

# Ed's Midnight Tales

By Ed Wettermann

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This product is a work of fiction. Any similarity to actual people, organizations, places, or events is purely coincidental. Made in Texas, USA.

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# Introduction

Welcome to Pinebox and thanks for purchasing our second *Midnight Tales*. These are a few of my own horrific tales and include over 40 plot hooks and adventure ideas, 13 new creatures for your Savage games, and more Pinebox Personalities to make your Pinebox campaign come to life. Of course we also included Pinebox News stories and other goodies.

Big Thicket Adventures is a tale I wanted to tell for some time. See I grew up in the Big Thicket and I truly love that forest. I remember my grandfather telling me of hunting those woods in the early 20th century. Once as a little boy he had been hidden in the hollow of a tree by his father, when a man who had murdered one of his cousins had come onto our families' land, and my great grandfather had gone out with a rifle to speak to him. Another time he had a run-in with a black panther. He said he was walking through the thicket and heard what sounded like a woman's scream above him. Upon looking up he saw a black panther hanging on a limb over his head. He shot the big cat several times, finally killing it. He hunted his entire life and I believe him when he said it was a panther. Many zoologists have stated that there are no panthers in East Texas. My grandfather would disagree.

As to the chupacabra, well...I believe! Something is killing goats, dogs, and chickens and sucking the blood from them. A bizarre animal was killed in East Texas a couple of years ago, just miles from where I grew up. Pictures of this creature may easily be found on the internet. Legends of Big Foot are also found in East Texas. One of my best friends growing up in East Texas swears one day in the woods he came upon a small monkey. And of course there is always legends of lost Confederate gold, pirate's treasures, and more throughout East Texas. One legend states that Jean Lafitte ran from pursuit up the Sabine River and hid his treasure somewhere therein.

Beer, Chicks, an Ouija Board and a Demon was just fun. My players love the chance to mess with the other players and this allowed their imagination to go crazy and do whatever they wanted. This is a great one-nighter and I hope you enjoy it as much as I did.

The Soul Gazer is my own creation following a conversation with Thomas Driver, the bassist for A Jury of Robots. I'd really love to see the Soul Gazer

idea catch on and how other folks grow the idea. The Christmas tales are also good fun, but I really love Goblin Friend. We will reveal more about the secret military base and the government labs in future adventures. These *Midnight Tales* are a great way for you to introduce Pinebox to your players and will be an awesome bag of tricks for those of you looking forward to running our ETU campaign due sometime in 2008.

So sit back and plan some horrific gaming!  
Thanks,

Ed Wettermann



## "Howdy" from 12 to Midnight

From all of us here at **12 to Midnight**, welcome to *Midnight Tales*. In case you are not familiar with us, we are a Texas-based RPG publisher specializing in modern horror. You might not normally think "Texas" and "horror" go together, but we are pretty sure you will change your mind after spending some time in Pinebox.

That's Pinebox, Texas. It is a nice little rural community smack-dab in East Texas. There is a university nearby, a Pine forest called the Big Thicket, and a mess of beautiful wildflowers every Spring. Unfortunately, it is also the epicenter of a whole lot of bad mojo. We're talking dark magic, serial killers, haunted buildings—the whole ball of wax.

If you want to learn more about Pinebox, just visit our website at [12tomidnight.com](http://12tomidnight.com). You can start using the free campaign setting on our site right now, then watch it continue to grow right here in the pages of *Midnight Tales*. Of course, Pinebox is *our* setting but all the material in these pages can just as easily be dropped into *yours*.

# Chapter 1: *Big Thicket* Adventures

## Setting

The Big Thicket of East Texas is one of the last remaining jungle-like regions of North America. Its dense undergrowth is so thick in places that it cannot be penetrated without a sharp machete or hatchet. Every deer season, many hunters find themselves lost within its confines. In East Texas it is often said, “Stay within 20 feet of the road or you’ll get lost—and you may never be found again!”

The Thicket is primarily made up of tall pines, ancient oaks, and a few beech trees. The understory is a tangle of vines, small bushes, and thorns. This forest is home to coyotes, black bears, many species of birds, and the legendary panther. Native American tribes, such as the Caddo, once made their homes deep in the Thicket. Though two hundred years ago the forest covered a majority of East Texas, today it only covers a few counties, including the southern reaches of Golan County.

In the 1800s, many bushwhackers, outlaws, and renegade Native Americans made the Thicket their home and sanctuary. During the 1920s, bootleggers hid their alcohol stills deep in the reaches of the Thicket along its natural creek beds. Today, murders are commonplace and human remains are found by hunters on a fairly regular basis, though these remains are generally half eaten by wild animals and rarely identifiable. Ancient Native American burial mounds, rotting cabins, and old barns are found

deep within the forest, overgrown with the weeds and thorn bushes of a hundred years’ growth.

Today, biking and hiking trails have been cut through many parts of the Big Thicket, which is now protected by both state and federal governments. The fall and winter see many hunters enter its dark interior seeking deer, ducks, squirrels, geese, turkeys, and wild razorback hogs. Several large camping areas are available for those who wish to keep the amenities of civilization close at hand, but others prefer to hike into the forest and create their own campground.

Many legends involving the Thicket persist even today: bigfoot and panther sightings, rumors of chupacabra attacks, reports of ghostly Spanish soldiers, fierce Native American spirits, and tales of buried Confederate Hope Gold. Some even say that pirates from Galveston ventured up the Sabine River to hide their loot in the deep woods. Other phenomena are also common, ranging from unexplained lights in the night sky to strange disappearances, bizarre and dangerous weather patterns, and the mysterious Flames of Kirby Smith. In a Pinebox Campaign all of these legends are true, and they make for great side treks or short adventure tales. Three such side treks are presented in this section of *Ed’s Midnight Tales: The Beasts of the Thicket, Little Lost Child, and Last Chance Gold*.



## Plot Hooks

- The heroes are part of a GPS geocaching team that seeks clues to a treasure deep within the forest.
- The characters are stranded in the Big Thicket on a lonely, rarely-used stretch of road, which they thought was a “shortcut,” when their vehicle runs out of gas, has a double-blowout, hits a large deer, or the like, and they have to hike back to civilization..
- The heroes volunteer to search for a lost child who wandered from his father’s camp into the brush.
- The characters track an adversary who attempts to elude them in the Thicket. Perhaps he maintains a secret hideout there.
- The heroes are here for recreation, such as camping, hiking, bike riding, or hunting.
- The characters are meeting someone: an informant, a black-market dealer of weapons or equipment, or some other person who would have reason to shy away from public view.
- The heroes are searching for lost the Confederate Hope Gold—old chests, buried after the surrender at Appomattox, that are rumored to be full of gold and jewelry.

### 1.1: Beasts of the Thicket

This encounter can involve a bigfoot, panther, or chupacabra. These legendary creatures are masters of hiding and moving silently. They only attack humans if provoked. Choose one of these three creatures or select the beast randomly. Once the plot hook has been established and the heroes are deep in the woods, read or paraphrase the following:

*As you make your way deeper into the beautiful, dark Thicket, you suddenly notice a strange stillness. The forest has become eerily silent.*

Have the heroes make *Notice* rolls against the creature’s *Stealth* roll in order to notice it a mere fifteen feet away, hidden in the underbrush, watching their every move. If they see the creature, what happens next depends on them. If the heroes choose to

provoke the creature, it fights them. Fleeing is also an option, though the action of running away provokes the panther or chupacabra to attack.

If the heroes choose to remain calm and still, the creature eventually turns and makes its way deeper into the forest. It may be tracked, by someone with the *Tracking* skill, to its lair. The creature’s home is a dry creek bed with five-foot-high banks on either side.

The panther makes its home in an ancient oak tree overlooking the creek bed, while the chupacabra lives within the tree’s hollow trunk. The bigfoot creature has created a bed of flora in the creek bed. If the lair is discovered, the creature fights or flees, depending on the actions of the heroes. If the creature survives an attack, it hunts the heroes until they escape the bounds of the forest.

#### Panther

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d8

**Skills:** *Climbing* d6, *Fighting* d8, *Guts* d6, *Notice* d6, *Stealth* d8

**Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7

**Special Abilities:**

**Bite or Claws:** Str+d6

**Camouflage:** A panther’s dark coloration makes them difficult to spot in the deep woods. Add a +2 to *Stealth* when hiding in thick woods.

**Improved Frenzy:** Panthers may make two *Fighting* attacks each action at no penalty.

**Pounce:** Panther’s often hide and pounce on their prey for a quick kill. It can leap 1d6" to gain a +4 to its attack and damage. Its *Parry* is reduced by –2 until it performs its next action.

**Size +1:** Panthers can weigh over 300+ pounds.

The legendary black panther of East Texas is an elusive hunter that haunts the deepest recesses of the Big Thicket. Some believe these are a type of jaguar or cougar, but little evidence has ever been collected. Many tales are told of a bone-chilling scream that sounds like a woman or a small child. In reality, it is the call of this large cat.



## Chupacabra

Chupacabras come in two subspecies, known as Lesser Chupacabras and Greater Chupacabras. Common special abilities are listed first, followed by information specific to the subspecies.

### Special Abilities:

**Claws:** Str+d6

**Chameleon Skin:** The chupacabra's skin can change color and texture to adapt to its surroundings. This provides a natural bonus of +4 to all *Stealth* rolls, and causes all *Shooting* and *Throwing* attacks against it to suffer a -2.

**Fleet Footed:** This creature rolls d10s instead of d6s while running.

**Go For the Throat:** This creature instinctively goes for an opponent's soft spots. With a raise on its attack roll it hits the target's most weakly-armored location and automatically begins its **Vampiric Bite** (see below).

**Improved Frenzy:** Chupacabras may make two *Fighting* attacks each action at no penalty.

**Infravision:** Chupacabras can see heat and halve penalties for bad lighting when attacking living targets.

**Musk:** This creature may exude a powerful musk three times a day, which forces every creature within a 5" radius (Lesser) / Large Burst Template (Greater) to make a Vigor roll. If failed, the victim is paralyzed in a sleeplike state for three rounds.

**Quick:** Whenever dealt a 5 or lower for initiative, the creature receives another card until one higher than 5 is drawn.

**Vampiric Bite:** When a chupacabra gets a raise on an attack roll, it latches onto a victim's soft area and begins a Vampiric Bite attack. The initial bite does 1d8 (Lesser) / 2d6 (Greater) points of damage, and if the target is wounded the victim must make a Vigor roll or lose consciousness. If the victim does not suffer a wound level or a shaken status, then the chupacabra loses its hold and falls away from the victim. Otherwise it remains attached and does the same range of damage on its next action. Each additional Vigor roll incurs an additional -1 to the roll. If an attached chupacabra suffers a Shaken result, it immediately loses its hold on its victim.

## Lesser Chupacabra

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8

**Skills:** *Climbing* d8, *Fighting* d8, *Guts* d6, *Notice* d6, *Stealth* d8

**Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 4

### Special Abilities:

**Glide:** Batlike wings allow this creature to glide through the air from great heights. The chupacabra has a flying pace of 12, but no climb rate as it always moves from a higher level to a lower one.

**Size -1:** Lesser Chupacabras are the size of a large dog.

## Greater Chupacabra

**Attributes:** Agility d10, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d10

**Skills:** *Climbing* d8, *Fighting* d10, *Guts* d8, *Notice* d6, *Stealth* d10

**Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 7

### Special Abilities:

**Size +1:** Greater Chupacabras can weigh over 300+ pounds.

The chupacabra is a savage and stealthy carnivore. It has the face of a wolf, but with gray or scaly facial skin. Course body hair and skin provides chameleon-like camouflage, with a row of quills that runs down the length of the beast's back. The creature has bat-like wings, powerful kangaroo-like legs, and two short forearms ending in three-fingered claws. Two sharp fangs extend several inches from the creature's snout. Its eyes are reported to be black, orange, or red.

These twisted creatures range throughout the Caribbean, Central and South America, and the southern United States. They generally prey on small fowl and animals, such as chickens, geese, ducks, goats, dogs, and cats. Greater chupacabras have been known to attack cattle and, occasionally, human beings. Chupacabras are masterful predators and are very difficult to track, hunt, or kill. Typically they attack at night and leave the bodies of their prey ravaged and bloodless. Investigators claim that the creature gives off a hissing noise and secretes a natural musk that lulls prey into a sleep-like paralysis. It then attacks the victim with two straw-like fangs, which allow the beast to suck the blood from its prey.