and it's easy to understand why everyone seems to leave during the hottest months of the year.

At least the little town offers some fun restaurants, including some of the more well-known chains and local favorites like the Pizza Barn, Hamburger City, and Suzy-Qs (offering the "Best Dang BBQ in Golan County"). The Pizza Barn has an arcade and a small rodeo that can be fun if you can get your parents or older siblings to take you on Friday or Saturday nights.

CHAPTER 02

CHARACTERS

PINEBOX MIDDLE SCHOOL

On its surface, Pinebox is your typical small American town, home to several independent shops and a handful of larger corporations as well as popular fast-food restaurants, regional supermarket chains, and a movie theater or two. Here you find residents from all walks of life and all corners of the globe who have come together to make this part of the Lone Star State home.

Pinebox is also home to several kids who divide their time between attending the local schools and celebrating their freedom after the bell rings.

CHARACTER ARCHETYPES

Every player character attending Pinebox Middle School is a student, but there are as many kinds of students as there are character concepts. The archetypes here aren't meant to be limiting, but only to get your creative juices flowing. Students at Pinebox Middle School come in all shapes, sizes, genders, and ability. Home life could be loving or harsh, rich or poor, a kid could be an only child or one of many siblings, and her parents may be straight, gay, divorced, extended family guardians, or foster. In other words, the heroes of Pinebox are the same as kids everywhere.

Here are several ideas to get you started, but never feel like you have to stop here.

Animal Lover: It doesn't matter if it creeps, crawls, caws, or cuddles, you adore animals. Maybe it's just the family dog or cat, a bouncy bush baby (possible with an exotic pet permit in Texas), precocious python, or a verbose budgerigar—whatever creature you choose as your animal companion, you are always there for your friend, and, in most cases, it appreciates and reciprocates that affection. Check out the rules for Animal Companions on page 18 if you want to kick your relationship up a notch.

Athlete: Nothing gets your blood racing more than some good competition. Pinebox Middle School currently offers several athletics programs including baseball, basketball, cross country, football, soccer, tennis, and track & field. The school also offers non-competitive developmental and intramural teams as well, including badminton, weight training, and cheer squad. There is also an all-ages wheelchair sports team which meets regularly on the campus of East Texas University.

Budding Scientist: At a young age, a parent, sibling, teacher, or dynamic internet personality with a PhD inspired you to look to the skies or learn *why* the world works. You can now focus a telescope, design a circuit board, or derive simple pleasure from looking at tissue samples under a microscope. Science

makes your world go 'round and you're sure, even now, that institutions of higher learning, pocket protectors, and remote laboratories are in your future.

Country Kid: Life in town may have its appeal, but nothing beats the freedom and beauty of country living on your ranch or farm. You probably grew up exploring the nearby woods, creeks, and fields and your town friends are shocked at the clarity of stars without light pollution. As part of your chores, you might help care for anything from rabbits or chickens or even up to 1,000 lb cattle. Blue jeans, a big ol' belt buckle, and boots are your normal school clothes.

Crafter: You are incredibly skilled with various tools, and you love to build things with your hands, from custom toasters to makeshift robots. In some cases, you make your wares available for purchase through your online shop, but typically you just like making things for yourself or to give away as gifts. The holidays are peak crafting times for you, often to the detriment of your free time with family or friends.

Delinquent: You like to flout authority and blaze your own path. Maybe you have a rough home life, or maybe you're so spoiled and coddled you just need an outlet to make your own choices. Either way, you'd rather make waves and serve in detention than sit quietly in class like a good little robot. Maybe you just don't bother to turn in homework, or maybe your temper gets you into fights with your classmates. Either way, teachers warn one another that you're trouble.

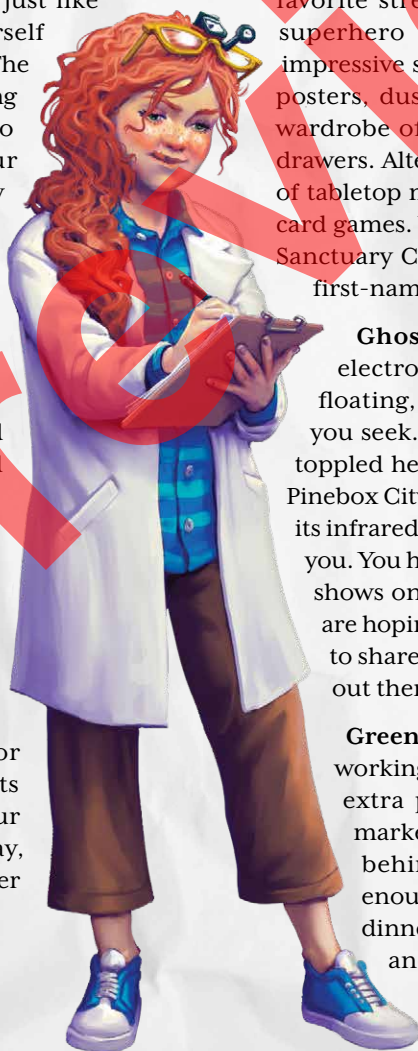
Fine Arts Kid: You are most comfortable when you are creating; drawing, sculpting, taking photographs, playing an instrument, acting, or singing on stage. Whatever your creative outlet, you look forward to getting to practice it in class at Pinebox Middle School.

Gamer: Tabletop, console, mobile, or live action role-playing games dominate your time. Whether you're gathering in your friends' basements to do battle with hordes of hobgoblins in underground lairs, walking through the local parks, or capturing Backyard Battle Monsters on your smart phone, you know, love, and live games. You have also been known to play and Game Master tabletop role-playing games at Sanctuary Comics and Collectibles including popular favorites like *Discovering Dungeons* and *Primal Planets*.

Geek: You are passionate about geek culture, whether comics, the latest series on your favorite streaming service, or the next big superhero blockbuster. Your room is an impressive shrine to pop culture with movie posters, dust-covered action figures, and a wardrobe of licensed Ts filling your dresser drawers. Alternately, you might be a collector of tabletop minis, comic books, or collectible card games. Veronica and Ron, proprietors of Sanctuary Comics and Collectibles, are on a first-name basis with you.

Ghost Hunter: Poltergeists, orbs, electronic voice phenomena, and free-floating, full-torso apparitions are what you seek. You frequently walk among the toppled headstones and overgrown plots of Pinebox City Cemetery, your camera (often in its infrared setting) on a selfie stick in front of you. You have picked up a few pointers from shows on cable and the internet, and you are hoping to make an incredible discovery to share with the world soon. The truth is out there.

Green Thumb: Whether you live on a working farm, your family grows a little extra produce to sell at the Saturday market, or there's a small yard garden behind your house that yields just enough to augment the home-cooked dinner menu, you have a green thumb and you find Zen-like pleasure in digging in the dirt.



CHAPTER 03

GEAR & GADGETS

PINEBOX MIDDLE SCHOOL

"Dreams about the future are always filled with gadgets." — Neil deGrasse Tyson

Kids earn an allowance of spending money for doing chores, getting good grades, and staying out of trouble (oops!). The amount of allowance is based on both wealth category and age because typically as the kids grow older they are given greater responsibility. It takes more to keep kids motivated as they get older and covet more expensive items like video games or a trip to the carnival. See the **Allowance** below.

In addition to any starting gear they buy, kids begin the game with sufficient school supplies (backpacks stuffed with pens, notebooks, glue, etc.), clothing, and an income-appropriate cell-phone provided by their parents (Principal's call). The quality of these items improves with wealth. They also start with some mode of personal transportation. See **Getting Around** on page 32 for details.

Anything acquired after play begins comes from gifts (grandparents are fantastic for this), allowances, or payments for odd jobs such as mowing lawns, washing cars, or running errands for elderly neighbors. By law, children 13 or younger may not work regular jobs in Texas. Exceptions are made for those working under the direct parental supervision at their family owned or operated businesses. Most employers won't hire anyone younger than 16.

Since funds are so limited in this setting, they can be easily tracked with play money from a board game such as *Monopoly* or something similar.

ALLOWANCE

In the real world, allowances are often distributed weekly. The **Weekly Allowance Table** below offers guidelines for weekly allowances based on grade and wealth levels. The Principal can estimate the number of weeks that transpire between sessions and multiply accordingly. As a simpler alternative, allowance can also be handed out on a per-session basis (see the **Per Session Allowance Table** on page 24). Ultimately, the goal is to provide kids some spending money in a way that's fun and easy to track.

WEEKLY ALLOWANCE TABLE

Affluence	6th Grade	7th Grade	8th Grade
Poor	\$3	\$4	\$6
Middle Class	\$6	\$8	\$12
Rich	\$12	\$16	\$24
Filthy Rich	\$24	\$32	\$48

PER SESSION ALLOWANCE TABLE

Affluence	6th Grade	7th Grade	8th Grade
Poor	\$5	\$7	\$9
Middle Class	\$10	\$14	\$18
Rich	\$20	\$28	\$36
Filthy Rich	\$40	\$54	\$72

If adventures continue through the summer, the student may earn additional allowance during the time off at the Principal's discretion.

Note: This is a student's "spending money" above and beyond the basic necessities like basic food, clothes, school supplies, and occasional gifts.

"Is it just me, or is that creepy statue givin' us the stink eye? Gimme a sec. I'm gonna make a quick sketch before I lose the light."

-Sheila,
Artist



SHOPPING

Below are some personal items with rules on their use. All the items listed under Common Gear in *Savage Worlds* are available in Pinebox. The Principal should also allow most other devices one might purchase in the modern world. See **Pinebox, Texas** on page 51 for a few local shopping destinations.

Being a "real world" campaign, players are encouraged to use items and prices for equipment found in stores, online merchants, or advertisements, along with the real-world delivery times for online orders and delivery services.

Dollar store or used variants of common gear costs 50% less than the listed prices on the following tables (or use real world prices), but ranges for weapons are halved and ammunition quantities are halved as well. Additionally, if a roll is required to use a discount store item or weapon, a Critical Failure means the item has broken beyond repair. But hey—dollar store!

Cash-strapped students (especially those with the Poverty Hindrance) can usually sell working items to a local buyer or through an internet storefront and get 20% of its original cost unless they roll a successful Persuasion, whereupon they convince potential buyers that the goods are a must-have "collector's item." In this case, they get 40% of its full value.

ENCUMBRANCE

Unlike some settings, Encumbrance matters in *Pinebox Middle School*. A 6th grader with a Strength d4 (carrying capacity of 20 lbs.) has the potential to be Encumbered hiking a trail carrying a backpack brimming with excessively heavy gear, so pay close attention to the weight of the items in your hero's inventory and be mindful of the potential for reduced Pace and Fatigue (see **Encumbrance** in *Savage Worlds*).

CHAPTER 04

SETTING RULES

PINEBOX MIDDLE SCHOOL

Attending Pinebox Middle School comes with its own unique quirks. Here are the Setting Rules that makes this wild, weird, and wonderful setting its own.

CONVICTION

The kids of *Pinebox Middle School* are smart, brave, determined, and largely on their own. They are capable of extraordinary deeds when the need arises.

Conviction is awarded for both great accomplishments and tough losses. For more, see the **Conviction** Setting Rule in *Savage Worlds*.

KIDS WILL BE KIDS

Kid-focused adventure and horror settings feature young people learning how to negotiate life's obstacles. How to handle difficult situations is often obvious to us as players—most of us are grown and have already saved the world a few times (at least in games!)

Kids don't have that experience yet, so the Principal is encouraged to occasionally reward players with Bennies when they embrace the tropes of being young people who don't quite understand the world yet, believe they're immortal, or make mistakes that make perfect sense in the eyes of a child.

KID TROPES

Here are a few common tropes of the genre Principals might reward the players for...

- **Take a dare:** Especially a double dog dare!
- **Trespass:** Especially into the old Jenkins' place where you're sure you heard Sparky barking!
- **Believe everything you read or see:** Fall for obvious (to you) lies, tricks, or traps.
- **Refuse to share:** Remember, you're a kid, and figuring out your social boundaries is part of growing up.
- **Toys as weapons:** Even if they don't actually work (but see **Soft Weapons** on page 29).
- **Arguing at the worst possible times:** Which comic handles Spider Man the best? Is Star Wars better than Star Trek? And who's stronger: Superman or the Hulk?
- **Cry, get mad, or pout:** Have a complete breakdown about things that aren't actually all that important.
- **Shortcuts:** You wanna show everyone you know Pinebox better than they do—even if you actually don't.
- **Always be looking at your phone:** Refuse to make Notice rolls because of it! (In the game, not at the game table—that's just rude, dude!)

GROWING UP

Kids have a lot of growing up to do. Much of that happens during their three years in middle school where they quickly develop from kids into young adults.

To reflect this, kids begin middle school with the following disadvantages which do *not* net them any extra Hindrance points.

- **Young:** The student begins with the Young (Major) Hindrance
- **Small:** The youngster starts with the Small Hindrance
- **Strength Penalty:** Kids subtract 1 from all Strength rolls (including damage!).
- **Maximum Attributes:** All attributes are capped at d6 during character creation, except one, which may be bought up to a d8. During Advancement, no attribute may be raised above d8.

- **Maximum Skills:** All skills are capped at d6 during character creation except two, which may be bought up to d8. During Advancement, no skill may be raised above d8.

ADVANCEMENT

Instead of gaining Advances by session, player character kids gain Advances and shed the limitations of their Young Hindrance after various milestones listed on the **Advances Table** (below).

At the end of the first semester of 6th Grade, for example, the students get a skill point, and a normal Advance and an upgrade to their clubhouse at the end of the 6th Grade. This means a student becomes Seasoned after the first half of the 8th grade.

After graduation kids Advance normally. Congratulations! You're all grown up! (But don't tell your parents; you'll make them sad...).

ADVANCES

Advances & Growth	Result
6th Grade	
Milestone	Character Creation (NOVICE): —
End of 1st Semester	Skill Point: Gain a d4 in a skill, or increase an existing skill a die type as long as this doesn't exceed the linked attribute.
End of 6th Grade	Advance: Take a normal Advance (see <i>Savage Worlds</i>) and Upgrade clubhouse.
End of Summer	Skill Point: Gain a d4 in a skill, or increase an existing skill a die type as long as this doesn't exceed the linked attribute.
7th Grade	
End of 1st Semester	Advance: Take a normal Advance and Upgrade clubhouse.
End of 7th Grade	Growth Spurt: Your Young Hindrance is now Minor rather than Major. You're no longer Small (increase Size to 0 and Toughness by +1), and increase any attribute one die type. Get Stronger: The kid no longer has a Strength penalty.
End of Summer	Advance: Take a normal Advance and Upgrade clubhouse.
8th Grade	
End of 1st Semester	Advance (SEASONED): Take a normal Advance and Upgrade clubhouse. Attribute: Increase an attribute one die type.
End of 8th Grade (Graduation)	Middle School Survivor: Congratulations! You've managed to survive middle school and immediately gain a point of Conviction! That's no small feat in a town like Pinebox! You no longer have the Young Hindrance and may now ignore the maximums to skills and attributes, but don't get an extra Benny each session either. Good luck at Pinebox High, champ! Advance: Take a normal Advance and Upgrade clubhouse.

CHAPTER 05

A GUIDE TO PINEBOX

PINEBOX MIDDLE SCHOOL

"Small towns have long memories and pass their horrors down ceremonially from generation to generation." — Stephen King

East Texas is not the tumbleweed-strewn desert depicted in classic Westerns. To the contrary, it has many rivers, streams, and lakes, and is known for its water skiing, bass fishing, and camping at several state parks, not to mention thousands of miles of hiking and biking trails through dense forests. Here are some of the more commonly known sights, locations, and businesses located in Golan County.

CLIMATE

The region is well-known for hot, humid summers with average temperatures in the 90s. The high humidity interferes with the body's ability to cool itself through the evaporation of sweat. A measly 95° Fahrenheit with 80% humidity yields a heat index of about 113°! This makes the threat of heat stroke and dehydration, especially for youngsters, a profoundly serious factor. Large-scale forays into the wilderness better involve lugging along copious amounts of water, which in itself increases your odds of becoming fatigued and passing out. Heat is a brutal enemy.

Winters are relatively mild, with high temperatures in the 60s common through November. Cold fronts usually strike during

December, January, and February, with at least a few that produce below-freezing temperatures. The area sometimes experiences ice storms that cause downed trees and power lines, though frozen driveways and ponds make for great fun. Snow is exceedingly rare in Pinebox, and if it does fall, it's rarely more than a light dusting. Students should not anticipate any of those mid-winter school closures that occasionally plague much colder regions of the United States.

East Texas does suffer from impressive thunderstorms and even occasional tornadoes. Summer months offer the possibility of hurricanes or tropical storms lashing the Texas coast and crawling inland. These storms spawn heavy rain and lead to localized flooding, dangerous winds, lightning, and tornadoes. Typically, folks have plenty of time to prepare for hurricanes, but tornadoes strike with little warning at all.

FLORA & FAUNA

All kinds of critters make East Texas their home. In reality, most wild animals do not pose a great deal of danger to residents. Few bears live in the area (mostly Louisiana black bears that have been reintroduced into the wild), nor panthers or wolves. The largest local carnivore is the American alligator which can grow quite large at 13 feet long and upwards of 600 lbs.

PINEBOX CONTINUITY

Fans can find many published adventures from 12 to Midnight and Pinnacle regarding East Texas University and the environs of Pinebox, Texas. *Pinebox Middle School* marks the first to advance the setting timeline, noting changes to elected city leadership and so forth. Everything published prior to *Pinebox Middle School* is considered the First Era and happened in the past 2 to 10 years (based on your own home campaigns). The contents of this book and future books and supplements take place in the Second Era, which is the present.

Adventures from First Era are compatible with the Second Era. You'll just need to account for continuity updates such as Forrester Harris being retired from Pinebox Pawn or Sheriff Butch Anderson being replaced by Desiree Sawyer. Swap out the names, and game on!

We have to learn all this in our Texas History Class in 7th grade. I mean, who cares? Ancient history, but our teachers are like, "ya gotta know this stuff if you're gonna live here and be a productive citizen." How does this help us do that? I can't wait to turn 18. Gonna get a scholarship for football and I'm leaving and never coming back!

—Roland Perry, 8th Grader, Pinebox Middle School

Rabies outbreaks sometimes cause wild animals to attack, and hikers always face the possibility of encountering a feral hog, a pack of wild dogs, or even an angry, 2,000 lb. longhorn that strayed off a local ranch.

Most people tend to overlook the little things like fire ants, considered by many to be the greatest animal nuisance in the area. Anyone standing still for too long likely finds themselves bitten by these nasty critters. Some fields are so dense with fire ants that the mounds are within a couple feet of one another. Their foragers and scouts are everywhere

looking for food (or threats) and are not shy about biting. Hiding from an enemy in the weeds can prove extremely painful!

Heaven forbid someone should faint outdoors in East Texas. Fire ants quickly swarm bodies, and locals recite tales of unfortunate souls succumbing to peak summer temperatures, passing out in their gardens, and later dying of complications caused by countless ant bites.

East Texas is also home to all kinds of snakes, both venomous and non-venomous. The most common venomous snakes are water moccasins (also known as cottonmouths) and copperheads. Rattlers and deadly coral snakes occasionally rear their heads but are less common in this part of the state.

Venomous arachnids, including both spiders and scorpions, strike from their hiding spots such as boots stored in closets. People still die from attacks by "killer" bees, and even the billions of mosquitoes and ticks can carry potentially deadly diseases like West Nile and Lyme disease. Chiggers are another dreaded insect—tiny red bugs that bite and leave their victim scratching and uncomfortable with extreme itching for about a week after the attack.

As far as plants go, poison ivy, poison oak, and poison sumac are common. While typically not life threatening, they can certainly pose a serious health nuisance, especially for kids with Allergies (see page 12).

East Texas is known for its great pine forests, although various hardwood trees are also quite common. Pinebox is in the extreme north end of the last remaining North American jungle known as the Big Thicket. This woodland is so dense that locals claim if anyone loses sight of the road while venturing into the forest, they will never find it again. Bring a compass should you ever consider stepping off the path!

"Everyone shape up and pay attention. We're hiking through the Thicket to the Burn, not skipping through the trees to the pond at Crenshaw's woods! And if you think wercoyotes are your biggest problem, you obviously haven't met a hill full of fire ants yet! Now let's go!"

—Consuela, Ranger Scout

CHAPTER 06

THE PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE

PINEBOX MIDDLE SCHOOL

The rest of this volume is entirely for the Principal. In this chapter, we pull back the curtains and explore Pinebox in a little more detail. Players should avoid the following pages unless they are OK with spending some time in detention.

GOLAN COUNTY

While most of their adventures take place in or near Pinebox Middle School, the heroes may find themselves venturing out of town into many strange areas around Golan County they aren't as familiar with.

SURROUNDING TOWNS

Avalon Acres: An established neighborhood north of Pinebox that has a reputation for wealth. The streets are wide, the homes are mini-mansions, and each is on a two-to-three-acre plot. The land is well manicured and maintained with old growth Pines.

Blackburn: A small, poor community on the southern banks of Lake Greystone. It was built on the ruins of a Caddoan settlement and saw its zenith in the 1920s. Today, the community population has dwindled to about 100 people and is a run-down, poverty-stricken town. Homes are generally either wood-frame houses built in the 1890s to the

1930s or mobile homes, more than a few of which are abandoned. While most locals avoid Blackburn due to its well-deserved, rough reputation, some still come to fish in the lake, go waterskiing, or search for the legendary lake monster, Bessie! The Sheriff's Department only ventures to this community during the day or for the occasional organized bust.

Caney Flats: An older town that was dying until recently. The homes were built in the 1920s and are generally wood framed and most are derelict and abandoned. The few families still living there are descendants of some of the original settlers of Golan County. In the past few years, however, some of the alumni of ETU have returned and purchased a handful of the old homes and are refurnishing and remodeling them. This resurgence has led some investors to believe it might be a good place to buy up real estate, as it is not too far from ETU. As a result, values are increasing.

Cavalas: It was found abandoned in 2004, though what happened to its population remains a mystery. The town is slowly repopulating thanks to low housing prices. Dwellings there remain somewhat neglected and dilapidated, but the independent new owners are working to slowly bring the town back with their own hands.

Krueger Village: A small town with a population in the mid-600s. It started as a gas station at the crossroads of FM63 and Highway

96 in 1929 and is the last stop between Pinebox and Blackburn. There is a small grocery store called Solly's, a post office, Krueger's Gas and Repairs, and a tiny City Hall that has one court room, the Mayor's office that doubles as the Police Chief's office, and a meeting room for the three City Councilmen. The police force consists of three officers: The Chief, Jerry Clemons (also the Mayor), and his two sons, Derek and Billy.

McCormick's Ferry: This historic site was named for an early Texas settler named Niles McCormick whose family ran a ferry across the Bobcat Bayou. In 1832, the entire McCormick family died in a flood, though their bodies were never recovered. Locals claim that passersby can hear the family call out for help late some nights. Today, this spot is a popular fishing and swimming area, and there are scattered homes along the bayou.

Morganville: There are a large number of roadhouses in this small town, and every weekend, live bands play at one or more of them, creating a general party atmosphere. Morganville has a reputation as another rough place akin to Blackburn, and fights break out there regularly.

New Nineveh: The second largest town in Golan County is roughly half the size of Pinebox. New Nineveh is known for its clean streets and the many antique shops that line the downtown square. An old jailhouse now doubles as the town museum, though visiting hours are extremely limited.

Okraville: This dirt road and small enclave community of ramshackle homes and decomposing trailers lies about three-and-a-half miles west of Pinebox. Locals respect Okraville's desire to voluntarily (and sometimes aggressively) remain detached from the rest of society and woe be the curious YouTuber who ignores the many "No Trespassing" signs and sets off to see exactly who or what dwells at the end of Okraville Road!

Shinbone Springs: This rural community consists of many farming families who sell their crops at the Shinbone Springs' Farmers Market every weekend in the spring and fall. It's a beautiful area alternating between small farms and forests. The roads are mostly gravel with only a few paved, single-lane, blacktopped ones.

Timberland Village: A gated community on a peninsula in Lake Greystone. The homes here are all large and beautiful on full acre lots. Some of Pinebox's more successful businesspeople, government representatives, and East Texas University faculty members live here, and the area has its own small security patrol.

Walls: With fewer than 500 permanent residents, the village of Walls (established in 1871) is often completely missed by those passing through the area on their way south to Pinebox (though the dramatically reduced local speed limit occasionally results in a brief stop by law enforcement). At the village's main intersection, where a flashing, four-way stoplight dangles over the road, there's a large, whitewashed brick building (formerly a hotel) that houses a pharmacy, post office, and general store on one side, and a private residence on the other. Catty-corner from this is Miss Evelyn's Preschool, a one-room schoolhouse dating back to 1886.

NATURAL FEATURES

Coker Cave: This 200-foot-long tunnel of dried sand and clay offers easy passage through a low, forested hill, exiting into a sinkhole on the far side. A common hangout for kids and ETU students alike, the tunnel is populated by scores of cave myotis bats that exit each night to hunt for food. Rumors abound about hidden side passages, lost Aztec treasures, and even a restless spirit or three!

Devil Pig Swamp: This low, fetid area consists of stands of woods and brush, and several small areas of standing water. A general stink does nothing to encourage visitors to brave the swarms of mosquitoes, spiders, and snakes—including the famed and extremely venomous water moccasins of East Texas. There is also the well-known local legend about a colossal devil hog (see **Devil Hog** on page 201) that gives the swamp its name.

Kestrell Lake: This small lake is surprisingly deep, up to 70 feet! It is known for its giant catfish and is a favorite swimming hole for adults to party without authorities around—though occasionally a sheriff's deputy does check in.

CHAPTER 07

MAGIC AND THE SUPERNATURAL

PINEBOX MIDDLE SCHOOL

“Children see magic because they look for it.” — Christopher Moore

In *Pinebox Middle School*, as in our world, magic is a thing of myth, sword-and-sorcery novels, and box-office-busting movies about kids attending ancient schools located somewhere in the highlands of Scotland. Yet some folks are privy to real forces that operate in the cracks of our reality, shaping probability and warping the environment in rarely predictable ways. It is a force mere mortals are scarcely capable of understanding and only intermittently controlling.

This kind of magic takes the form of rituals, a form of ceremonial magic performed by one or more participants.

RITUALS

Player characters in *Pinebox Middle School* don't usually have Arcane Backgrounds (but see the **Strange Things** sidebar on page 79), so if they choose to dabble with eldritch forces, they must find strange rituals, gather sometimes icky components, and take their chances dabbling in forces they don't fully understand.

ACQUISITION

The first thing the students must do to perform a ritual is find it! The magical instructions to

cast powers are usually found within the pages of musty tomes or passed down from one practitioner to another. In game terms, they are usually the result of combing through hard to find ancient texts, discovering shady practitioners willing to share their knowledge (for a price), or even foraging through the untamed wilds of the internet!

MAGIC AND TECHNOLOGY

In *Pinebox Middle School*, the mixture of magic and technology is rarely stable. In fact, whenever technology (a hard drive, a memory chip, etc.) is used to store or communicate magical texts, the mixture of the two creates an inescapable entropy that inevitably corrupts and garbles that communication.

MAGICAL ENTROPY

Whenever magical information is stored electronically, (whether the instructions of a ritual, a photograph of a page from a grimoire, an audio file of ritual instructions, or a video of one being performed), the modern practitioner is in a race against entropy. In whatever medium it's stored, individual letters get replaced, pixels scramble and change color, and eventually the file itself becomes so corrupt it won't even open. Consequently, finding a viable piece of magic on the internet is unlikely, although not entirely impossible.

How long it takes for a spell to become totally useless can be anywhere from a few days, to a few seconds, depending on the nature of the magic being stored. The more rare and powerful it is, the shorter the time it remains viable on a technological medium. The details are up to the Principal, but it's always only a matter of time.

TRANSFERRING MEDIUMS

Whenever anyone attempts to transfer magical text or images to or from a technological device, she must make an Electronics roll. Failure means something goes wrong. The Principal can make up a strange outcome or roll on the **Magical Transference Table** below to find out what happens.

MAGICAL TRANSFERENCE TABLE

2d6 Result

- 2** **Kablooey!:** Not only does the transfer fail, whatever electronic device was being used physically blows up, causing 2d6 damage in a Small Blast Template. In addition, eldritch energies are released. Roll on the **Ritual Complications Table** on page 78.

3-5 **Brick:** As soon as the last element is copied, the device being used immediately bricks and becomes useless. If the direction of transfer was to the device, the magical text can still be recovered via an Electronics roll at -2 using cloud backup or a sent email just before the device is fried.

6-8 **Reboot:** The transfer succeeds, but as soon as the last element is copied, the device being used reboots. It takes ten times longer than it should to come back to life, but after that, it's probably fine....

9-11 **Haywire:** The transfer succeeds, but all electronic devices in the immediate area (Principal's call) go haywire. LCD TV's flash, phones start playing music at full volume, toaster ovens spark and catch fire, and the internet *definitely* goes down.

12 **Garbled:** The transfer succeeds, but the resulting text is subtly changed. Any casting of the copied ritual now acts as if one of its components were substituted (see **Substitution** on page 75).



CHAPTER 08

ADVENTURE GENERATOR

PINEBOX MIDDLE SCHOOL

Students of *Pinebox Middle School* have all the normal stresses of school life and being kids in a grown-up world, but with the added burden of knowing about all the things that move in the shadows and threaten their community... and beyond. They must adapt to learning the reality behind Pinebox's facade, navigate the social jungle of middle school, and still do their chores.

As with most *Savage Worlds* settings, Principals have the option of running a *Pinebox Middle School Plot Point Campaign*. A Plot Point Campaign is an overall story and framework that allows plenty of room for the Principal and heroes to pursue their own interests. The framework is comprised of Plot Points, which are short, related adventures, usually designed to be run in a session or two.

Descent Into the Inferno is a full-length Plot Point Campaign (page 96) taking the kids from 6th grade orientation all the way to the end of 8th grade.

Principals who are looking for a less directed approach or who want to flesh out the PPC a bit can default to the less-connected *Savage Tales* starting on page 140, create their own adventures, or use the Adventure Generator on the following pages to craft all-new mysteries for their students.

ADVENTURE GENERATOR

The Adventure Generator is designed to help a Principal create mysteries on the fly and inspire *Savage Tales* of their own. These scenarios work well for one-shots or for "filler" adventures between episodes of the Plot Point Campaign.

If the Principal does not have a particular plan for their next adventure, they can use the tables on the following pages to quickly and easily create one.

To start, draw a card for each of the following tables, shuffling the deck between steps:

- **Who:** Who are the enemies in this adventure, and if there is a single "big bad" pulling the strings, who exactly are they?
- **What:** What are the villains up to?
- **Why:** Why exactly are the baddies doing what they are doing?
- **Where:** Where does the incident begin or where does the main action take place?
- **Complication:** A twist or two for extra flavor, plus some red herrings.

WHO

Card	Antagonist
2	Classmate: Someone or some group in the same grade as the heroes are up to no good.
3	Little Kid: Someone a grade or more lower than the heroes is stirring up trouble.
4	Big Kid: Someone a grade or more higher than the heroes is plotting something bad. It could be an older kid at Pinebox Middle School, or even a high school student whose plans cause problems for the younger kids.
5	Teacher/Administrator: One of Pinebox Middle School's employees is the antagonist this time out. If the suit is red, it's an administrator.
6	Parents/Guardians: The parents or guardians of a classmate, or even the PTO (Parent-Teacher Organization, an adult auxiliary or club for supporting school initiatives) as a whole are the instigators.
7	Government: Officials are at the root of the problem. If the suit is red, the trouble comes from the local authorities. If the suit is black it's the military (perhaps from Base X), the FBI, or some sort of secret agency—maybe the kind with black helicopters.
8	Animal: An earthly beast is behind this mystery. It may be natural but somehow forced into the mystery by other circumstances, or it may have been altered somehow—perhaps by consuming industrial waste or as the result of a miscast ritual.
9	ETU: Someone at the university is behind the trouble. If the suit is red, it's a student. If black, it's a faculty member.
10	Business: A business (or at least part of it) is the primary actor. A red suit means it's a local company. Black means it's a business from out of town trying to establish a new location or a traveling business such as a carnival or stage performance.
Jack-Ace	Supernatural: A monster, ghost, demon, or human with supernatural abilities is on the prowl. Draw on the following Supernatural Creature Table .
Joker	Double Trouble: There are two forces at work here. Draw twice more. If you draw the second Joker, draw twice more for a total of three antagonists in the adventure.

"The new patch for backyard battle monsters is coming out on Tuesday. I haven't played it yet, but I already know it's going to be a complete disaster!

I should get on the internet and let people know."

-Silas,
Gamer

CHAPTER 9

DESCENT INTO THE INFERNO

PINEBOX MIDDLE SCHOOL

*"You may all go to Hell, and I will go to Texas."
— Davy Crockett*

The *Descent into the Inferno* Plot Point Campaign introduces the heroes to Pinebox Middle School and then, over the course of three years (6th through 8th grade) reveals the dark secrets at its core—a cancerous evil that's been growing beneath the surface for decades!

Descent into the Inferno is broken into three sections which correspond to school years (6th through 8th grade), but this is only a suggestion. With the exception of the first and last adventures (which are intended to take place on the first day of school and at the end of the campaign, respectively), the plot points can occur any time. The plot points also thematically correspond to the circles of hell in "Inferno", the first part of Dante's epic poem, *Divine Comedy*.

6TH GRADE

Held Back (Limbo): On their very first day at Pinebox Middle School, the heroes are brought together by virtue of a teacher-assigned lab group. They also meet a secretive new kid who has been reliving sixth grade for decades as an experiment by the evil Dr. Jensen.

Backyard Battle Monsters v1.0 (Lust... for gaming): The hospitalization of a fellow student draws the gang into an investigation ending with a video game fight for their lives!

Backyard Battle Monsters v2.0 (Gluttony... for gaming): The individual responsible for unleashing virtual monsters upon the real world is revealed as the heroes combat even more deadly opponents from the world's most popular mobile game.

7TH GRADE

Missing Parsons (Greed): A fellow student is kidnapped moments before the gang is set to meet him. It's up to them to track him down before it's too late. This investigation leads the group into a twisted network of tunnels and an encounter with one of Dr. Jensen's dangerous progeny.

Spies Like Us (Wrath): A night-time noise complaint leads to a brush with unnatural "shadow doctors" assembling robotic killers. If the kids survive, they forge a potential friendship with a member of the Pinebox police force.

Swap 'til You Drop (Heresy): The heroes end up in the middle of another weird and wild experiment with ties to the shadow doctors and Dr. Jensen. It requires quick thinking to put everything right.

8TH GRADE

Crash (Violence): During a school field trip, the kids find a crashed panel truck driven by a shadow doctor. Worse, the even more frightful creature being transported in the back has escaped! The gang has to rescue their friend, Officer Jewett, while dodging Dr. Jenson's undead minions and a truly tragic, horrific monster.

Skeleton Key (Fraud): The kids are finally armed with everything they need to enter the one door in school that has resisted their attempts to gain access to its secrets. From here, they enter Dr. Jenson's Inferno complex and descend through eight levels of his twisted machinations.

School is Out... Forever! (Treachery): The heroes finally meet Dr. Jenson and his allies, just in time to become the final link in the villain's planned resurrection and ascent as an immortal conqueror.

WHAT HAS COME BEFORE

On March 17th, 1983, a relatively small obituary appeared on page 19 of the *Pinebox Post* for a Dr. Thomas Jenson. This article mentioned his involvement in the construction of Pinebox's state-of-the-art middle school back in the mid-1960s, but little more was written due to later events which transformed his reputation as a philanthropist into a town pariah.

Dr. Thomas Jenson was a transplant from Washington, DC, who made Pinebox his home when he was assigned to Base X in the late 1940s. Dr. Jenson's field of research was life extension, but in 1953 immediately following the Burn (see *East Texas University*) his funding was canceled in favor of other human-enhancing approaches. Packed and ready to leave for good, on his last night in Pinebox he had a life-changing dream. The next morning, he hiked to an empty field on the outskirts of town and squeezed into an almost unnoticeable crevasse which opened into a subsurface chamber.

Drawn by his dream vision, young Dr. Jenson navigated a narrow underground cave system until he reached a cavern more than 100 feet below ground. In the center of the cavern,

he found a pit from which flickered cold, unnatural black flames—Inferno. It was here the whispers in his mind were loudest, and it was here he made a pact with the demons on the other side of the hellish portal. In exchange for their dark knowledge and service in life, he would serve them upon his death. Convinced he was on the verge of a breakthrough with his life-extension research, he planned on living forever and never having to make good on his part of the pact.

First, he needed to secure permanent access to Inferno, but this proved more difficult than he anticipated. The empty field had been deeded to the school district, which planned on building a new school once it could secure funding. Desperate to prevent outside discovery of the Inferno, Jenson secured a position as Community Planning Manager and in the 1960s proposed the construction of a new middle school to replace Sam Houston Junior High, a crumbling remnant from an earlier time.

In late 1963 Dr. Jenson secured funding for a city nuclear fallout shelter, an eight level underground bunker. The generous funds from the project also paid for what became Thomas Jenson Junior High School, situated above the shelter and named in his honor.

For Dr. Jenson, the most difficult part was keeping construction workers from exploring the last cave passage that would take them to the Inferno. It was in disposing of an overly curious worker that he discovered the pit's ability to reanimate a corpse and turn it into a completely obedient minion. While the process burns out the corpse's eyeballs, Jenson was eventually able to wire in camera goggles as a substitute. He dubbed his undead creation a "shadow doctor," an obedient shadow of his own brilliance.

As promised, the construction fences were pulled down in mid-August of 1965 and the residents of Pinebox were invited to tour the new school as the Lone Star Flag was raised on the pole out front. Unfortunately, due to several lawsuits secretly backed by the Sweet Heart Foundation (see *East Texas University: Degrees of Horror*), judges ruled the multi-level shelter below the school unsafe, violating several construction codes. Except for one large entry room, the entire shelter was condemned and ordered permanently sealed off.

CHAPTER 10

SAVAGE TALES

PINEBOX MIDDLE SCHOOL

BULLY 1

Middle school is a time of growth. Unfortunately, some kids grow faster than others, and bullying is a fact of life for those who become targets of these students. The team is no exception to this as Frank Larson, the biggest 6th grader in the class, is a consummate bully who enjoys making others uncomfortable and fearful of him. He has five other kids he runs with who follow his leadership. Together, they provide foils for the heroes' three years of middle school.

Recommended: 6th grade

Location: Pinebox Middle School

Cell Phone Status: 

SETUP

Early in the school year, one of the heroes is targeted by Frank Larson. It's the classic, "give me your milk money," or "do my homework," or just name calling. After a few interactions spaced out during the heroes' tales of adventure, Frank decides to escalate his actions. He chooses the most physical of the team and tries to start a fight with him/her. Bullies are tricky in that they cannot be "destroyed" or defeated in the usual way.

FRANK LARSON'S BULLY CLUB

■ **Frank Larson:** Use the profile for 6th Grader on page 181 but add the Brawny Edge with Strength d8, and Fighting d6. The size of a high school freshman, Frank is a poor country kid with a bad attitude.

■ **Tommy James:** Use the profile for 6th Grader on page 181 but add Agility d8 and Stealth d8. Skinny, wiry, with a devilish smile, Tommy is always one to get into trouble and likes an adrenaline rush.

■ **Clint Edwards:** Use the profile for 6th Grader on page 181. A follower his whole life, he likes to be included and does whatever Frank tells him. He is average height, with a crooked nose (it was broken in a 2nd grade playground accident).

■ **Amy Ames:** Use the profile for 6th Grader on page 181 but increase Smarts to a d8, and add the Attractive Edge. She is smart and manipulative. She is Frank's girlfriend, but he is much more attached to her than she is to him. She is a freckled red head with light skin and pretty green eyes.

■ **Vernon Perry:** Use the profile for 6th Grader on page 181. Add the Quick Edge and increase Agility to d8, and Strength and Fighting to d6. Vernon is an African American. He and, Frank became friends in 4th grade after fighting each other.

■ **Ashley Perry:** Use the profile for 6th Grader page 181. Increase her Smarts to d6, and Spirit to d8. Add Intimidation and Persuasion skills at a d6 each. Ashley is Vernon's twin sister. Like her brother, she is athletic but with a real mean streak.

ESCALATION

Once the bullying relationship is cemented, the tale truly begins. Frank wants to find a way to irritate or hurt those who stood up to him. He enlists his “crew” to help him accomplish this.

He decides to set up one of the students by planting what he calls “incriminating evidence” in their backpack. Frank gets Tommy James to steal the Ms. Thompkins’ purse. She’s the English teacher and she keeps it behind her desk during class. They do this between periods. Tommy sneaks the purse into his own backpack as Frank keeps the teacher’s attention near the door.

They then have two chances to place the “evidence”. Tommy sits behind one of the heroes in one of his classes and tries to sneak it into his victim’s backpack during class. This is an opposed roll of Tommy’s Stealth versus the hero’s Notice. The other chance is during Phys Ed class by placing it in one of the kids’ lockers. Tommy has previously stolen a master key to get into any locker he needs to.

If Tommy is caught by the heroes, he immediately causes a scene stating the suspect “stole” a teacher’s purse, resulting in both him and the accused being taken to the Principal’s office. If the heroes don’t catch Tommy, the victim ends up in the Principal’s office alone.

When Ms. Thompkins realizes her purse is gone, she calls her cell phone, which is still inside it. She continues calling, until someone hears and answers it. Worse, it goes off during a class, drawing another teacher’s attention.

Once at the Principal’s office, a successful Persuasion roll (-2) is needed to convince the Principal the accused was somehow “set up.” Failure results in a week of in-school suspension, and parents are contacted. With success, the kids may or may not be able to finger Tommy, depending on the circumstances. If not, he gets away with it.

WRATH OF THE RITUALIST

The theft is just the beginning. Ms. Thompkins is also a practicing ritualist, though she considers herself a “white witch.” While she refuses to file charges, she is very angry the students involved betrayed her trust. That evening, she casts a minor curse ritual on anyone she suspects was involved, which bestows the Danged Hindrance on them for a month (see page 13).

This brush with the supernatural leads to terrible and horrifying nightmares and Ms. Thompkins is in all of them. She tells them in their dreams that they should be ashamed of what they did and apologize to her. “And you better mean it,” she says, her eyes ablaze with some blueish fire. In addition to the Danged Hindrance, these dreams cause all the kids involved to suffer a level of Fatigue.

If the students begin investigating Ms. Thompkins, they discover the truth about her by talking to people in town, breaking into her mobile home, or searching her desk. She keeps trinkets of magic and is known as “a strange one,” “a witch,” and worse.

Ms. Thompkins would never actually hurt a child, but she wants them to be sorry for what they did. If they apologize and mean it (a Persuasion roll to move her from Unfriendly to Neutral) she immediately removes the curse.

If Tommy is caught, and not the student heroes, then after a week of this, he comes to the gang, legitimately scared, and asks for their help explaining the dreams.

The episode may end with an apology, or the team may seek to find what she has of theirs to break the curse. Ms. Thompkins is using the students’ notebooks as a focus for the curse. She keeps them in a drawer in her classroom desk. If they steal the notebooks and burn them, the curse is over, but any work in them is destroyed, resulting in a lower grade—and Ms. Thompkins knowing the kids are on to her!

If the crew helps Tommy, either by convincing him to apologize or by finding and burning the notebooks, Tommy leaves the Bully club and becomes the group’s erstwhile ally, much to the chagrin and anger of Frank.

■ **Ms. Thompkins:** Use Cultist stats on page 181.

CHAPTER 11

CHARACTERS AND CRITTERS

PINEBOX MIDDLE SCHOOL

“Heroes need monsters to establish their heroic credentials. You need something scary to overcome.” — Margaret Atwood

Pinebox, Texas is filled with strange and unusual beings—and those are just the locals! There are also more than a few ghosts, ghouls, and honest to goodness monsters roaming the Big Thicket.

MONSTROUS ABILITIES

Pinebox Middle School uses a handful of new and expanded Special Abilities, some of which are common to multiple types of monsters.

POSSESSION

Possession occurs when a spirit enters and gains control of a physical body. The power is most often the domain of demons and hostile ghosts, but sophisticated intergalactic or inter-dimensional visitors have also been known to occasionally hitch rides within unsuspecting souls.

To possess a living being, the creature must have “sight” on the victim, even if it remains incorporeal, invisible, or perhaps even bound or trapped inside a nearby object.

The entity may then cast the *puppet* power at will using Spirit as their arcane skill. The possessor may not control more than one victim at a time. The victim resists at a -2 and

the base Duration is 24 hours. Releasing the spell is a free action.

The being takes its victim’s physical attributes, but retains its own Spirit, Smarts, and skills. It also keeps any of its other Special Abilities the Principal thinks make sense for the mortal form.

If the entity gets a raise, in addition to the usual effects, it can access the victim’s skills and memories at will.

If the host takes a Wound during the Duration of the possession, the entity must make another opposed Spirit roll to maintain its hold over the host.

Exorcism: Possessing entities who can’t be convinced, tricked, or aren’t otherwise willing to leave on their own during the power’s Duration must be cast out of a body with the *exorcism* power.

INFERNO UNDEAD

These creatures were created by Dr. Jenson in the Inferno (see the Descent Into the Inferno Plot Point Campaign on page 96). They are just like regular Undead in *Savage Worlds*, except all Inferno Undead are also mute.

WEAKNESSES

Monster Weaknesses come in a variety of forms and in *Pinebox Middle School*, many of them are specific, non-violent vulnerabilities kids can

take advantage of if they know about them. Learning a creature's Weaknesses is sometimes a simple matter of a Research or Occult roll, but sometimes it's an entire adventure in itself!

NOTEWORTHY RESIDENTS

Below are some of the more notable residents of Golan County along with a few Pinebox Middle School faculty members.

PRINCIPAL TERRY CARVER

Terry Carver and his family relocated from Austin to Pinebox in response to the big tech boom of the late 1990s. Carver was a history teacher at the time, but he quickly rose through the ranks to find himself Principal of the middle school in 2009.

Carver is a friendly and extremely engaged school official, often spending the bulk of his days among his students, even dining with them in the school cafeteria.

Secret: Carver grew up in Pinebox and once ran with a group of friends similar to that of the heroes. He has seen and even fought living nightmares on the city streets and out in the dense woods and though he has never spoken of his own experiences to others, he is willing to share with the heroes if confronted.

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

Skills: Academics d10, Athletics d6, Common Knowledge d8, Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d8, Stealth d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Loyal (to students)

Edges: Charismatic, Streetwise, Work the Crowd

"Principal Carver's pretty cool, I guess. Rumor has it, he used to be a kid too, but I don't believe it!"

-Gabe
Country Kid



INSPIRATIONS

Inspiration for pre-pubescent adventures in Pinebox can be found almost anywhere including (and perhaps most importantly) your own childhood. Over the years, however, there have been a number of movies, TV shows, books, comics, and even games featuring kids up against incredible odds, kids with supernatural powers and mysterious origins, and small communities facing colossal threats from somewhere beyond!

A few of the following are just thrilling tales of kids being kids, but even mundane, coming-of-age stories can be fantastic sources from which you can gather seeds to grow the fruits of exciting campaigns. This list is by no means comprehensive, but it is certainly a good jumping off point for those looking to up their game!

Please note that not all these films and books are family-friendly fare, but all deal with kids or teens (gifted, possessed, extraterrestrial, synthetic, and just plain run-of-the-mill).

INSPIRATIONAL TV SERIES (IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER):

Adventures of Pete and Pete, The
Animorphs
Chilling Adventures of Sabrina
Eerie, Indiana
I Am Not Okay with This
Journey of Allen Strange, The
Misfits of Science
October Faction
Pup Named Scooby-Doo, A
Sabrina the Teenage Witch
Secrets of Sulphur Springs
Small Wonder
So Weird
Stranger Things
Tales from the Loop
Tomorrow People, The

Lost Boys, The (1987)
Monster Squad, The (1987)
Return of the Living Dead Part II (1988)
Teen Witch (1989)
Sandlot, The (1993)
Matilda (1996)
Halloweentown (1998)
Sixth Sense, The (1999)
Bridge to Terabithia (2007)
Let the Right One In (2008)
Race to Witch Mountain (2009)
Diary of a Wimpy Kid (2010)
Attack the Block (2011)
Super 8 (2011)
ParaNorman (2012)
Middle School: The Worst Years of My Life (2016)
It (2017)
Rim of the World (2019)
Vampires vs. the Bronx (2020)

INSPIRATIONAL MOVIES (IN ORDER OF RELEASE)

Village of the Damned (1960)
Children of the Damned (1964)
Other, The (1972)
Escape to Witch Mountain (1975)
Return from Witch Mountain (1978)
The Pit (1981)
E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial (1982)
Firestarter (1984)
D.A.R.Y.L. (1985)
Explorers (1985)
Goonies, The (1985)
Silver Bullet (1985)
Weird Science (1985)
Stand by Me (1986)
Gate, The (1987)

INSPIRATIONAL COMICS (IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER)

Junior Braves of the Apocalypse
Paper Girls

INSPIRATIONAL READING (IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER)

"Animorphs" Series by K. A. Applegate and Michael Grant
Boy's Life by Robert McCammon
The Boys of Summer by Richard Cox
"Diary of a Wimpy Kid" Series by Jeff Kinney
"The Famous Five" Series by Enid Blyton
"Gone" Series by Michael Grant
"Goosebumps" Series by R.L. Stine

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