

The students must complete a tricky scavenger hunt or a major evil is unleashed on Pinebox!

This adventure is designed for Freshmen (Novice Rank characters) with a couple of advances. They may or may not already know the supernatural is all too real, but they certainly will after this tale is complete.

The chaos begins when the students receive a frantic call from Margaret Winters, a friend and fellow student who styles herself a “white witch.” The heroes might owe Margaret a favor; or she may know these students have already experienced the high strangeness of Pinebox and so should be able to handle this particular task. If one of the heroes has been investigating rituals, he may have run across Margaret and caught her attention that way as well.

Margaret, a Junior, has discovered a minor rift between our world and the one beyond—smack in the middle of the Sam Houston Gymnasium. She may or may not tell her friends the details depending on how familiar they are with the supernatural, but she’s doing her best to hide the rift from the insidious things that lurk beyond and so can’t gather the ritual items she needs to actually close it. For that, she must send her friends on a scavenger hunt.

Margaret can only hide the rift for six hours. After midnight tonight, her strength will fade and there’s no telling what may come through.

Fortunately, the gym is closed for the weekend for repairs so there are no other students or faculty around.

A FRIEND IN NEED

Margaret needs her fellow students to gather three components: five sticks of blue chalk, the drinking vessel of a god (see below), and thirteen strands of tiger fur. There is no particular order in which they need to be gathered. The characters just need to acquire them and meet back up with Margaret at the gymnasium before midnight.

BLUE CHALK

The chalk may be found almost anywhere; from a local store, the campus art building, or a student with the appropriate major/minor who already owns some.

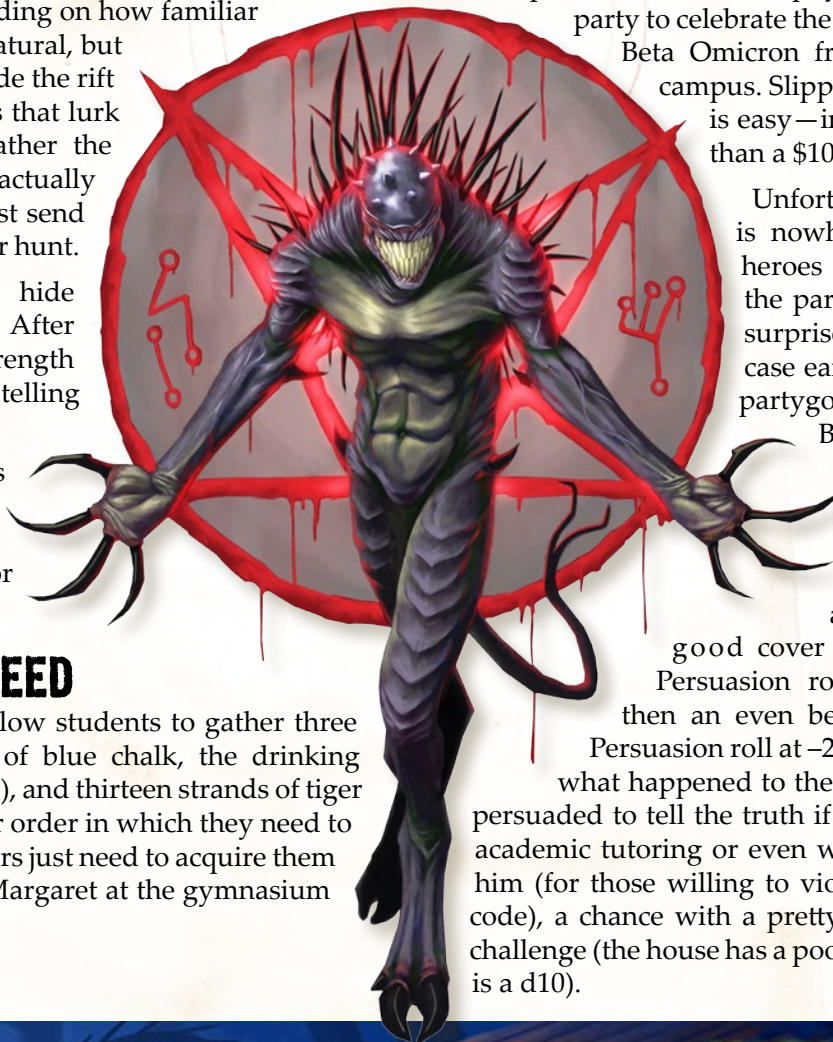
POSEIDON’S CUP

The drinking cup of a god is a tall order, but Margaret has an idea. ETU’s swim team recently won the State Championship and colloquially named the trophy “Poseidon’s Cup” since the team members view themselves as gods of the water. Margaret doesn’t know if this will suffice, but she certainly doesn’t know of anything better either.

A few phone calls, texts, or IMs and a Streetwise roll reveals that Brent Rodriguez, the swim team captain, has possession of the trophy and is hosting a huge party to celebrate the win. He lives at the Rho Beta Omicron fraternity house just off campus. Slipping into the house party is easy—in fact, it’s nothing more than a \$10 cover charge.

Unfortunately, the trophy is nowhere to be seen. If the heroes ask where it might be, the partygoer seems somewhat surprised—it was in the trophy case earlier this afternoon. The partygoer suggests they ask Brent Rodriguez directly.

Brent is constantly surrounded by his inner-circle and they rarely leave him alone. A student needs a good cover story and a successful Persuasion roll to get to him, and then an even better cover story and a Persuasion roll at -2 to get Brent to tell them what happened to the trophy. Brent might be persuaded to tell the truth if offered a favor such as academic tutoring or even writing a term paper for him (for those willing to violate the school’s honor code), a chance with a pretty girl, or losing a swim challenge (the house has a pool but Brent’s Swimming is a d10).



Once persuaded, Brent whispers that he wrecked his prize Porsche and used the fraternity's money to cover the repairs, leaving him short for the actual party. He pawned the trophy to cover the funds and plans to get it back on Monday with the proceeds from the event's cover charge. The pawn ticket is in his pocket, but he won't part with it without a *really* good reason (Dean's call).

Pinebox Pawn closes at 9 pm on the weekends. Getting the trophy back from the shop requires the pawn ticket and \$240. If it's already closed, the heroes must find a way into the shop and the locked cage in the back of the store where valuables are kept—and of course somehow disable the shop's alarm as well.

The latter is the tricky part, but Knowledge (Electronics) or an internet search and a Smarts roll at -2 (per 10 minute attempt) figures out how to cut the relevant lines.

TIGER FUR

There are no native tigers in Pinebox or a local zoo. Fortunately, there is a way to obtain the fur on campus. The zoology department has a taxidermied tiger on loan as part of its current curriculum. The animal is in a classroom in the Bob Reynolds Agricultural Center. Students with a veterinary, zoology, or related major/minor are aware of this fact. For others, it requires a quick internet search and a successful Common Knowledge roll (or asking around and a successful Streetwise roll).

The building is locked after sundown and campus security patrols the area every couple of hours. The classroom in question is directly across the hall from Professor Martinson's office and is locked. The professor has a key to the room stored in the drawer of his desk. Making matters more difficult (or easy!), Professor Martinson is working late, grading papers with the door open.

BANISHING 101

Assuming the heroes gather the components, they find Margaret at the gymnasium. Regardless of what time they arrive, she looks panicked. Something has found the portal and is trying its best to break into our world. Margaret doesn't know for sure, but says it's almost certainly a demonic presence.

Just as she says that, the lights in the gymnasium dim and athletic equipment bursts out onto the floor. Suddenly, basketballs, weights, bats, and other sports gear fly everywhere! In the red glow of the backup and emergency lights, six dim humanoid figures can be seen hurling everything they can get their hands on at Margaret! Clearly, they're trying to keep her from sealing the portal as something much larger and more sinister

begins loudly smashing against the rift from the "other side."

Margaret's ritual is a Dramatic Task. While she finishes that (with help if any of the students have the Ritualism skill), the rest must attempt to defend her or disrupt the spirits. These creatures have just enough substance to pick up the athletic gear—but that also makes them somewhat vulnerable to attack. If "wounded," they scream and are sucked back through the portal.

A character who wants to defend Margaret from the barrage of athletic equipment can do so by going on Hold and making a successful Agility roll versus the spirits' Throwing attacks. If the spirit hits (a 4 or higher) but the student equals or beats the roll, he is hit instead. If Margaret is hit, she must make a Smarts roll or fail the ritual. The heroes *can* spend Bennies for Margaret in this case though—consider it a side effect of the weird energy leaking through the portal.

If Margaret is unsuccessful, the greater entity enters Pinebox. It bursts through in a thunderous flash of dark purple light and foul-smelling smoke—then vanishes to return another day once it's gathered its strength. The Dean should create an entity using the Demon Creation Table in *ETU* for future use.



MARGARET WINTERS

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

Skills: Fighting d4, Knowledge (Literature) d8, Knowledge (Occult) d6, Notice d4, Ritualism d8

Charisma: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Outsider

Edges: Witch

Gear: Iron dagger (Str+d4).

GEISTS

These six entities are minor spirits in the service of a much more powerful creature. In this encounter, they are more or less solid beings.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d4

Skills: Fighting d4, Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Taunt d8, Throwing d6

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 4

Gear: Thrown items (Str+d4, nonlethal).

Special Abilities:

- **Fear:** The creatures are clearly supernatural in origin.