

Degrees of Horror

Beta Guide

Student Name: _____ XP: _____

Student Rank (circle 1): Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior

Class _____ Section _____

Instructor _____ Date _____

Howdy Savages,

We publishers live in scary times. On one hand, many people strongly advocate giving away content and making money through other means. On the other hand, nobody is quite sure what “other means” entails for the book trade. Musicians can give away their music and still sell concert tickets, but it doesn’t work quite the same with writers. Ed and I have talked a LOT about how much (or how little) to include in this free teaser for *ETU: Degrees of Horror*. Believe it or not, we began work on this RPG in 2007, and it’ll be 2010 before the entire book is released. When you work on something that long, it’s a little hard to just give it away. Yet, here we are.

This is NOT all of *Degrees of Horror*. This is a “partial beta” to a A) show you the book really does exist, B) gauge your initial reaction to some new rules that are not part of the core Savage Worlds system, and C) give you enough material to start playing a “light” version of the game. For starters, this teaser includes the book’s first chapter in its entirety. If this is your very first introduction to the Pinebox setting, this chapter will give you a basic understanding of what it and *Degrees of Horror* are all about.

Next, we give you the official ETU character sheet and much of the chapter on character creation. Even though you’ll read passing references to them, this teaser does not include the new edges and hindrances we’ve written for *Degrees of Horror*. Maybe we should have included them, and maybe later we will. But for now, that feels a little too much like giving away the farm. Granted, there’s a lot more to “the farm” than edges and hindrances, but work with us here. We’re feeling our way along.

In addition to setting info and character creation, we’re also sharing a brand new mechanic for Inventions. It’s a neat system that allows ETU students to create anything from truth serum to programmable robots...but it doesn’t use the standard power point system. There’s a good reason for it, namely that Inventions can incorporate not only Powers, but also Abilities, Skills, and Edges. We think it’s an easy, logical system, but it’s also different than what you’re used to in Savage Worlds. We hope you’ll kick the tires, give it a spin, and let us know what you think. We don’t expect you to actually use the Inventions in play, but try making one or two and let us know how it goes. Rest assured that we’ve taken game balance into account. Students must be Sophomores before they can create Basic inventions and Seniors to create Advanced inventions. Of course, the GM always has the choice of declaring Inventions off limits for his particular campaign, too.

Now that you’ve got a character, what do you do with her? We’ve included the very first plot point in our campaign. If you’re not a GM, we highly encourage you to exercise self-restraint and avoid reading that section. The *Degrees of Horror* plot point campaign is a campaign of mystery and adventure, so reading a plot point could really spoil your campaign. We’re also throwing in a *Midnight Tale* that was previously released on our website.

Please let us know what you think. Even though the first draft is written, we’re still editing and testing for game balance. We genuinely want your feedback. Please visit our forums at 12to-midnight.com/forum or the Savage Worlds licensee forum at <http://www.peginc.com/forum/viewforum.php?f=42> and tell us what you think.

Preston P. DuBose
Ed Wetterman

Dear Student,

Welcome, and congratulations on your acceptance as an incoming freshman student at East Texas University. I would like to take this opportunity to direct you to information that will make your transition to ETU as smooth as possible.

First, I would like to remind you that all freshmen and sophomores are required to live in on-campus housing. This both insures your safety and helps you build friendships that will undoubtedly last a lifetime. Be sure to go fightingravens.com to fill out your dorm application and submit your deposit.

Next, I would like to remind you that freshman orientation, which we call Sweat Lodge, coincides with dorm check-in on the third weekend in August. Please plan to attend one of the sessions on Thursday, Friday, or Saturday evening. At Sweat Lodge you'll learn about the importance of campus safety, our university traditions and fight song, the Raven's Honor Code, and advice from seniors. The Saturday night Sweat Lodge ends with free pizza and a show by local rockers A Jury of Robots.

Again, let me congratulate you on your first step into a larger world. College is what you make of it, and an acceptance to ETU is a great start!

Go Ravens!

President Nelson

Chapter 1: ETU Degrees of Horror

The ETU Campaign Setting

In *ETU: Degrees of Horror*, the real world is your setting. Young adults go about their daily lives attending classes, dating, making friends, planning for the future, and learning how the world works—usually in blissful ignorance of the truth.

An unnatural darkness hides on the fringes of our everyday lives. In places, that darkness intrudes upon our mundane reality until the veil of willful, *blissful* ignorance is stretched impossibly thin. The world of Pinebox is the modern world we live in, but slightly askew.

Global conspiracies, hidden secret societies, and paranormal activities are real, as some among us today would argue. Imagine if the stories of haunting, vampires, or witches were true. What if all the urban legends were true? Only no one believes it. No one is truly prepared for it.

In this campaign, you play college students who begin as everyday, naive freshmen at East Texas University in Pinebox, Texas. The students at ETU are generally normal people, with normal skills, abilities, and knowledge. They get caught up in the world of the supernatural and therein lies the horror of the campaign. While these heroes may gain great knowledge of the arcane and the supernatural, the truth remains hidden from the world at large. Certain government agencies and secret societies make sure that the status quo is preserved.

Through the course of gameplay, your exposure to the dark underbelly of Pinebox is the catalyst for your character to grow and mature into a hero. It isn't an easy process. In college, success comes in different forms. At ETU it could mean passing a test, or it could mean stopping a psychotic fan from drugging the entire wrestling team. On the flip side, some failures come at higher costs than others. Learning to be a hero means making tough choices and living with the consequences.

However, truly normal students would never do the things this campaign requires of them. So these student-heroes have something more about them. They must have heroic hearts, inquisitive minds, and a desire to fight back against the dark forces arrayed against them. Heroes of ETU must become a

force for good, ready to take down whatever darkness threatens the little town of Pinebox. So think of a character archetype, and build in some sort of heroic tendency. This could be a character who is selfless, courageous, stubborn, or overly curious.

Character Concepts

Since the world of ETU mirrors the real world, most any modern character concept is available for play. The list below is not meant to limit character creation in any way, but to give you some ideas regarding character concepts and backgrounds.

Spend some time thinking about your character archetype and what sort of hero you would like to play.

Archetypes

Activist: Conservation, the green movement, PETA, Green Peace, Anti-Nukes, Anti-War—these are your mantras. Someone has to protect the world for the next generation and it might as well be you. ETU is a small college, but one involved in agriculture, Homeland Defense, and other biological and nuclear studies. You can make a difference. You will be heard.

Actor/Performer: You live for the stage and hope that by furthering your studies you might get your big break. ETU is a small college where you can get lots of hands-on roles right away.

Believer: You know there is more to the universe than any human can possibly comprehend. The truth is out there. Secret army bases, labs, creatures of legend, UFOs, crystal power, monsters, ghosts, angels, devils, magic—pick your obsession.

Career Military: You have enrolled at ETU and are in the ROTC program. You are patriotic and have a strong desire to serve the United States of America.

Crusader: You believe in law and want to fight the evils of our society while helping those who are not in a position to help themselves. ETU has a fine Criminal Justice department and many active programs such as the Ride Along Project that lead you to be excited about getting your education here.

Degrees of Horror sneak peek

Hunter/Avid Outdoors Sportsman: You love the outdoors and believe in conservation and getting back to nature. ETU is located in the Big Thicket and is near several lakes and rivers, making it the perfect university for you to continue to enjoy nature.

Jock: You excelled in sports in high school and the scholarship offered by ETU was too good to pass up. The school is smaller than you would have liked, but your chances of starting in your chosen sport is better.

Journalist: You have always wanted to be a reporter, to get the big story, to tell the truth. The public has a right to know and you are their vehicle to that knowledge. ETU has a fine student run newspaper, radio station, and even cable channel. Golan County is full of stories, and ETU is a great place to find your voice.

Local: You grew up in Pinebox or the surrounding area. Most of your friends have left to find jobs or educations in other cities. You know there are dangers inherent to living in Pinebox, but for you it is just a way of life. ETU is a fine school, and you are looking forward to beginning your studies.

Martial Artist: You believe that the body and mind must be developed to reach your personal best. You are constantly training and focused on what you want to achieve.

Occultist: The arcane has always fascinated you and you are drawn to the power it promises. Only through dedication and study can you hope to grow your knowledge of rituals and obscure powers. Will you be a force for good or evil?

Partyboy/Partygirl: Yeah, getting accepted to ETU is fine, but you can't wait to get away from home. Grown up and a reason to party. ETU doesn't know what it's in for. Let's get this party started!

Psychic: You have the gift. Sometimes your dreams come true, or you hear voices or see images as you communicate with the dead or with some other intelligence or spirit. You have felt called to attend ETU, but for what purpose?

Scholar: The new ETU library is well regarded and many professors seem top-notch. How such a relatively small college can recruit so many renowned professors is a mystery, but this school suits your needs and you eagerly look forward to getting started.

Scientist: You are dedicated to the principles of science and realize the value it has for the world. The

government sponsored labs of ETU mean you will get to be involved in wonderfully exciting programs and research.

Stranger in a Strange Land: You were born in another country and have come to ETU for an education in America. What you found is that Texas is different from the rest of America. In fact, the saying around here is "Texas is like a whole other country." The people talk with a strange, slow accent, look at strangers oddly, and while they are outwardly friendly, you know there is mistrust and doubt bubbling just below the surface. Can you fit in here? Make friends? Be successful?

Techie: Engineering, nanotechnology, computer science, aerospace engineering, and robotics—it all excites you, and ETU seems to a good fit. Great professors, lots of endowments, and government research grants make this the ideal environment for you.

Levels of Play

All starting heroes begin with zero experience and are created using the ETU character creation rules in the next chapter. All participants should be ETU in-

An Explanation of the American Education System for our Non-American Friends

In America, children are entitled to a taxpayer-funded education that lasts 12 grades, with each grade lasting one year. This education begins roughly around age six and continues through age 18. Children must achieve an overall passing score to advance to the next grade. The curriculum is determined at a state or local level, but generally cuts across the liberal arts, sciences, and some physical education such as organized sports. While some students are singled out for advanced study and others are held back to cover remedial topics, at least in theory all students are given the same baseline education. Although some high schools specialize in particular trades, this is not the norm.

Although some colleges and universities operate on different schedules, ETU operates on a semester system. The Fall semester runs from September to mid-December, and the Spring semester runs from mid-January through May. Students have the option of taking additional classes in condensed semesters during the summer to get ahead or re-take failed classes. Because 16 weeks of study are crammed into six-week summer semesters, these classes are much more demanding. Many students use the summer break to earn money, spend time with family, or travel.

Degrees of Horror sneak peek

coming freshmen with well-developed backgrounds. In the Savage Worlds system, each year of college is equivalent to one Rank of experience. Hence a freshman begins at zero experience, becomes a sophomore with 20 experience points, a junior at 40, and a senior at 60. At 80 experience points the heroes should be at or near graduation and completing the campaign. However, new Ranks are not automatic! Characters must pass two final exams (more on that later) to achieve the next rank. Consequently, a freshman with 20 experience points, but one failed exam is still a freshman and may not take any sophomore edges. If she passes her next final (10 experience points later), then she attains the rank of sophomore.

The Game Master in the ETU setting is known as the Professor and all the information following the chapter on Magic and Science is for his eyes only! Got it?

Setting Background

East Texas University

History

East Texas University is located, naturally enough, in East Texas. The original institution was founded in 1888 as East Texas Women's College. However, by 1905 enrollment had dropped from a peak of 18 students to only five. Fortunately, it was saved from closure by rags-to-riches wildcatter Howard O'Brien, whose wife was an ETWC alumna. Mrs. O'Brien convinced her husband to donate a million dollars to her Alma Mater, insuring its financial security for years to come.

Of course, nobody gives away that kind of money without strings attached. Mr. O'Brien insisted that enrollment be opened to men as well as women. That, in turn, meant a name change. They eventually settled on the name South East Texas Institute. That name lasted until 1987, following the embarrassing notoriety of being in a magazine list of top party schools. A new president, Paul Patterson, was hired to clean house, and as part of his initiative he lobbied the state legislature to change the college's name. The state approved the name East Texas University.

Statistics

Today East Texas University serves more than 10,051 undergraduate and graduate students in almost sixty fields of study. The anthropology and folklore departments are ranked in the top ten in the country and ETU is rated in the top 20 best education values for a public university. There are students from more than twenty countries attending ETU, and the college has a nationally ranked ROTC program and was recently awarded a grant to become a Homeland Defense Training School. ETU has a very active Journalism department and its own award winning, student run television and radio stations.

Student Life

While there are shopping and various avenues for entertainment in town, ETU offers the convenience of many amenities right on campus so that almost anything a student needs can be found there. In addition to on-campus housing (mandatory for freshmen and sophomores), there is a movie theater, bowling alley, well-equipped gym and recreational sports center (including a paint ball field), bookstore, convenience store, transit system of East Texas University busses, four dining halls, emergency care, and much more.

Pinebox, Texas

The city of Pinebox is located in Golan County, Texas. Pinebox is nestled in the remains of a once-vast, dense forest called the Big Thicket that ranged across Texas, Louisiana, and beyond. For many years, the area's primary income derived from harvesting pine trees for timber, which is how the city came to be named. There are numerous hiking and biking trails, as well as excellent fishing and water sports opportunities at nearby Lake Greystone.

The city itself has a population of roughly 22,000, including students. Pinebox boasts many familiar restaurant chains, as well as local favorites such as the Pizza Barn. Despite hosting a nationally ranked university, Pinebox has managed to maintain its rural roots. Many students have said one of the best things about ETU was how the low-pressure, small-town lifestyle helped them adjust to life on their own.

Although ETU stresses student safety, crime in Pinebox is much lower than big city universities. Although accidents happen, as they do anywhere, you can rest assured that Pinebox is a safe place to live and learn.

Texan Talk

Some say Texas is like a whole other country. Maybe that's true. All of France and Britain could fit inside Texas. Texas has a little bit of everything, from the Piney Woods and Big Thicket of East Texas, across the plains of Central Texas, to the Hill Country, to deserts, and mountains of west Texas. Texans are an eclectic mix of western dreams, and northern entrepreneurship. The truth is a West Texan and an East Texan have very different accents, but the following list might help those not used to Texan or Southern lingo to better understand the way people here have been known to talk.

Texas Wisdom

Big Hat, No Cattle– All talk, no action

Don't make me open a can of Whoopass!– I'm about to kick your ass if you don't stop.

Better than two peas in a pod– Very close friends or allies.

He's on a tear– He's doing bad things.

Showing his ass!– Being bad, acting badly.

Don't slap a man who's chewing tobacco– Could get messy.

Letting the cat out is easy, putting him back in the sack is hard– It's easy to start something, harder to see it through.

Don't squat with spurs on– If you squat wearing spurs, you will slice your butt open!

Always drink upstream of the herd– Be different and your water will taste better. The herd is stinky with cow poop on their hooves.

He's as sharp as a mashed potato– Boy's dumb!

Looks like the cheese fell off the cracker– Things didn't work out the way it was planned.

Don't dig up more snakes than you can kill– Don't go looking for extra trouble.

He couldn't pour piss out of a boot with directions on the heel– Boy's dumb!

More than you can shake a stick at– Many.

Happier than a rooster in a hen house– A very happy state of mind.

Dumber than a box of (hammers/rocks) – Boy's extremely dumb.

We've Howdied, but we ain't shook– We know each other, but we haven't come to an agreement or we know each other, but we are not friends yet.

That chaps my ass– Makes me mad.

He's all swole up– He's angry, looking to fight.

It's a turd floater– A big rainstorm.

Having a fit– Throwing a tantrum.

Texas Wordology

Coke– any soft drink, not just coca cola, but Dr. Pepper, Sprite, Orange, Mountain Dew.

Fixin to– about to, or eventually will do something.

Dadgummit, dadblammit– used instead of curse words.

Pissed off– angry

Recken– to think about

Howdy Ya'll– Hello everyone.

Boondocks– way out in the middle of no where

Yankee– anyone not born in Texas. Can be anyone north of where you live. "Dallas is Yankee land to Houston."

Dry County– A county where it is illegal to sell liquor.

Aggervated– mild annoyance to crazed rage.

Ball– To play American Football. There is no other sport. Ball is Football in Texas.

Nu-uh– No way.

Lit off– To leave, took off.

Tank– a pond.

Texas Stop Sign– A Dairy Queen fast food restaurant known for hamburgers and ice cream.

Bloody Nickel– slang for Houston's 5th Ward, one of the toughest neighborhoods in the nation.

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What a Do?– A way to say hello and ask what’s going on at the same time.

Awwready!– Used as an affirmation or agreement.

Tejano– A native Hispanic Texan.

To carry– to provide a ride.

Icebox– a refrigerator, not necessarily the frozen part, but the entire thing.

Catching Cold– becoming sick or ill.

Eat Up With– excessively afflicted with some bad thing such as jealousy, cancer or other disease.

Nekkid– A state of being nude.

Take on– To wail or cry.

Ain’noneed– No reason to.

Grocery Store– any place that sells food and gas.

Holler– to call out.

Ice House– a bar, usually a biker bar.

Tenny Shoes– any pair of athletic shoes

I imagine– to have intent or belief. “I imagine it’s time to go.”

Plumb– to do something completely.

Switch– a branch or stick used to spank or punish.

Wouldn’t Take– To refuse to sell. “I wouldn’t take less than a thousand for it.”

Skoo-eet– Let’s go eat.

Chapter 2: Character Creation

Welcome, incoming freshman. As this is a horror game and you begin as simple college students, there are a few additions to the basic Savage Worlds character creation rules. We hope you will agree that these changes help underscore the setting's tone and enhance your experience. Here's a summary:

1. Your race is predetermined. Everyone is human.
2. Assign your traits, including attributes, skills, bonus skills, and derived attributes.
3. Choose your hindrances and edges, which may affect some traits above.
4. Choose your major and assign your bonus Knowledge skills
5. Choose any extracurricular activities (up to three per semester)
6. List your starting possessions

Step 1: Race

By default all characters are human. If you want to create a character who is part fish, you're on your own. (You might try that other university up in Massachusetts). As humans, every hero starts with one free edge.

Step 2: Traits

Attributes

Pick your attributes as described in the Savage Worlds roleplaying game. Every character begins with a d4 in every attribute and has 5 points to raise any or all of them to higher die types.

Oh, to be a Wild Card

Freshmen begin this setting with no wild die, though they do receive the normal number of bennies per session. Henceforth, we refer to any hero on the path to becoming a full Wild Card character as a Heroic character.

As a Sophomore the Heroic character receives a d4 Wild die. As a Junior he has a d6 Wild die. As a Senior he may take one Senior edge, such as Fighting Master or Monster Slayer.

Why? The heroes begin the campaign as innocents likely to become victims of the dark forces found in Pinebox, but as they progress they learn to fight back and maybe, just maybe, they will make a difference.

Bottom line... Be afraid, be very afraid!

Skills

Choose your skills from the list provided in the Savage Worlds rulebook.

Because ETU is set in our modern-day world, it is highly unlikely that entering freshmen have proficiency beyond d8 in any given skill, and we recommend the Professor approve any skills raised above a d8 during character creation and the player should provide a valid reason for it. .

Incoming Freshmen also start with two bonus skills, described below, which are free and do not affect the starting pool of 15 skill points.

Linguistics

Most universities require at least basic knowledge of a second language, thus incoming freshmen are required to have at least a d4 *Knowledge (Language)* skill. The hero needs only to decide on a language. Any additional languages require the you to level this skill up normally. The hero receives an additional language for each die of *Knowledge (Language)* they take. Native languages are free.

Knowledge (Major focus)

Freshman start with a bonus d4 in *Knowledge (Focus)* relating to your field of study. (See *Step 4: Majors*, below). This skill is important to the character as it is used when taking Final Exams, since the outcome of these tests determine whether a hero may become a Sophomore (Seasoned), Junior (Veteran), or Senior (Heroic). General Studies Freshmen receive a +1 bonus to any *Common Knowledge* rolls and may use *Common Knowledge* rolls to take tests through the Sophomore level. See **Chapter 4: Setting Rules: Leveling** for information on gaining knowledge as you level.

The Guts Skill

This being a horror campaign, the *Guts* skill takes on extra importance. *Guts* rolls are made whenever a Fear Check is required.

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The Ritualism Skill

The AB background skills of *Spellcasting*, *Psionics*, and *Weird Science* do not exist in Degrees of Horror. The skill of *Ritualism* is a campaign catchall that includes understanding of all things relating to the preparation and casting of rituals, creating talismans, and is required to take the **Ritualist** edge. This skill may not be taken at character creation, but may be taken after playing certain Midnight Tales and Plot Points. If you desire to create a ritualist you need to consult the Professor and let him know of your plans so he can include the proper Tales to propel your hero onto heroic, and arcane feats of valor as you fight the shadows.

Knowledge (Paranormal)

This skill is a catchall that includes the understanding of all things occult, from secret cabals to demonic forces. If you need to identify a certain type of spirit, a creature, or a demon, this is the skill used to do so. This skill is also used to activate certain talismans. A hero may begin the game with this skill.

The Faith Skill

There is no **AB Miracles** edge in Degrees of Horror. Miracles are the sole purview of the Professor. However, that does not mean that a hero may not have great faith and may find uses for the *Faith (Spirit)* skill. *Faith* is necessary to hold unholy creatures and demonic spirits at bay, to exorcise demons in certain rituals, and in the creation of Holy Water. However, like all skills taken by a hero, a character should have a background that includes why she is a person of great faith. Many folks have faith in a greater power, deity, or spirit, but only a few have the *Faith* to confront demons and to drive them out of a poor, possessed soul.

Derived Attributes

Calculate your secondary attributes as usual. Additionally, you have a new Studying attribute that is the sum of the bonuses and penalties from various Hindrances, Edges, Adventure Cards, Activities, and Professor whim. Your beginning, non-modified Studying attribute is 0. At the beginning of each semester the Studying attribute resets to zero, unless the hero has certain hindrances that permanently reduce the attribute.

The second new attribute is Reputation (Rep) on campus. This attribute can be used to influence Professor Characters and may be positive or negative.

Common Knowledge in Degrees of Horror

Common Knowledge rolls are made to see what a character knows about a certain thing pertaining to his background. For instance, a character born and reared in Pinebox has general knowledge of Golan County and might know some of the local history and gossip. A person from rural East Texas would probably have some knowledge of farming, ranching, fishing, or hunting.

Common Knowledge rolls may be modified by the Professor based on the background of the character and the difficulty of what is being ascertained by the roll. If the character's background suggests he would have good knowledge of something, the Professor may allow him to make a *Common Knowledge* roll at +2. The Professor could increase the difficulty as well from -1 to -4 or even greater. However, for anything requiring a more advanced knowledge, a specific *Knowledge* roll should be made and it may also be modified by the Professor.

For instance, in *Degrees of Horror*, a lawyer may use his *Common Knowledge* for knowing the basics of law and how the criminal justice system works. However, if he is looking for an obscure court case to set precedent over a current case, that should require a *Knowledge (Law)* roll.

A medical doctor should have *Healing* as a skill and probably has great *Common Knowledge* of all things related to practicing medicine. However, if he wants to do brain or heart surgery, he should have *Knowledge (Surgery/Heart/Brain)* and the Professor can decide on modifiers. A medical doctor who does not have a specific knowledge should not be allowed to perform such a surgery, or if he is allowed, it should be made with a -4 or greater modifier.

Remember to use whatever roll the Professor deems appropriate to see how well an action is performed. The medical doctor in the previous example knows how to operate on the brain, but the actual surgery should be an Agility roll, or perhaps a *Smarts* roll, according to the Professor's understanding of what is being attempted.

In *Degrees of Horror* specific Knowledge skills take on heightened proportions as they are used when making Final Exam rolls at the end of every semester. The heroes receive a basic die or die bumps in the specific skill they are majoring in every rank for free, though they may increase this during character creation or during normal level ups.

A hero who is a Science Major receives a free specific *Knowledge* skill die, but for general science type questions, a *Common Knowledge* roll would easily suffice. Only use the specific *Knowledge* skill when attempting to know something that is very detailed, and less well-known, that a typical person in that field of study might not know, such as brain surgery for a general medical practitioner

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Your starting reputation is 0, and increases and decreases based on your actions in-game. It is a level of trust and respect afforded the heroes on campus and may be used to borrow school equipment, gain new scholarships and grants, and to give aid to the heroes who have earned it. Reputation is constantly modified throughout the campaign and does not reset as the Studying attribute does.

Step 3: Hindrances & Edges

Choose Hindrances and Edges from the Savage Worlds rulebook. Some Hindrances and Edges have been modified to better suit ETU, so be sure to consult the end of this section.

The following Hindrances are not available in the ETU setting: **Bloodthirsty**, **Illiterate**, **Wanted (Minor/Major)**. The following Edges are not available in the ETU setting: **Arcane Resistance**, **Giant Killer**, **Mr. Fix It**, **Holy/Unholy Warrior**. There are no Arcane Backgrounds in Degrees of Horror, though there are special Weird edges that become available through roleplay opportunities during the campaign. Because these edges have the potential to change the tone of the campaign, your Professor may declare them off limits.

Senior Edges:

ETU introduces Senior Edges—these edges can only be accessed after taking prerequisite edges and becoming a Senior. These edges add flavor and distinction for characters wanting to become masters of a particular area. Students may only take one Senior edge—regardless of their qualifications—thus these special edges become defining aspects of their characters.

Step 4: Majors

Characters begin as a Freshman at ETU and are assumed to be enrolled as full-time students with a 12-15 credit-hour course load, equating to four or five classes a semester.

Choose a Major from the list below. Keep in mind that many universities have slight variations of names for the same degree. Furthermore, there are literally hundreds, if not thousands of different degrees offered by institutions worldwide. To keep things Fast! Furious! and Fun!, we have lumped several degree

specializations under one catch-all Major. Yes it is a gross simplification and probably will cause academics everywhere to shred their diplomas in rage, but keep telling yourself it's just a game.

Pick any degree you would like your character to have, then scan the list for the major that best fits. Note that the “specializations” in parenthesis are examples only and are not meant to limit your choices. Furthermore, some degrees could be argued to belong in another major. For instance, does Dance belong under Kinesiology, or Art? We don't really care. Just as long as you and your Professor are in agreement, it's all good. Rather than creating new Majors, try to find a category that fits the degree you have in mind.

Majors (Example Specializations)

- Agriculture (general agriculture, animal science, conservation, forestry, crop science, wildlife management)
- Art (general art, art history, music, design)
- Business (economics, general business, international business, finance, marketing, accounting)
- Computer Sciences (computer technology, information services, programming)
- Criminal Justice (police sciences, pre-law, corrections, social services)
- Cultural Studies (anthropology, archaeology, sociology, child development)
- Education (elementary, secondary, special ed, ESL)
- Engineering (mechanical, electrical, aerospace, petroleum, architecture)
- General Studies (undecided)
- Kinesiology (sports science, physical ed, dance)
- Military Science (ROTC: US army, tactics, strategy)
- Liberal Arts (languages, creative writing, history, English literature, folklore, psychology, fashion)
- Life Sciences (biology, botany, genetics, entomology, pre-med, medical tech, biotechnology, health services)
- Physical Sciences (chemistry, physics, geology, weather and climate, nanotechnology)
- Speech and Communications (speech, journalism, radio/television)

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Heroes may declare double majors, but suffer a permanent -4 to the Studying Modifier for the increased class load. No more than two majors are ever allowed, though majors may be dropped (See Chapter 4).

Minors

Minor specializations can be declared at any time, but are not required. Characters may declare a Minor.

Apply a -1 penalty to Studying due to the strain of the course load. Taking a Minor adds a bonus d4 *Knowledge* (focus) skill in the related field. Dropping the minor results in -2 penalty to any rolls involving the bonus *Knowledge* skill. A hero may only have up to two minors in Degrees of Horror, though this results in a -2 Studying modifier for each semester.

Step 5) Activities

In addition to new edges and hindrances, ETU introduces extra-curricular Activities. Each Activity has both positive and detrimental features. The following list is a guide and may not detail the exact activity you want your character to have. Work with the Professor to match your idea to one of the groups below. You may choose up to three from the following list.

- **Athlete:** Requires Vigor d8. You are on an ETU sports team of your choice. +2 *Rep*, -1 *Studying* (examples: Football, Baseball, Lacrosse, Basketball, Golf, Softball, Swimming (Requires Swimming skill), Diving Team (Requires Swimming skill), Lacrosse, Soccer, Fencing Team, Polo Team (Requires Riding skill), Volleyball, Track and Field, Tennis, Cheerleading, The Flight, the Raven's Dance and Drill team)
- **Band:** You belong to a rock-n-roll, country, or other type of band. +2 *Rep*, -1 *Studying*.
- **Fraternity/Sorority:** You belong to a fraternity or sorority. You gain a +1 to *Studying* (thanks to old tests) and reduce your Wealth by one category for the First semester. Below are several fake Fraternities and Sororities, though the Professor or the Player may substitute real ones or may generate new ones as they desire (see sidebar on creating Fraternities and Sororities).
 - *Mu Omegas: Cultural Fraternity of Future Farmers dedicated to furthering the Western*

- *culture of farming and ranching.*
- *Omega Alpha Deltas: Political Fraternity dedicated to making political and legal connections.*
- *Pi Thetas: Social Fraternity dedicated to making friends and connections.*
- *Chi Sigmas: Athletic Sorority dedicated to female athletics.*
- *Delta Xi: Community Service Sorority dedicated to helping various charities and society as a whole.*
- *Upsilon Kappas: Secret Society Sorority dedicated to the empowerment of women.*
- **Job (dull):** You have a very boring, uninteresting 8 hour job. Increase Wealth by one Category, -2 *Reputation* (that's so uncool Brewster!)
 - *Night Security Guard at The Golden Mark Corporation.*
 - *Night Clerk at a warehouse. Count incoming goods, and outgoing goods.*
 - *24 hour Help desk line for cellphones*
- **Job (part-time):** You have a part time job of your choice. Increase your Wealth by +\$100, -1 *Studying*
 - *Wait Staff or Assistant Cook at the Pizza Barn, Hamburger City, College Café, Mom's Diner, El Perro Loco*
 - *Car Wash Staff at Jelly's Car Wash*
 - *Data Entry Clerk at a local corporation*
 - *Staff at Billiam's Gym*
 - *Staff at the old Pines Hotel (Wait staff,*

Yeah, I'm In a Band

So you want to be in a band? Then you may as well play it to the hilt! Decide what type of band you are in and your role in the band, such as vocals, guitarist, bassist, drummer, keyboards, or so on. Decide how many NPCs are in the band. The Professor can use the NPC generator to fill in details.

List several songs by bands you wish to emulate. These songs may be played at the appropriate times for good role-playing ambiance.

Specific gigs for money should be role-played in the course of the game and may take place in several local venues including the Pizza Barn, the Roost, or a private party.

For performances, you may use your Charisma to modify *Common Knowledge* rolls made at -2 (Spirit plus Charisma for Vocals, Agility plus Charisma for instruments, etc), or if you are really good and have taken a specific *Knowledge* skill, you may use it instead with no penalty to the roll.

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- Cleaning staff, Desk Clerk*
 - *Mechanic's assistant at McMurray's Garage*
 - *Convenience Store clerk at Speedy Pete's*
 - *Staff at Horner's Used Book Store*
 - *T-Shirt Security at various parties and events*
 - *Resident Assistant for one of the ETU dormitories (Whitehall (coed), Danford (male), Hughes (male), Travis (coed Athletic), Kirchman Tower (female))*
 - **Job (full-time):** You have a full time job of your choice. Increase your Wealth by two categories, -2 Studying, and -2 Reputation.
 - *As above (Part-Time list), but work 40 hours or more a week*
 - *Assistant Manager of local Apartments (Windy Creek Trailer Park, Indian Summer Trailer Park, Whiskey Creek Apartments, Blue Moon Apartments)*
 - *Fire Fighter for the Fire Department*
 - *Clerk at State Bank and Trust*
 - *Sewage Technician for City Wastewater and Treatment plant*
 - *Car Salesman at McFierson's Used Cars*
 - *Assistant Bail Bondsman for Bonner's Bail Bonds*
 - **ROTC:** You belong to the Reserve Officer Training Corp, and will be joining the US Army as a commissioned officer upon successfully surviving—ah-hrm—graduating, from ETU. You may apply the benefits of Leadership edges to Wild Cards as long as you remain in the ROTC.
 - **Significant Other:** You have a girlfriend or boyfriend, and everyone knows that having a significant other suddenly makes you more attractive to the opposite sex! +1 Charisma, -1 Studying, -\$100 (regular dates are a must!)
 - *Decide on a name for love interest and have the Professor create the NPC*
 - **Student Organization:** You belong to a student organization. This could be anything from the debate club to the robotics team, and each instance stacks. +1 to related skill (may never choose Fighting or Shooting) or +2 Rep, -1 Studying.
 - *Student Newspaper (Reporter, Photographer, Layout Technician, Editor)*
 - *Student radio station (Disk jockey, News Reporter, Sports Reporter, Technician)*
 - *Raven's Marching Band (Decide on instrument played)*
 - *Orchestra (Decide on instrument played)*
 - *Online Gaming Club (rarely make physical socials, but have many online ones.)*
 - *Raven's Roleplaying Organization (Pronounced "ARRPO")*
 - *Raven's Aid Society (Student service organization)*
 - *Raven's Actor's Guild ("Rag." May be actor, playwright, stage technician, or director)*
 - *Debate Team*
 - *Robotic's Team*
 - *Shooting Team (may not take +1 Shooting)*
 - *Student Rodeo Team*
 - *Intramural Sports*
 - **Tutor:** You help others with schoolwork which reinforces your own knowledge +1 Studying, -2 Rep.
 - *Choose subject (English, History, Science, Mathematics)*
 - **Teacher's Aid:** You help out one of the Professors in your Major. +1 Studying.
 - **Volunteer:** You volunteer somewhere. +2 Rep, -1 Studying
 - *Pinebox Hospice*
 - *Candy Striper at Pinebox Medical Center*
 - *Aide at Pinebox Elementary, Junior High, or High School*
 - *Golan County Animal Shelter*
- Activities are temporary and reset every rank, as does the Studying modifier. However, Reputation earned remains as a permanent modifier that is constantly adjusted up or down.

Step 6) Gear

Each Freshman starts college with possessions corresponding in value to his wealth level (typically \$500). For instance, students are assumed to have an average wardrobe appropriate for Texas seasons, and a few other possessions like a cell phone and MP3 player. List these items in the Gear section of your character sheet. For more on wealth and buying stuff, consult **Chapter 3: Wealth & Spending.**

Character Creation Summary

1) Race

- All characters are human and get a free Edge (for which you must meet all the requirements).

2) Traits

- Create normally using the Savage Worlds rules (5 points for attributes, 15 points for skills, and determine Charisma, Pace, Parry, and Toughness as normal).
- Choose a free *Knowledge (Language)* d4 skill.
- If you choose a Major, character receives a free specific *Knowledge* skill of d4.
- Determine Major focus of study or declare General Studies.
- May choose a Minor focus of study.
- May choose up to 3 Activities.
- Determine starting Studying Score based on Edges/Hindrances/Activities.
- Determine starting Reputation. Usually begins a 0, unless modified by certain Edges/Hindrances/Activities.

3) Edges and Hindrances

- Create normally using the Savage Worlds rules.
- The following Hindrances are not available in Degrees of Horror: **Bloodthirsty**, **Illiterate**, **Wanted (Minor/Major)**.
- The following Edges are not available in Degrees of Horror: **Arcane Resistance**, **Giant Killer**, **Mr. Fix It**, **Holy/Unholy Warrior**.
- There are no **Arcane Backgrounds**.

4) Gear

- Most characters begin with \$500 after paying all bills. This may be modified by certain Edges and Hindrances or activities.
- May choose a 5+ years older vehicle unless modified by certain Edges or Hindrances.
- May (with Professors permission) list normal items that a college student would have and own in a dorm room setting. Anything else must be purchased with the initial money.

5) Background Details

- Fill in any other background details you care to add. Family members, friends, and important

NPCs with relationships to the hero should be determined.

Skills Summary

All the basic skills found in the Savage Worlds rule-book may be used in *Degrees of Horror*. The *Faith* skill is modified for Degrees of Horror.

Load Limits

A character's load limit is per the Savage Worlds rule-book.

Leveling

- Gain a new Edge.
- Increase a skill to equal to or greater than linked attribute.
- Increase 2 skills less than their linked attributes.
- Increase one attribute once per Rank (Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, Senior).
- Add a new skill at d4.
- Take Final Exams using specific *Knowledge* skill modified by current Studying score (only bennies remaining at the end of the previous session may be used to reroll result and this may only be done once).
- Upon attaining a new Rank, improve specific *Knowledge* skill of Major/Minor (See Chapter 4 for more details on this).
- Choose new activities after each semester (generally 10 experience points, but may be an average of 10 for the party, though the character must actually rank up to take the next level of edges).
- Reset Studying Score after each semester.

Chapter 5: Science

Inventions

Technology marches inexorably onward, creating science fact from science fiction and producing results so fantastic as to be almost indistinguishable from magic. To create any special inventions requires the hero to have the Weird Inventor Professional Edge. This provides the hero with 10 Build Points. A Build Point is used to create cutting edge and even weird technology. He may use his 10 Build Points with the **Basic Technology Chart** to create various items. He may have many separate, small items or may combine the points into one or more items. These take all his attention and resources, so he may not build new items until the old ones are disabled, destroyed, deconstructed, or he gains extra Build Points by taking the Extra Builds Edge upon leveling up.

To create any Basic Tech invention requires a *Repair* roll (-2) and access to a laboratory. A raise halves the normal build time. Each Build Point expended equals two hours of time to create. Creating any invention that uses Powers or Abilities increases the *Repair* roll to a -4. Also, any invention using Advanced Tech, increases the *Repair* roll to -6. A failed roll during creation results in an inoperable device which must be carefully taken apart (*Repair* -2), at the cost of doubling the total time to create the device. A critical failure (a 1 on the skill die) on any *Repair* roll to create an invention results in the total loss of the item, the time, and the money invested.

Note that the inventor is limited in Build Points, though he may lose, deconstruct, or use a creation and he gets those Build Points back to create something new. This is limiting at first, but with the Weird Inventor edge and two level ups, he could have 20 Build Points. A working lab is required with money for raw materials and this can become available during play. A sample lab might have \$10,000 in materials available for the inventor.

Basic Tech

The tech piece invented may be just about anything, from something worn to an independent robot construction. These creations fall into two categories:

Gadgets and Constructs. All have the following base attributes:

Gadgets: Size: -2, Toughness 2, Base Cost: \$500. Every Build Point of upgrades adds an additional \$500. Note: Miniaturization must be purchased for 1 Build Point for small gadgets such as glasses or similar items weighing up to 5 lbs (See Basic Tech Chart below). Gadgets never have a Smarts die.

Constructs: Fearless. Size -2. Base Toughness 2. Strength d4, Agility d4, Vigor d4, Smarts - (direct remote control), Spirit -. Base cost \$2000. Every Build Point of upgrades adds an additional \$500.

A construct's Smarts may be raised by spending 1 Build Point for Basic Programming and 1 Build Point for Sensory Equipment. This allows the construct to interact with its environment, and to execute predetermined commands or routines. It may comply with voice commands of the inventor if Advanced Auditory Response is installed (See Basic Tech Chart below). An invention that can respond vocally, must have Basic Programming, Sensory Equipment, Advanced Auditory Response, and a d4 *Language* skill.

Basic Tech Chart

Build Cost	Product Specs
1	Add 1 die to existing Skill (trappings vary), up to d8 maximum
3	Add Ability (See Basic Abilities List below)
2	Advanced Auditory Response. (May respond to voice commands)
1	Add d4 Skill (to trappings vary)
3	Add Edge (see Basic Tech Edge List below)
1	Add Existing Equipment. Must be smaller than Tech creation.
3	Add Power (see Basic Tech Powers List below)
1	Add 2 Power Points for operation per Build Point spent
1	Add Sensory equipment. (Video and sound microphone).
1	Each Size Increase from -2 to a maximum of +3
3	Add Weapon (must have <i>Shooting</i> or <i>Fighting</i> skill) + cost of weapon x3. Weapon can only be twice as large as the Size of the creation (Professor's discretion)
1	Basic Programming. Smarts d4
1	Increase Attribute die type one die. (Up to d8 maximum).
1	Miniaturization (making object very small). Only 1 power or ability limit.
1	Mobile to 4" ground movement (trappings vary)

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Options in Detail:

Add 1 die to existing Skill: Any skill may be chosen to be increased to a d6 for one Build Point or to a d8 for two Build Points. The skill must have already been purchased for 1 Build Point for a base d4. Basic Technology may not have skills over a d8.

Add Ability: This bestows basic abilities on the construct or gadget. See the **Basic Abilities Tech List** below.

Add Advanced Auditory Response: If the construct has Basic Programming, it may comply to the inventor's verbal commands.

Add d4 Skill: Purchase a basic skill package for the construct or gadget.

Add Edge: This allows the inventor to choose from one of the **Basic Tech Edges**. (See chart below).

Add Existing Equipment: This allows the inventor to add any sort of equipment, such as specialized motion detectors, EMF readers. etc. In addition to the Build Point cost for each piece of equipment, the inventor must purchase the equipment to be added. The equipment must be smaller than the construct or gadget it is to be added to.

Add Power: This allows the inventor to add a power from the **Basic Powers Tech List** below. All powers require power points to operate, so the inventor must also purchase power points to empower the construct or gadget to operate properly.

Add 2 Power Points: If a construct or gadget is to use a Power, then it must also have Power Points. For every Build Point spent, the invention gains 2 power points. This also effects the duration of the power, as when the Power Points run out, the power ends. The device may be recharged by the inventor at one Power Point per hour, but the power is not functional while being recharged (this does not require a roll, just time).

Add Sensory Equipment: This allows the construct or gadget to see and hear what is happening in its environment and to transmit this information back to the inventor. This package consists of a basic video feed and audio microphone. Any other type of equipment must be added separately.

Add Size Increase: All gadgets and constructs begin at Size -2. Small gadgets must also be miniaturized. Constructs may be increased in size up to Size +3 at the Basic Tech level with each Size increase costing another Build Point. This means creating a

human sized robot costs 2 extra Build Points to increase from Size -2 to Size 0. All things Size -2 or miniaturized, are considered Small. All items Size 4 or better are considered Large, and everything from Size 8 is considered Huge (only Advanced Inventors may create Size 8 constructs or gadgets, see below).

Add Weapon: Constructs and gadgets may be given weapons. The weapons must not be more than twice the size of the construct or gadget (Professor's discretion). The invention must also have a *Fighting* or *Shooting* skill purchased to use the weapon and the weapon's cost is tripled to modify for the invention's use.

Basic Programming: Unless this is purchased, the construct is little more than a remote controlled vehicle. The upgrade allows the inventor to program the construct to act independently. However this is Smarts d4 (a), meaning it is no smarter than a really intelligent animal.

Increase Attribute: This may be used to increase an attribute. The Smarts die may never be increased over a d4 (a) at the Basic Technology level. Constructs and gadgets never have Spirit die. Attributes are limited to d8 for Basic Technology.

Miniaturization: This allows for very small gadgets or constructs weighing from less than a pound up to five pounds. The Professor is the final arbiter of just how small a gadget or construct may be.

Mobile: This allows the construct or gadget to move up to 4" per round. The trappings for this movement are left to the inventor, though some types of movement (flight, teleport) require Powers.

Basic Tech Abilities List

This technology bestow the following abilities on the creation, or onto a gadget, that may be used by the inventor (such as Goggles of Low Light Vision). The trappings must be determined upon creation. If the product is used to modify a person in possession of it, it must be activated, which takes one action, and a simple *Repair* roll, or a Smarts (-2). Once activated, the device's modification lasts for 2 rounds + number of Build points of the item. After which the item must be reactivated. Each of these abilities are found in the Savage Worlds Rulebook.

Aquatic

Armor

Bite (Str +d4 or d6 but costs extra Build Point)

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Burrowing
Claws (Str+d4 or d6 but costs extra Build Point)
Cone attack (Basic Build costs x2) 2d8 damage,
Agility -2 to avoid. (Trappings vary)
Flight: Fly at 4", with a climb rate of 2". May not
run.
Go for the Throat
Hardy
Infravision
Immunity
Kick (Str +d4, or d6 but costs extra Build Point)
Low Light Vision
Paralysis (Taser type attack, 2d6 non lethal)
Pounce
Slam (Str +d6, non lethal)
Wall Walker

Basic Tech Edge List

These edges bestow the following edges on the creation, or may be used in a gadget form by the inventor (such as Goggles of Alertness). The trappings must be determined upon creation. If the product is used to modify a person in possession of it, it must be activated, which takes one action, and a simple *Repair* roll, or a Smarts (-2). Once activated, the device's edges lasts for 2 rounds + number of Build Points of the item. After which the item must be reactivated. These edges are found in the Savage World's rulebook.

Alertness
Block
Combat Reflexes
Dodge
First Strike
Fleet-Footed
Marksman
Quick
Rapid Recharge
Steady Hands
Sweep (must be Size 0 or greater)

Basic Tech Powers List

Tech devices do not roll to activate Powers, but also never benefit from any raises. Once all Power Points have been used, the device may not activate any further Powers until "recharged" taking 1 hour per Power Point by various means (trappings).

Barrier

Blast
Bolt (basic) 2d6 maximum
Burst
Deflection
Light
Obscure
Quickness
Rapid Recharge
Speak Language
Speed
Stun

Advanced Technology

The following **Advanced Tech List** is only available to heroes with the Senior Edge of Advanced Inventor. The Advanced Inventor gains an additional 10 Build Points and has access to greater technology.

Advanced Tech List

Build Points	Product Specs
1	Add 1 die to existing Skill, up to d12 maximum.
3	Add Ability (See Advanced Abilities List below)
3 per die	Add Artificial Intelligence
3	Add Advanced Edge (See the Advanced Tech Edges below)
3	Add Power (See Advanced Powers List Tech list below)
1	Add 3 Power Points. Costs 1 BP per 3 PP
1	Add Size increase from -2 to a maximum of +8
1	Increase Attribute up to a d12. Costs 1 / die increase
3/1	Mobile Fly Movement 6" +1" per extra BP.
1	Mobile Ground Movement 6" plus 1" per extra BP.

Options in Detail:

Add 1 die to existing Skill: Advanced Technology may not have skills over a d12, and skills may not be greater than linked attribute.

Add Ability: This bestows advanced abilities on the construct or gadget. See the Advanced Abilities List below.

Add Artificial Intelligence: This may only be used on a construct and imbues it with true human-like intelligence.

- d4 Smarts: Basic Low Functioning Human
- d6 Smarts: Average Human-like Intelligence
- d8 Smarts: Advanced Human-like Intelligence
- d10 Smarts: Genius Intelligence
- d12 Smarts: Emotions, true Artificial Intelligence.

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Add Advanced Edge: This allows the inventor to choose from one of the Advanced Tech Edges. (See chart below).

Add Power: This allows the inventor to add an advanced Power from the Advanced Powers Tech List below. All powers require power points to operate, so the inventor must also purchase power points to empower the construct or gadget to operate properly.

Add 3 Power Points: If a construct or gadget is to use a Power, then it must also have Power Points. For every Build Point spent, the invention gains 3 power points. This also effects the duration of the power, as when the Power Points run out, the power ends. The device may be recharged at one Power Point per hour, but the power is not functional while being recharged.

Add Size Increase: All gadgets and constructs begin at Size -2. Gadgets may also be miniaturized. Constructs may be increased in size up to Size +8 at the Advanced Tech Level with each Size increase costing another Build Point. This means a human sized robot costs 2 extra Build Points to increase from Size -2 to Size 0.

Increase Attribute: This may be used to increase an attribute (other than Smarts-See Artificial Intelligence). Constructs and gadgets never have Spirit die. Attributes may be raised to a d12 for Advanced Tech.

Mobile Fly Movement: This allows the construct or gadget to fly up to 6" per round and climb at 3". This may be improved 1" per BP spent after the initial 3 BP cost. Climb rate is half of the total movement rounded down. The trappings for this movement are left to the inventor. Note: the inventor may also choose to Add the Ability of Flight rather than Mobile Fly Movement, but he may not increase the movement as he can here.

Mobile Ground Movement: This allows the construct or gadget to move up to 6" per round. This may be improved 1" per BP spent after the initial 3 BP cost. The trappings for this movement are left to the inventor.

Advanced Abilities Tech List

This technology bestow the following abilities on the creation, or may be used by the inventor (such as Goggles of Alertness). The trapping must be determined upon creation. If the product is used to mod-

ify a person in possession of it, it must be activated, which takes one action, and a simple *Repair* roll, or a Smarts (-2). Once activated, the device remains active until turned off or destroyed.

Advanced Flight Fly at 10" with a climb rate of 5". May not run.

Infection (Professor's option on how it works.)

Paralysis (Professor's option on how it works.)

Poison (Professor's option on how it works.)

Regeneration

Strength

Any other ability Professor allows.

Advanced Tech Edges

This technology bestows the following edges on the creation, or may be used in a gadget by the inventor (such as Fist of Mighty Blow). The trapping must be determined upon creation. If the product is used to modify a person in possession of it, it must be activated, which takes one action, and a simple *Repair* roll, or a Smarts (-2). Once activated, the device works until turned off. These may be found in the Savage Worlds rulebook, but some may be modified for Degrees of Horror.

Berserk

Danger Sense

Dead Shot

Improved Block (Requires Block)

Improved Dodge (Requires Dodge)

Improved First Strike (Requires First Strike)

Improved Level Headed (Requires Level Headed)

Improved Rapid Recharge (this allows creations to recharge Power Points 1pp per every 10 minutes)

Improved Sweep (Requires Sweep)

Mighty Blow

Rock and Roll!

Wild Attack (Fighting Option)

Advanced Powers Tech List

Tech devices do not roll to activate powers, but also never benefit from any raises. Once all Power Points have been used, the device may not activate any further Powers until "recharged" taking 1 hour per Power Point by various means (trappings).

Armor (as an automatic Raise, ex. Bestows 4 points of Armor, instead of +2). Trappings Vary

Advanced Blast (May double Power Points expended for 3d6 effect, or increase size to large burst

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template. May triple Power Points to do both). Trappings vary.

Advanced Bolt (May expend triple power points to cast up to 3 bolts or spend double to increase base damage to 3d6) Trappings vary.

Advanced Deflection (Works as a Raise for a -4 penalty).

Advanced Speed (Running is a free action)

Boost/Lower Trait

Environmental Protection

Healing

Invisibility

Shape Change

Telekinesis

Teleport

Examples

Healing - There's an App for That

This invention uses a cell phone camera to catalog injuries, then applies powerful image analysis and recognition software to identify the wound and instruct users on how to best apply healing. Allows *Healing* skill rolls at d8.

Build Points: 4

1 - add Skill: *Healing* d4

1 - raise skill to d6

1 - raise skill to d8

1 - add sensory equipment

The Bug

This is autonomous surveillance device is crafted to resemble a dragonfly. It can be programmed with simple instructions, such as to travel a certain route, gather information, and return. It is capable of both flight and ground travel.

Build Points: 10

3 - basic Ability: flight

1 - miniture

1 - mobile

1 - sensory equipment: audio

1 - sensory equipment: video

1 - basic programming

1 - add Skill: Notice d4

1 - raise skill to d6

Fear Inhibitor

This device resembles a cell phone, but it actually creates a field that inhibits the wearer's ordinary fear response. Allows *Guts* checks at d8.

1 - add kill: *Guts* d4

1 - raise skill d6

1 - raise skill d8

Running Shoes

These athletic sneakers have been modified to issue weak electric pulses to the wearer's feet at every step. These pulses provide nerve feedback that causes additional muscle contraction, propelling the wearer farther and faster in a stride. Provides the Fleet Footed edge, and can apply the Speed power for brief bursts of additional speed.

Build Points: 7

3 - add edge: Fleet Footed

3 - add power: Speed

1 - add 3 power points

EAST TEXAS UNIVERSITY

Curriculum Guide

PROFESSOR ONLY

Chapter 10: The ETU Plot Point Campaign

Plot Point One: Sweat Lodge

In this section, the heroes are indoctrinated into the ETU student body, and learn that there is more to college life than co-eds.

Welcome to ETU

The adventure begins as the heroes file into the arena and take their seats.

Welcome to East Texas University. Now that you've settled into your dorm, it's time to get your bearings. At ETU they call freshman orientation the Sweat Lodge. Your dorm residence advisor spouted some stuff about how the Native American sweat lodges were considered places of rebirth that provided important teachings to the people. At least the letter said there'd be food and music.

The Raven Multiuse Indoor Arena is a building highly suggestive of Cold War era architecture—a squat, grey, windowless, brick building more reminiscent of a bomb shelter. Inside the building, a breezeway circles the ground floor, which is actually the top of the arena's rows of seats. Visitors who walk down the isles to the basketball floor can enter a basement level under the arena seats. This underground area also circles the entire arena and includes locker rooms, a loading dock, and a series of offices, multiuse classrooms, conference rooms, and so on.

You'd say this building has seen better days, but it's questionable if it looked much better even in its prime. The Ravens Multi-use Indoor Arena—the basketball arena—is an ugly, grey, windowless, round building, like a giant WWII pillbox without the firing slits. Despite some creative decorating inside the arena, the building still shows its age. From peeling paint to vacant fire extinguisher racks to struggling air conditioning, it's no wonder the campus tour guide skipped this building.

President Nelson drones on for far too long, blabbing about campus safety, parking in designated areas, campus traditions, and the like. It's enough

to put a person to sleep, if there wasn't a veritable circus of other activity to keep your attention.

Allow each of the characters *Notice* checks to determine which events they notice.

Roll	Result
Failure	A boy and girl are arguing a few rows ahead and to the side. Both sides start gesturing wildly, and eventually the boy stands up and changes seats to join your row.
1 Success	You notice a campus security guard tripping down the steps as he tries to sneak out of the orientation. He looks around wildly to see if anyone noticed, briefly makes eye contact with you, then turns bright red as he flees through the floor-level exit.
2+ Successes	One of the administrators standing on the sidelines seems to be having a tantrum in front of a pair of janitors. You can't hear what she's saying, but she keeps pointing to the arena walls, where various school slogans, the mascot, and abstract symbols have been painted.

Finally, Nelson seems to be wrapping up.

"In conclusion, your time here at ETU has the potential to be among the best days of your life. Don't just survive college, but make the most of your opportunities here. Now, before we break into our senior-led groups, let's all practice the ETU Ravens fight song!"

The fight song words are flashed on a giant video screen behind the president, and slowly the crowd picks up the tune as you sing...

Ravens Fiiiiight

Ravens Fiiiiight

Put on the black and whiiiiite

Ravens Fiiiiight

Ravens Fiiiiight

Our team will own the niiiight.

Fear the Fightin' Ravens,

Our mighty team does sooooooar.

Fear the Fightin' Ravens,

When we make another scoooooore.

With the conclusion of the fight song, President Nelson announces:

Go Ravens! Now, while for the part you've been waiting for. While the band and food sets up here on the gym floor, you'll break up into groups for a

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final, time-honored Sweat Lodge tradition. You'll be meeting away from the eyes and ears of we administrators, with a senior who will pass along the best advice from four years of life here at ETU. Or in some cases five or six years. ...yes, I mean you Robby! Now on the bottom of each of your chairs is taped a location here in the building where you'll meet with your senior. In 45 minutes we'll have food and music ready to go, so let's get moving!

Be a Zebra

The characters each have room 12 taped to the bottom of their chairs. After much wandering, they discover that room 12 is one of the basement rooms under the bleachers. As they make their way down the dim hallway, along with bustle of other students, allow another *Notice* check. Students who made their first notice check get a +1 on this one.

Roll	Result
Failure	The girl who was arguing with the guy seems to be following him from a distance.
Success	A security guard seems to be trying very hard to look casual as he slips out of a door marked "Physical Engineering Control. Private".
Raise	You catch a glimpse of a concrete floor and a tangle of metal pipes as the door closes.
2+ Raises	The same two janitors are carrying buckets of water and sponges back out toward the arena.

Inside the room, the characters have a few moments to meet one another. Introduce Professor characters, who can help get the ball rolling. A creepy, tall and skinny senior with very pale skin, perfectly styled hair, and deeply inset eyes enters the room. He has a slow smile, but he seems friendly. He nods to everyone and introduces himself as Christopher Niles. He tells them that he's only here because he needs 1 more credit to graduate than he can get the hell out of Pinebox. His advice:

Be a zebra.

Haven't you watched the animal shows on TV? Zebras survive because they blend in and don't draw attention to themselves. They stick close together, because the lions pick off the ones who stray too far from the herd. If you want to survive at ETU, you'd better learn to think like a zebra.

Allow characters to respond, then reply in character. Here are some responses.

Why should we be careful?

ETU is a dangerous place. Students disappear every week. Zebras picked off from the herd. The administration says they're drop-outs, but I've seen too many girlfriends, boyfriends, and parents wandering around campus tracing the last known whereabouts of their loved ones.

What happens to them?

Haven't you been listening? Think like a zebra! Don't ask questions. Don't stick your neck out. Don't bring attention to yourself. I don't know what happens to them. You may as well ask why someone painted freaky symbols on the arena walls. Why did a chemical company sponsor the food tonight? Why is this building missing so many fire extinguishers? Who cares? Stuff like this goes on all the time. But if you learn how to think like a zebra, you'll figure out how to spot danger and get the heck away.

Allow roleplay, then end the session and announce that the party has started.

Christopher Niles—paranoid senior

Description: Very pale skin, tall and skinny. He has perfectly styled hair and deeply inset eyes, but with a slow smile, he seems friendly.

Minor Hindrance: Anemic, Fidgets a lot, never seems comfortable.

Business Major

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

Pace: 6; Parry: 5; Toughness 5; Charisma:0

Driving d6, Fighting d6, Investigation d10, Knowledge (History) d8, Knowledge (Russian) d8, Knowledge (Business) d12, Knowledge (Modern Culture) d4, Notice d8, Persuasion d8, Repair d6, Shooting d6, Streetwise d6, Swimming d6, Stealth d4

Professor Checklist: Did You Remember To ...

- Allow *Notice* check.
- Introduce Professor characters (Christopher Niles)

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- Drop clues about runes, disabled firefighting equipment, and domestic dispute.

The Party

The official orientation ends. A band starts up at one end of the basketball court. The lights are dimmed. Boxes upon boxes of pizza are brought out.

Time keyed events happen in sequence.

Any Time

Investigation

During this time, the characters can investigate the missing fire extinguishers. (Yep, they're all missing or drained.), the sprinkler system control room, or the runes.

Sprinkler System Control room

This was the room marked private. There is a tangle of pipes leading into and out of walls. A giant wheel is marked "Sprinkler System Maintenance Cutoff". This wheel has been chained into a closed position. A *Notice* roll reveals the following.

Roll	Result
Success	The padlock on the chain looks pretty new.
Raise	Rust on the ground reveals that the wheel was recently turned.
2+ Raises	Based in the small amount the wheel can still be turned, it would seem that the water has been shut off.

Runes

The two janitors have managed to scrub off one of the runes, but many others are painted too high and will require a ladder to reach. They give up for the night and tell the characters they'll take care of it tomorrow.

The runes seem to be drawn in an oily chalk. It does not rub off easily. If the heroes touch a rune:

9 PM It feels slightly warm to the touch, like something that has been sitting in the sun.

10 PM It's warmer, like touching clothes that came straight from the dryer.

11 PM It's definitely warmer, almost painful to the touch.

11:45 PM The runes start smoldering.

Midnight The runes burst into flames.

Random Freaky Stuff

- The heroes find a bucket filled to the top with human teeth.

- The heroes hear screams and other horrible noises from another room, but when they enter nobody is there.
- The sound of footsteps in the hallway, starting and stopping when they do.
- NPCs who they meet earlier in the evening later insist they've never met.
- Random scorch marks on the wall
- Boiling cups of soda/punch/water/beer
- Ghostly reflections in locker room mirrors or glass doors.

9 PM - Starting

Ghostly Warning

Walking the basement hall, the character with the highest **Spirit** sees a good looking girl watching him intently. She smiles and makes eye contact with him, then motions for him to follow her into a room. If the hero does not take the bait, she tries again with other characters throughout the night.

If the hero follows her into the darkened room, a *Notice* roll reveals that she smells heavily of smoke. She says her name is Julia and that she couldn't keep her eyes off him. She slips into his arms but feels icy to the touch. If he tries to pull away, she grips him in a tight embrace. She nuzzles his neck and whispers, "You're all going to burn."

She steps back, then is suddenly engulfed in flames. But not just the girl—the entire room follows suit. Your lungs burn and are unable to control a spasm of coughing. The oxygen is gone from the room, and somehow you know that the entire building is ablaze.

Allow the hero to react after making a Medium Spook check.

You can't get air into your lungs, and the heat and smoke is so painful that you can't keep your eyes open any longer. Then, as suddenly as the fire appeared, it is gone. The girl is gone. The pain is gone. Gone, that is, except for a strange shape blistering on your arm.

A successful *Common Knowledge* roll indicates that the shape is familiar. A *Raise* reveals that it is identical to one of the runes on the arena wall. This check can be made by any character who is shown the symbol.

Runes

See main Runes entry. They feel slightly warm to the touch, like something that has been sitting in the sun.

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10 PM

Domestic Dispute

The girlfriend corners one of the players at the party to find out what the boyfriend said about her. She tells the heroes that he's been stalking her and she's fearful for her safety. She clings to one of the heroes "for protection", but a *Notice* against her *Deception* reveals that she's trying to make her boyfriend jealous. He sees her talking to the heroes and reacts by threatening her, pulling out a flask, and stalking away.

Lorain Walker-Freshman female

Hindrances: Vengeful, Stubborn; Edges: Very Attractive (+1 Charisma), Major: Anthropology

Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Pace: 6; Parry: 4; Toughness 5; Charisma: 1

Fighting d4; guts d6; persuasion d6; deception d10

Possessions: purse, knife

Rueban Barstow- freshman male

Combat Reflexes. Speaks softly in quiet voice. Visible tattoo of a dragon. Major: Sports Sciences -Football.

Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Pace: 6; Parry: 4; Toughness 5; Charisma:0

Fighting d4; guts d6; persuasion d6; deception d10

He is drunk and angry at Lorain for stalking him. They slept together once and he dumped her because she was crazy. Now she follows him around and claims that *he* is stalking *her*.

Exterior doors

Some of the more obscure exterior doors are chained and padlocked shut from the inside. If an administrator is notified, the heroes are told it's a security precaution. If the security guard is notified, he tells them that upperclassmen have been plotting to disrupt the party.

Runes

See main Runes entry. They are warmer, like touching clothes that came straight from the dryer.

11 PM

Exterior doors

More doors are chained and padlocked. For some reason, this doesn't seem to bother administrators. In fact, they say it was probably done "for our safety" to prevent people from smuggling in alcohol or people who didn't belong. The main doors are still open.

Exterior Doors Toughness 10

Interior Doors Toughness 8

Padlocks Toughness 10

Chains Toughness 10

Runes

See main Runes entry. 11 PM, they are definitely warmer, almost painful to the touch.

11: 45 PM, the runes start smoldering (*Notice* -1 due to Dim lighting.)

Domestic Dispute

The stalker boyfriend is talking to one of the heroes—female if possible--when the girlfriend approaches. She pulls a knife and tries to stab him. Security is nowhere to be seen. If the heroes do not intervene, let him take a wound.

Midnight

Midnight arrives and if the runes have not been washed off with the sprinkler system then the smoldering symbols burst into flames. From that point the building quickly catches on fire. One way or another, Tyson tries to stop the heroes (either from washing off the runes or escaping the fire). Most likely a fight ensues.

Tyson August- WC

Instructed by his cult leader to bring about a worthy sacrifice, Tyson plans on sacrificing an entire building.

Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Pace: 6; Parry: 4; Toughness 5; Charisma:0

Fighting d6; Guts d6; shooting d4

Possessions: baton (Str +1), short lengths of chain he has been using to padlock the doors shut.

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Wrapup

The next day, the survivors are brought in front of President Nelson. The Professor should play this scene based on the characters actions in the Roost. If witnesses place them near the fire, Nelson may blame them for the “accident”. Alternately, they may be recognized for their heroism. Either way, Nelson tells the students that he will be keeping a close eye on them.

Should they ask, the Security officer was either killed, or has conveniently “disappeared.”

As they exit Nelson’s office, they are met by a middle-age professor named Dr. Glen Maclanahan. He is very interested in the heroes version of events, explaining that he is a believer in the paranormal and has heard of ghostly activity in the Roost. He is helpful, and believes anything the heroes tell him. In parting, he gives them his business card.

Chapter 11: Midnight Tales

Pinebox Pawn

Rewards: Access to various talismans, gadgets, and haunted items.

Generate: Create any talismans, gadgets, or haunted items to introduce

Creatures/NPCs: Forester Harris

Background

This small shop is located in downtown Pinebox on 111 Church Street. The small door is green, with tarnished brass doorknob and little panes of glass forming a half-sun motif at the top. Through a large window to the right of the doorway, you can see two mannequins, one male and one female, dressed in clothing from the 1920s or 30s. The window has a small sign hanging on the inside which reads, “We buy and sell everything your heart desires!”

Owned by Forester Harris, Pinebox Pawn has been on this street for nearly forty years. Like most of the shops on Monument Street, it seems deceptively small from the outside but is quite spacious within. Inside, the lights are dim and the air is stale, reeking of age. Upon entering, patrons are greeted by a chime and the sight of the front counter, where Forester Harris sits, reading a tattered old book. Almost always, Harris holds his rosary beads, idly moving them through his fingers. There is a small sign on the cash register, which reads “NO CREDIT.” Just below it, another small sign reads, “BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU ASK FOR!” All along the walls are pictures of many different people and places. Perhaps the most interesting is a picture of John F. Kennedy in his motorcade, driving down Dealy Plaza just before his assassination. Every type of antique and collectable may be found within this shop; however, there are a few that are “special,” and these all come with a story, a promise, or a curse.

Forester Harris is probably in his early seventies, though it is difficult to be certain based only on his looks. He is bald and wears small, wire-rimmed glasses. His nose is peculiarly pointed, and his ears are slightly too large for his head. He is trim and moves like a much younger man. The most startling aspect of his visage are his large, dark eyes. They are deep

brown, almost black, with disconcertingly large corneas. He is dressed in a white shirt, a black tie, and suspenders.

A quiet man with a thin, raspy voice, Forester Harris has a perpetual smile that seems to say “I know something that you don’t.” He smiles at everyone who enters his store, and seems to know all the locals by name.

In conversation he sometimes gives the impression of being a conspiracy theorist, but anyone with the resources to investigate would find his “speculations” entirely truthful. Forester’s uncanny knowledge of countless events—both historical and mundane—has given him a reputation as a walking encyclopedia, albeit a disquieting one. If the day is slow, Harris spends most of his time in a small room at the back of the shop. The infrequent customers find him sitting by a radio, listening to the local news channel and fingering his prayer beads. Beside the small office is a metal staircase leading to the second floor. This floor is dedicated to storage and a converted one-bedroom apartment. The apartment is simple, and one seemingly steps into the past when one enters this place. Harris lives alone and rarely invites anyone up to visit.

Secrets

Forester Harris is actually half demon, the issue of Martha Lynn Harris’s infernal union with a demonic spirit she summoned one Halloween night in 1931. Despite his tainted blood, Harris grew up to become a fine citizen of Golan County. He served in the Korean War and, upon returning to Pinebox, became a sheriff’s deputy and served admirably for the next twenty years. In 1977, he was elected sheriff of Golan County, and the crime rate dipped to an all-time low. He was reelected twice before retiring and opening Pinebox Pawn. His demonic ancestry provides him with several others, knowing what they want and even what they have done, or are willing to do, to attain it. Harris uses this ability to control others through gentle persuasion, Intimidation, and even black mail. As he grows older, he becomes gruffer and less easy for others to get along with. He often closes his shop

Degrees of Horror sneak peek

down at odd times, locks up, and tells people to go away. However, he still does a brisk business, and his gifts allow him to find and identify very special antiques and items.

Anything the heroes need to sell may be sold here at 25 percent of the total value, or they may take a loan on the item, for 75 percent of its value, by pawning it to Harris.

Any psychic hero who enters the premises feels a great evil and sorrow within, and recognizes danger. Harris also senses the psychic, and the two may be headed for a showdown!

Harris occasionally has dreams of the future and, if he is on friendly terms with a hero, may provide warning of impending trouble.

Character Speak

"Welcome. What are you looking for? Perhaps I can help you."

"I have about anything you could want, but some of it comes with a hefty price."

"Are you certain you want that? Sometimes these things are not as they appear."

"I'm closing now, so you had best make a decision and move on."

"Everything and everyone has a price. Everything is negotiable."

Special Items

Pinebox Pawn carries all the usual items typically found in a pawnshop. There are gun racks, antiques, stereos, old computers, video games, music, clothing, jewelry, and many other items for sale. A Notice roll (-2) allows the heroes to discover one or more of the following special items (at the Professor's discretion):

Johnson's 12-Gauge, Pump-Action Shotgun

One shotgun catches your eye. Its wooden stock is engraved with the image of an antlered deer, and the barrel is a beautiful gunmetal blue. It is obviously a pump-action 12 gauge and probably dates to the early 1960s. A tag on it simply reads, "Johnson's 12 Gauge. A Hunter's Weapon!"

Price: \$1200

Forester Harris purchased this shotgun from Old Man Aries Johnson, who was a local legend in Golan County. He is still considered by many to be the greatest hunter and tracker in the history of East Texas. Aries used this shotgun on many hunts, from 1961

until 1991, when his age and health began to take a toll on his body so that he was no longer able to hunt the woods as he had once done. Aries, an African American, fought for civil rights in East Texas and had several vigilante run-ins with the local Ku Klux Klan in the mid 1960s, conflicts in which this gun played a pivotal role. Aries now lives in the Pinebox Hospice, his body withered and frail. The shotgun was built by a local gunsmith named Toombs, and it has taken on certain qualities that may be beneficial to anyone who wields it. When fired in combat, the ranged damage increases from 3d6/2d6/1d6 to 3d8/2d8/1d8.

Adventure Ideas

- Aries Johnson dies and his spirit enters the weapon. He speaks with the new owner in dreams and visions, attempting to create a new vigilante hero against oppression and racism.
- A successful Investigation roll reveals that Toombs was a dabbler in the occult and often called upon various earth spirits when creating his weapons. If the heroes seek out Toombs' descendents in Pinebox, they happily sell them a copy of his self published book, *Native Rites and Modern Weapons*. The book describes several arcane marks. These marks bind the wielder to the weapon, if both bear the same mark. A successful Notice roll reveals a mark on the butt of the weapon. The mark is that of the "Hunter." While carrying the gun in the woods, the owner who gets a matching tattoo gains the Tracking skill at d6 or an extra die if he already possesses it, and gains the following bonuses while in the woods: Stealth +2 and Survival +2.

Ritual of Weapon Binding

Time: Ten Minutes.

Penalty: -4

Ritual Requirements: 2 Common Items, a razor (for tattooing), weapon to be bound

Trappings: This ritual binds the user to a weapon. He becomes more accurate and deadly with the weapon, increasing the base damage die by one die type. A single individual may only be bound to one weapon in his lifetime.

Effects: Slowly the tattoo, cut into his arm, dripping with blood, began to pulse with a soft light. The pistol grip of the pistol also began to glow and slowly

Degrees of Horror sneak peek

the dim light traced a matching rune upon it. “It is done. The weapon is now an extension of you.”

- The Texas National Militia, a racist and separatist group, hears that the shotgun has been found and they send one of their own to approach the heroes about purchasing it. They send three of their own to get it by force if necessary.

Talking Toaster

This metallic toaster is a vintage antique of the 1950s. A small tag on it reads, “Antique Toaster. Dupree’s Rampage, Collector’s Item!”

Price: \$150

Outwardly, this appears to be an ordinary toaster from the 1950s, in excellent condition. But there is an evil spirit that posses this vintage toaster—a spirit bent on wreaking havoc and chaos. The spirit is that of an ancient, unspeakable evil or bizarre alien entity, and it causes the toaster to talk and attempt to manipulate its owner into going on a killing spree.

The first known appearance of this toaster is in 1952, in Roswell, New Mexico. At a small farm, an entire seven-member family died in what was then labeled a bizarre, cult-related suicide pact. The truth is that, although the McGills led a relatively ordinary life against the backdrop of the New Mexico desert, “Pops” McGill murdered six members of his own family before taking his own life.

Then, in 1984, Mark Dupree, an ex-policeman, walked into Pinebox State Bank and Trust. That November day would be very long indeed, as Dupree, with a fully loaded shotgun, C4 strapped to his body, and a toaster clutched to his chest, held the entire bank and its patron’s hostage. After sixty-three hours, the state SWAT team was able to disarm Dupree, taking his weapons, his explosives, and his kitchen appliance. During the trial that followed, Dupree’s lawyer argued that his client suffered from temporary insanity. In his official statement, Dupree claimed he was under the influence of the kitchen appliance. After the trial, there was no evidence indicating anything unusual about the toaster. It was simply auctioned off and bought by Forester Harris.

This toaster, when in close proximity to its owner, bestows a temporary +1 bonus to Toughness and inflicts a permanent -1 penalty to all Smarts related rolls. The character falls under the control of the evil spirit if he fails a Spirit roll (-2). The check is made

every week and increases in difficulty by an increment of -1 each time—so after a week the roll is made at a -3; after two weeks, at a -4; and so on. The possession may be broken by keeping the toaster at least 100 feet away from the target for at least 24 hours. Anyone eating bread from the toaster must make a Spirit roll or feel compelled to hold the toaster, cradling it like a baby! Clutching the toaster in this way inflicts a penalty of -2 to Parry.

Adventure Ideas

- In the middle of another adventure, a well-dressed business person launches a random attack upon the heroes by swinging the toaster by its cord.
- The heroes investigate a murder/suicide involving a newlywed couple who had been opening their wedding gifts before suddenly turning violent.
- A woman wearing a tinfoil hat and carrying a toaster accosts the heroes on the street, pleading with them for help. She weeps, “What’s the frequency? Can’t stop the signal.”
- The heroes are drawn into tracking a serial killer whose victims are all chefs or caterers. The killer is herself a caterer, slowly working her way through her competition for catering a black-tie charity event at the state capital in Austin. She and her toaster have big plans for that evening.
- The possessing spirit wants to be free and manipulates its owner into stealing magical tomes and ingredients necessary for performing the ritual. Rare occult volumes are disappearing from the city, foreshadowing dark things to come.

A Pair of Tickets to the Big Thicket Flyer

These tickets are found in an old cigar box, among Indian-head nickels, matchsticks, buttons, and other odds and ends. The tickets, yellowed with age but otherwise in remarkable shape, both read, “Big Thicket Flyer, Stanley Spur to Baton Rouge, Admit One, Coach, August 3, 1939.” Neither appears to have been used.

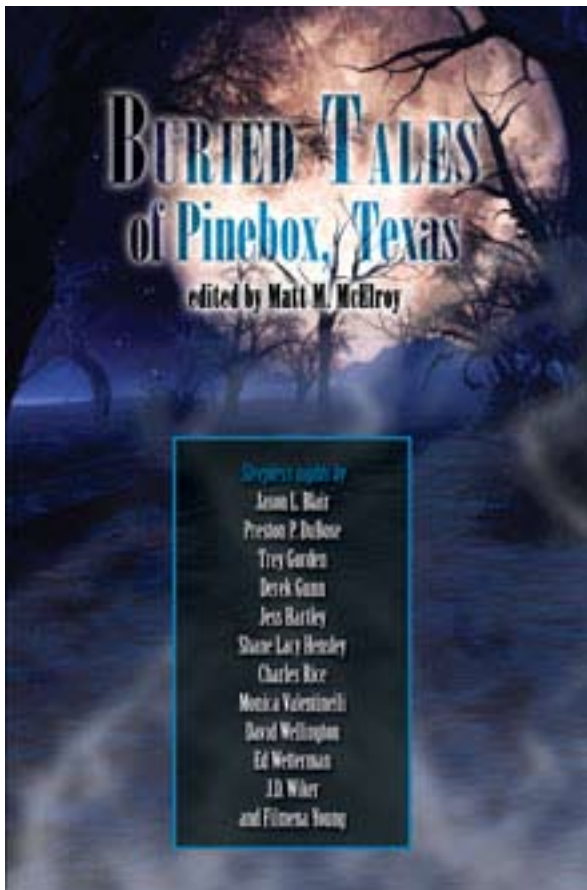
Price: \$75 a piece

In 1939, the Big Thicket Flyer was the only passenger train to serve Pinebox. It traveled the Stanley Spur, off the Gulf Coast Line, connecting several East Texas and western Louisiana towns along the express

line. That summer, the Flyer derailed at Sandy Fork Bridge, killing every person on board. However, at least four ticketed passengers never boarded the train. (See Last Call for the Big Thicket Flyer in 12 to Midnight's Green's Guide to Ghosts for the whole story behind the Flyer).

Adventure Ideas

- Following the night of the accident, these tickets became cursed. Whoever owns them dies in a transportation-related accident and is doomed to haunt the next owner. To release all the trapped spirits, the tickets must be torn by one of the missing passengers.
- A series of numbers are printed in pencil on the back of one of the tickets. Are the numbers a safe combination, latitude and longitude, or a coded message? Whatever the case, powerful people want those tickets and will do almost anything to get them.
- Tearing the tickets instantly summons a ghost train to the user. The train can take two passengers on a one-way trip to any known location in the world, bypassing even the most airtight security.



Welcome to Pinebox, Texas

Is this preview your first introduction to Pinebox? Well then, welcome! Pinebox is a sleepy little East Texas town with more than its share of trouble. Whether it's the snake cultists running the local bar or vengeful spirits haunting the high school boys locker room, there always seems to be some sort of trouble brewing just below the surface.

If you're looking for a chilling primer on Pinebox, look no further than *Buried Tales of Pinebox, Texas* and its tales of horror from a dozen haunting voices in fiction.

Jason L. Blair

Preston P. DuBose

Trey Gorden

Derek Gunn

Jess Bartley

Shane Lacy Hensley

Charles Rice

Monica Valentinelli

David Wellington

Ed Wettermann

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Available in both print and ebook formats. Ask your friendly local game store for a copy today.

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