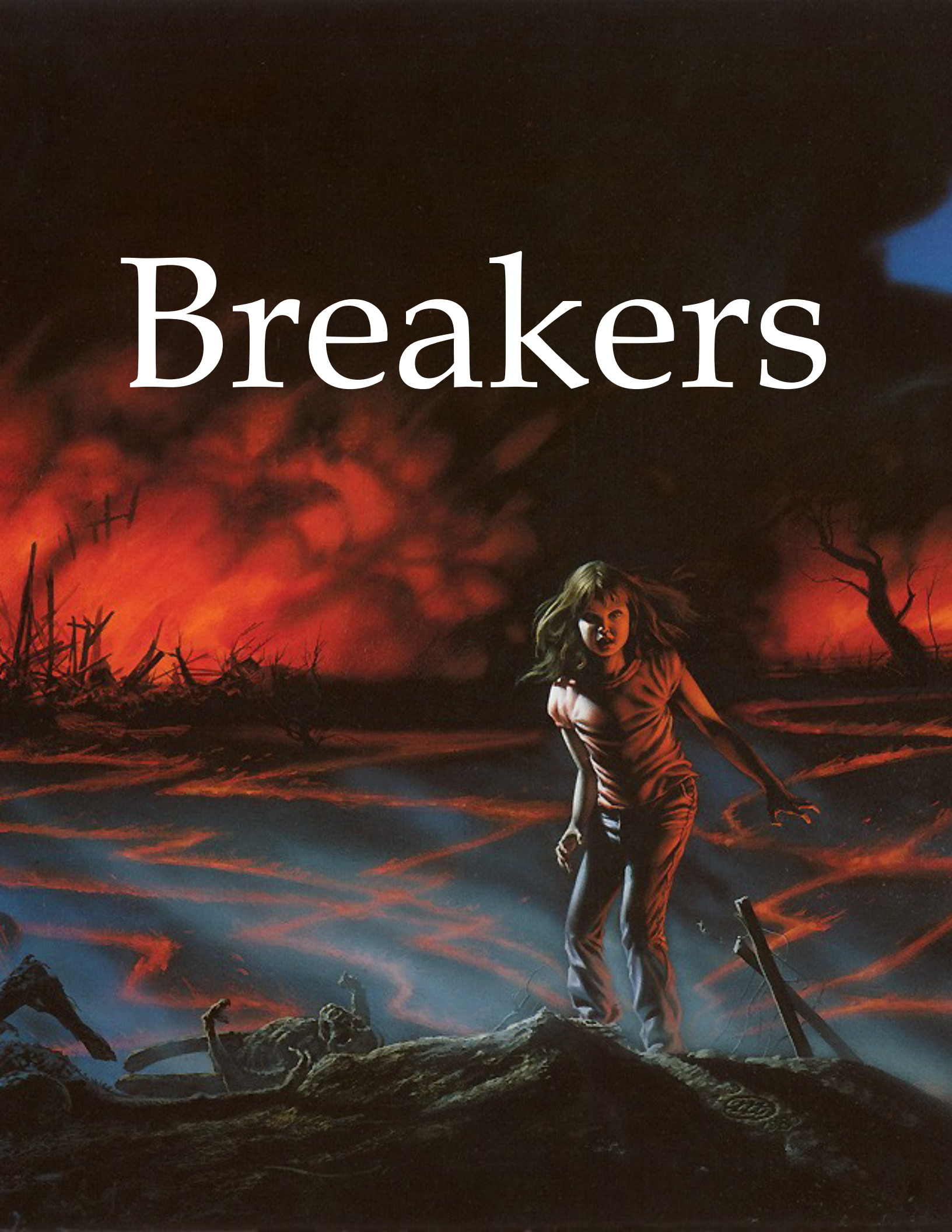


Breakers



He had said it would be good—that they would see to it. Well, she would see to it. They better not start anything. They just better not. She did not know if her gift had come from the lord of light or of darkness, and now, finally finding that she did not care which, she was overcome with an almost indescribable relief, as if a huge weight, long carried, had slipped from her shoulders.

Blooming

She had gone in only five minutes before, after opening the gas main (it had been easy; as soon as she pictured it lying there under the street it had been easy), but it seemed like hours. She had prayed long and deeply, sometimes aloud, sometimes silently. Her heart thudded and labored. The veins on her face and neck bulged. Her mind was filled with the huge knowledge of POWERS, and of an ABYSS. She prayed in front of the altar, kneeling in her wet and torn and bloody gown, her feet bare and dirty and bleeding from a broken bottle she had stepped on. Her breath sobbed in and out of her throat, and the church was filled with groanings and swayings and Sunderings as psychic energy sprang from her. Pews fell, hymnals flew, and a silver Communion set cruised silently across the vaulted darkness of the nave to crash into the far wall. She prayed and there was no answer. No one was there—or if there was, He/It was cowering from her.

Once a Breaker realizes his or her potential, (s)he gains a vague understanding of psionic powers and concepts.

To use a power, a Breaker makes an Anima percentage check against the Resistance number listed on the matrix.

Breakers may lose Sanity by using telepathic powers. Every time a specific power is used, the Breaker must make a Sanity check or lose the Sanity Points listed. Like any other Sanity loss, no more than the maximum listed loss can be reached.

With a mind-link and enough patience, one Breaker can teach another Breaker any power besides Facilitation.

Using the Touch

She had grown a little wary of the terrific strain using the power seemed to put on her heart and lungs and internal thermostat. She suspected it would be all too possible for her heart to literally burst with the strain. It was like being in another's body and forcing her to run and run and run. You would not pay the cost yourself; the other body would. She was beginning to realize that her power was perhaps not so different from the powers of Indian fakirs, who stroll across hot coals, run needles into their eyes, or blithely bury themselves for periods up to six weeks. Mind over matter in any form is a terrific drain on the body's resources.

Every Breaker begins with a number of darks equal to their Anima. Expendng darks takes a lot out of a person's brain and body. If darks are emitted too rapidly or too frequently, the Breaker will suffer worse and worse physical symptoms. Death, usually by heart attack or stroke, is the inevitable result.

For example, a Breaker with 10 darks uses 1 dark (10% of her total). Three rounds later, she uses another dark (now her total used within the last 10 rounds is 20% of her maximum). At this point she suffers a headache. If she uses another 2 darks within the next six rounds, she will suffer a nosebleed in addition to the headache.

Darks used	Symptom
20%	Headache (-2 Anima)
35%	Nosebleed (-1 Appearance, -1 Fortitude)
50%	Numbness (-3 Dexterity, -3 Strength)
75%	Hemorrhaging
90%+	Blackout / coma

Darks return at the rate of one every ten rounds. Breakers recover from numbness, nosebleed, and headache (in that order) at the rate of one condition every ten rounds. Hemorrhaging Breakers must succeed in a Luck check or lose 1d6 points from Strength and Dexterity. This condition abates with 24 hours of rest.

If the Breaker expends 90% of her darks, she must succeed in a Luck check to merely black out. Failure means a coma. A second Luck check is needed to stop her Anima score from being permanently lowered by one.

Psychic Death

Sue tried to pull away, to disengage her mind, to allow Carrie at least the privacy of her dying, and was unable to. She felt that she was dying herself and did not want to see this preview of her own eventual end.

(carrie let me GO)

*(Momma Momma Momma oooooooooooooooooo
ooooooooooooo)*

The mental screams reached a flaring, unbelievable crescendo and then suddenly faded. For a moment Sue felt as if she were watching a candle flame disappear down a long, black tunnel at a tremendous speed.

(she's dying o my god i'm feeling her die)

And then the light was gone, and the last conscious thought had been

(momma i'm sorry where)

and it broke up and Sue was tuned in only on the blank, idiot frequency of the physical nerve endings that would take hours to die.

She began to run, breathing deep in her chest, running from Tommy, from the fires and explosions, from Carrie, but mostly from the final horror—that last lighted thought carried swiftly down into the black tunnel of eternity, followed by the blank, idiot hum of prosaic electricity.

The after-image began to fade reluctantly, leaving a blessed, cool darkness in her mind that knew nothing. She slowed, halted, and became aware that something had begun to happen. She stood in the middle of the great and misty field, waiting for realization.

Her rapid breathing slowed, slowed, caught suddenly as if on a thorn—

And suddenly vented itself in one howling, cheated scream.

As she felt the slow course of dark menstrual blood down her thighs.

Darks expended: all remaining
Sanity Loss: 3/2d4+2

Learning to shine

She opened her eyes. She looked at the hairbrush on her bureau.

Flex.

She was lifting the hairbrush. It was heavy. It was like lifting a barbell with very weak arms. Oh. Grunt.

The hairbrush slid to the edge of the bureau, slid out past the point where gravity should have topped it, and then dangled, as if on an invisible string. Carrie's eyes had closed to slits. Veins pulsed in her temples. A doctor might have been interested in what her body was doing at that instant; it made no rational sense. Respiration had fallen to sixteen breaths per minute. Blood pressure up to 190/100. Heartbeat up to 140—higher than astronauts under the heavy g-load of lift-off. Temperature down to 94.3°. Her body was burning energy that seemed to be coming from nowhere and seemed to be going nowhere. An electroencephalogram would have shown alpha waves that were no longer waves at all, but great, jagged spikes.

She let the hairbrush down carefully. Good. Last night she had dropped it.

She opened her eyes.

Flex.

The bureau rose into the air, trembled for a moment, and then rose until it nearly touched the ceiling. She lowered it. Lifted it. Lowered it. Now the bed, complete with her weight. Up. Down. Up. Down. Just like an elevator.

She was hardly tired at all. Well, a little. Not much. The ability, almost lost two weeks ago, was in full flower. It had progressed at a speed that was—

Well, almost terrifying.

Every game the Breaker successfully uses his or her powers, she makes a Sanity check. A successful check means the Breaker gains 1d2 darks.

A pleasure to Break

“And because to Break is divine,” Dinky said. He was also looking at Eddie. “The way the half an hour after you shoot up can be divine. If you know what I’m talking about.”

“They lost something else, too,” Ted told them quietly. “There’s a novel by Ray Bradbury called Fahrenheit 451. ‘It was a pleasure to burn’ is that novel’s first line. Well, it was a pleasure to Break, as well.”

Dinky was nodding. So were Worthington and Dani Rostov.

Even Sheemie was nodding his head.

Clairvoyance

“Alain, are you listening?”

Alain, who knew perfectly well that Roland wasn't speaking of his ears or his attention-span, nodded.

“Do you hear anything?”

“Not yet.”

“Keep at it.”

“I will... but I can't promise anything. The touch is flukey. You know that as well as I do.”

“Just keep trying.”

Then he left, standing on the porch for a moment to verify he still had the Bar K to himself. Of course he did. Yet for a blink or two, there at the end, he'd felt uneasy—almost as though he'd been scented. By some sort of In-World telepathy, mayhap.

There is such; you know it. The touch, it's called.

Aye, but that was the tool of gunslingers, artists, and lunatics. Not of boys, be they lords or just lads.

Resistance: 16*

Darks expended: 3-8

Sanity Loss: 0/1

If the Resistance Test fails by a small margin, the target may (at the Controller's discretion) detect the attempt.

Facilitation

For another thing, Ted had come to realize by the mid-nineteen-thirties that what he had was actually catching. If he touched a person while in a state of high emotion, that person for a short time became a telepath. What he hadn't known then was that people who were already telepaths became stronger. Exponentially stronger.

Resistance: 10
Darks expended: 5+
Sanity Loss: none

“I really did not understand that my talent goes far beyond propping and Breaking. I'm like a microphone for a singer or a steroid for a muscle. I . . . hype them. Say there's a unit of force—call it darks, all right? In The Study, twenty or thirty people might be able to put out fifty darks an hour without me. With me? Maybe it jumps to five hundred darks an hour. And it jumps all at once.

Good-mind

For one thing, being near working Breakers made talk unnecessary. What they called “good mind” kicked in as you walked down the third-floor hallway on either side, from either elevator, and when you opened the doors giving on the balcony good-mind bloomed in your head, opening all sorts of perceptual doorways. Aldous Huxley, Pimli had thought on more than one occasion, would have gone absolutely bonkers up here. Sometimes one found one’s heels leaving the floor in a kind of half-assed float. The stuff in your pockets tended to rise and hang in the air. Formerly baffling situations seemed to resolve themselves the moment you turned your thoughts to them. If you’d forgotten something, your five o’clock appointment or your brother-in-law’s middle name, for instance, this was the place where you could remember. And even if you realized that what you’d forgotten was important, you were never distressed.

Resistance: 10
Darks expended: 1
Sanity Loss: none

Ted had gotten on his knees beside the struggling, screaming woman and motioned for Dinky to get kneebound on the other side of her. Ted had taken one of her hands, then nodded for Dink to take the other. And something had flowed out of them—something deep and soothing. It wasn’t meant for Jake, no, not at all, but he caught some of it, anyway, and felt his wildly galloping heart slow.

“And then Ted, Dinky, Dani, and Fred joined hands. They made what Ted called ‘the little good-mind.’ I could feel it even though I wasn’t in their circle, and I was glad to feel it, because that’s one spooky old place down there.” She clutched her blankets more tightly. ‘I don’t look forward to going again.’”

A Breaker in the good-mind may add one point of Anima to her power resistance tests for each other mind (i.e. in a group of five Breakers, they may each add up to four points of Anima to resistance tests).

Line

“Only you got something, too.” He can see it on the candy-rack, a bright yellow mark something like a handprint. “Snickers bar?”

Pete walks outside, ignoring the tinkle of the bell, ignoring the rain, which now really is rain. The yellow is on the sidewalk, but fading. The rain’s washing it away. Still, he can see it and it pleases him to see it. That feeling of click. Sweet. It’s the line. It has been a long time since he’s seen it so clearly.

Resistance: 15

Darks expended: 3

Sanity Loss: none

Mind-spear

And God, how he comes to understand that! For one thing, his “wild talent” (as the pulp science-fiction magazines sometimes call it) is actually physically dangerous under the right circumstances. Or the wrong ones.

In 1935, in Ohio, it makes Ted Brautigan a murderer.

Resistance: 16

Darks expended: 7

Sanity Loss: 0/1d3

The purple dusk of that summer night deepens suddenly to full dark, then lightens up again, then deepens once more. It's his eyes, doing the trick that so amazed the second doctor almost twenty years before, but Ted hardly notices. His attention is fixed on the fleeing man, the son of a bitch who just mugged him out of his wallet and spoiled his face in the process. He's never been so angry in his life, never, and although the thought he sends at the fleeing man is innocuous, almost gentle

(say buddy I would've given you a dollar if you'd asked maybe even two)

it has the deadly weight of a thrown spear. And it was a spear. It takes him some time to fully accept that, but when the time comes he realizes that he's a murderer and if there's a God, Ted Brautigan will someday have to stand at His throne and answer for what he's just done.

He concentrated and felt a sick pain rip through his head. The mind-spear flew. Trampas let go of Dinky and gave Ted a look of unbelieving reproach that Ted would remember to the end of his life. Then Trampas grabbed the sides of his head like a man with the worst Excedrin Headache in the universe, and fell dead on the grass with his throat swollen and his tongue sticking out of his mouth.

Mind Transfer

Jake had no idea how good his mental connection to Oy actually was, but thought he would soon find out.

“Oy!”

The calling voices of the low men were now horribly close. Soon they would see the boy and the bumbler stopped here and break into a charge. Oy could smell them coming but looked at Jake calmly enough anyway. At his beloved Jake, for whom he would die if called upon to do so.

“Oy, can you change places with me?”

It turned out that he could.

Resistance: 14/18*

Darks expended: 5

Sanity Loss: 1/1d4

*Resistance is 14 for a willing participant and 18 for an unwilling one.

Oy tottered erect with Ake in his arms, swaying back and forth, horrified to discover how narrow the boy’s range of balance was. The idea of walking even a short distance on but two legs was terribly daunting, yet it would have to be done, and done at once. Ake said so.

Oy tried to bark his frustration. What came out of Ake’s mouth was a stupid thing that was more word than sound:

“Bark! Ark! Shit-bark!”

Oy got up by putting Ake’s back against the wall and pushing with Ake’s legs. At last he was getting the hand of the motor controls; they were in a place Ake called Dogan and were fairly simple. Off to the left, however, an arched corridor led into a huge room filled with mirror-bright machinery. Oy knew that if he went into that place—the chamber where Ake kept all his marvelous thoughts and his store of words—he would be lost forever.

Luckily, he didn’t need to. Everything he needed was in the Dogan. Left foot . . . forward. (And pause.) Right foot . . . forward. (And pause.) Hold the thing that looks like a billy-bumbler but is really your friend and use the other arm for balance.

Precognition

“I hate that noise,” Alain said. He sounded morose and sleepy. In fact, he had been troubled by odd dreams and premonitions all night—things which, of the three of them, only he was prey to. Because of the touch, perhaps—with him it had always been strong.

Resistance: 16
Darks expended: 1-6
Sanity Loss: 0/1

He was gathering the wad of wrinkled bills up from the board when his eyes happened on the Wheel again. The warm concern for her that had been in them faded out. They seemed to darken again, become speculative in a cold way. He’s looking at that wheel the way a little boy would look at his own private ant colony, Sarah thought.

She thought: He can’t be content until he’s lost it all back.

And then, with strange certainty: But he’s not going to lose.

“What do you say buddy?” the pitchman asked. “On or off, in or out.”

“Shit or git,” one of the roustabouts said, and there was nervous laughter. Sarah’s head swam.

Johnny suddenly shoved bills and quarters up to the corner of the board.

“What are you doing?” the pitchman asked, genuinely shocked.

“The whole wad on 19,” Johnny said.

Postcognition

Johnny took off his gloves and put them in his coat pockets. Then he knelt and began to brush the snow away from the seat of the bench. Again Bannerman was struck by the haggard pallor of the man's face. On his knees before the bench he looked like a religious penitent, a man in desperate prayer.

Resistance: 14

Darks expended: 2-5

Sanity Loss: 0/1

Johnny's hands went cold, then mostly numb. Melted snow ran off his fingers. He got down to the splintered, weatherbeaten surface of the bench. He seemed to see it very clearly, almost with magnifying power. It had once been green, but now much of the paint had flaked and eroded away. Two rusted steel bolts held the seat to the backrest.

He seized the bench in both hands, and sudden weirdness flooded him—he had felt nothing so intense before and would feel something so intense only once ever again. He stared down at the bench, frowning, gripping it tightly in his hands. It was . . .

(A summer bench)

How many hundreds of different people had sat here at one time or another, listening to “God Bless America,” to “Stars and Stripes Forever” (Be kind to your web-footed friends . . . for a duck may be somebody's moooother . . .), to the Castle Rock Cougars' fight song? Green summer leaves, smoky haze of fall like a memory of cornhusks and men with rakes in mellow dusk. The thud of the big snare drum. Mellow gold trumpets and trombones. School band uniforms . . .

(for a duck . . . may be . . . somebody's mother . . .)

Good summer people sitting here, listening, applauding, holding programs that had been designed and printed in the Castle Rock High School graphic arts shop.

But this morning a killer had been sitting here. Johnny could feel him.

Psychic Shield

The boy stood close to him, his body poised. His eyes took in the Slow Mutants only as they passed, not traversing, not seeing more than they had to. The boy assumed a psychic bulge of terror, as if his very id had somehow sprung out through his pores to form a telepathic shield.

Resistance: 12

Darks expended: varies*

Sanity Loss: 0/1

*One dark is expended for each Sanity point that would otherwise be lost.

Note that Psychic Shield does not protect against loss incurred by using this power.

Purge

'Oww, Jesus!'

Sitting up drove two monstrous bolts of chromium pain into his head. He clapped his hands to his skull and rocked it back and forth, and little by little the pain subsided to a more manageable level.

No concrete sensory input except this rotten headache. I must have slept on my neck or something, he thought. I must have

No. Oh, no. He knew this headache, knew it well. It was the sort of headache he got from a medium-to-hard push . . . harder than the ones he had given the fat ladies and shy businessmen, not quite as hard as the ones he had given the fellows at the turnpike rest stop that time.

Andy's hands flew to his face and felt it all over, from brow to chin. There were no spots where the feeling trailed away to numbness. When he smiled, both corners of his mouth went up just as they always had. He wished to God for a light so he could look into his own eyes in the bathroom mirror to see if either of them showed that tell-tale blood sheen

Push? Pushing?

That was ridiculous. Who was there to push?

Who, except . . .

His breath slowed to a stop in his throat and then resumed slowly. He had thought of it before but had never tried it. He thought it would be like overloading a circuit by cycling a charge through it endlessly. He had been scared to try it.

My pill, he thought. My pill is overdue and I want it, I really want it, I really need it. My pill will make everything all right.

It was just a thought. It brought on no craving at all. The idea of taking a Thorazine had all the emotional gradient of please pass the butter. The fact was, except for the rotten headache, he felt pretty much all right. And the fact also was he had had headaches a lot worse than this—the one at the Albany airport, for instance. This one was a baby compared to that.

I've pushed myself, he thought, amazed.

For the first time he could really understand how Charlie felt, because for the first time he was a little frightened by his own psi talent. For the first time he really understood how little he understood about what it was and what it could do. Why had it gone? He didn't know. Why had it come back? He didn't know that either. Did it have something to do with his intense fear in the dark? His sudden feeling that Charlie was being threatened (he had a ghostly memory of the piratical one-eyed man and then it floated away, gone) and his own dismal self-loathing at the way he had forgotten her? Possibly even the rap on the head he had taken when he fell down?

He didn't know; he knew only that he had pushed himself.

The brain is a muscle that can move the world.

'Jesus,' he whispered. 'Am I really clean?'

There was no craving. Thorazine, the image of the blue pill on the white plate -- that thought had become unmistakably neutral.

'I am clean,' he answered himself.

Next question: could he stay clean?

Resistance: 17

Darks expended: 6+

Sanity Loss: 1/1d4+1

Pyrokinesis

*Oh, she knew the Devil's Power. Her own grandmother had it. She had been able to light the fireplace without even stirring from her rocker by the window. It made her eyes glow with
(thou shalt not suffer a witch to live)
a kind of witch's light.*

Resistance: 11

Darks expended: 1-4

Sanity Loss: 1/1d3

Charlie turned toward them. As she did so, half a dozen other men, John Mayo and Ray Knowles among them, broke for the porch's back steps with their guns drawn.

Charlie's eyes widened a little, and Andy felt something hot pass by him in a warm puff of air.

The three men at the front end of the porch had got halfway toward them when their hair caught on fire.

A gun boomed, deafeningly loud, and a splinter of wood perhaps eight inches long jumped from one of the porch's supporting posts. Norma Manders screamed, and Andy flinched. But Charlie seemed not to notice. Her face was dreamy and thoughtful. A small Mona Lisa smile had touched the corners of her mouth.

She's enjoying this, Andy thought with something like horror. Is that why she's so afraid of it? Because she likes it?

Charlie was turning back toward Al Steinowitz again. The three men he had sent running down toward Andy and Charlie from the front end of the porch had forgotten their duty to God, country, and the Shop. They were beating at the flames on their heads and yelling. The pungent smell of fried hair suddenly filled the afternoon.

'No, don't,' he said in an almost conversational tone of voice. 'Don't—'

It was impossible to tell where the flames began. Suddenly his pants and his sportcoat were blazing. His hair was a burning bush. He backed up, screaming, bounced off the side of his car, and half turned to Norville Bates, his arms stretched out.

Andy felt that soft rush of heat again, a displacement of air, as if a hot slug thrown at rocket speed had just passed his nose. Al Steinowitz's face caught on fire. For a moment he was all there, screaming silently under a transparent caul of flame, and then his features were blending, merging, running like tallow. Norville shrank away from him. Al Steinowitz was a flaming scarecrow. He staggered blindly down the driveway, waving his arms, and then collapsed facedown beside the third car. He didn't look like a man at all; he looked like a burning bundle of rags.

'Get out,' Andy said hoarsely. 'Get out quickly. She's never done anything like this before and I don't know if she can stop.'

'I'm all right, Daddy,' Charlie said. Her voice was calm, collected, and strangely indifferent. 'Everything's okay.'

And that was when the cars began to explode.

Sigul-making

Resistance: 10

Darks expended: 3

Sanity Loss: 1/1d4

Anyway, I was looking out and there were these flies buzzing around at the top of the window, you know how they do. I didn't like the sound, but I couldn't reach high enough, even with a rolled-up magazine, to swat them or make them go away. So instead of that, I made these two triangles on the windowpane, drawing in the dirt with the tip of my finger, and I made this other shape, a special circle-shape, to hold the triangles together. And as soon as I did that, as soon as I closed the circle, the flies—there were four or five of them—dropped dead on the windowsill.

It was a Saturday, bright and early, and I didn't have to go anywhere near Mrs. Bukowski's if I didn't want to, but that day I did want to. I got out of bed and threw on my clothes just as fast as I could. I did everything fast because I didn't want to lose that idea. I would, too—I'd lose it the way you eventually lose the dreams you wake up with (or the boners you wake up with, if you want to be crude)—but right then I had the whole thing in my mind just as clear as a bell: words with triangles around them and curlicues over them, special circles to hold the whole shebang together . . . two or three of those, overlapping for extra strength.

Mrs. Bukowski's dog wasn't sleeping in. Fuck, no. That dog was a firm believer in rooty-tooty, do your duty. It saw me coming through the picket-fence and went charging to the end of its rope as hard as ever, maybe even harder, as if some part of its dim little doggy brain knew it was Saturday and I had no business being there. It hit the end of the rope, boi-yoi-yoinng, and went right over backward. It was up again in a second, though, standing at the end of its rope and barking in its choky I'm-strangling-but-I-don't-care way. I suppose Mrs. Bukowski was used to that sound, maybe even liked it, but I've wondered since how the neighbors stood it.

I paid no attention that day. I was too excited to be scared. I fished the chalk out of my pocket and dropped down on one knee. For one second I thought the whole works had gone out of my head, and that was bad. I felt despair and sadness trying to fill me up and I thought, No, don't let it, don't let it, Dinky, fight it. Write anything, even if it's only FUCK MRS. BUKOWSKI'S DOG.

But I didn't write that. I drew this shape, I think it was a sankofite, instead. Some weird shape, but the right shape, because it unlocked everything else. My head flooded with stuff. It was wonderful, but at the same time it was really scary because there was so fucking much of it. For the next five minutes or so I knelt there on the sidewalk, sweating like a pig and writing like a mad fiend. I wrote words I'd never heard and drew shapes I'd never seen—shapes nobody

had ever seen: not just sankofites but japps and fouders and mirks. I wrote and drew until I was pink dust halfway to my right elbow and Ma's piece of chalk was nothing but a little pebble between my thumb and finger.

At the end, I realized I had to make it stronger, and the way to do that was to make it just for the dog. I didn't know its name, so I printed BOXER with the last of the chalk, drew a circle around it, then made an arrow at the bottom of the circle, pointing to the rest. I felt dizzy and my head was throbbing, the way it does when you've just finished taking a super-hard test, or if you spend too long watching TV. I felt like I was going to be sick . . . but I still also felt totally eventual. I looked at the dog—it was still just as lively as ever, barking and kind of prancing on its back legs when it ran out of slack—but that didn't bother me. I went back home feeling easy in my mind. I knew Mrs. Bukowski's dog was toast.

Three days later the dog was eating the old dirt sandwich.

Mr. Shermerhorn said Mrs. Bukowski's boxer for some reason started running around the tree he was tied to, and when he got to the end of his rope (ha-ha, end of his rope), he couldn't get back. Mrs. Bukowski was out shopping somewhere, so she was no help. When she got home, she found her dog lying at the base of the tree in her side yard, choked to death.

The writing on the sidewalk stayed there for about a week; then it rained hard and afterward there was just a pink blur. But until it rained, it stayed pretty sharp. And while it was sharp, no one walked on it. I saw this for myself. People—kids walking to school, ladies walking downtown, Mr. Shermerhorn, the mailman—would just kind of veer around it. They didn't even seem to know they were doing it. And nobody ever talked about it, either, like "What's up with this weird shit on the sidewalk?" or "What do you suppose you call something that looks like that?" (A foulder, dimbulb.) It was as if they didn't even see it was there. Except part of them must have. Why else would they have walked around it?

Telekinesis

I thought I might meet some other people like me—if this was a book or a movie (or maybe just an episode of The X-Files), I would meet a cute chick with nifty little tits and the ability to shut doors from across the room—but that didn't happen.

Resistance: 14

Darks expended: 2+

Sanity Loss: none

There was the sprinkler system. She could turn it on, turn it on easily. She giggled again and got up, began to walk barefoot back toward the lobby doors. Turn on the sprinkler system and close all the doors. Look in and let them see her looking in, watching and laughing while the shower ruined their dresses and their hairdos and took the shine off their shoes. Her only regret was that it couldn't be blood.

The lobby was empty. She paused halfway up the stairs and FLEX, the doors all slammed shut under the concentrated force she directed at them, the pneumatic door-closers snapping off. She heard some of them scream and it was music, sweet soul music.

For a moment nothing changed and then she could feel them pushing against the doors, wanting them to open. The pressure was negligible. They were trapped

(trapped)

and the word echoed intoxicatingly in her mind. They were under her thumb, in her power. Power! What a word that was!

She went the rest of the way up and looked in and George Dawson was smashed up against the glass, struggling, pushing, his face distorted with effort. There were others behind him, and they all looked like fish in an aquarium.

And in a sudden, blind thrust, she yanked at all the power she could feel.

Some of the lights puffed out. There was a dazzling flash somewhere as a live power cord hit a puddle of water. There were dull thumps in her mind as circuit breakers went into hopeless operation. The boy who had been holding the mike stand fell over on one of his amps and there was an explosion of purple sparks and then the crepe bunting that faced the stage was burning.

Just below the thrones, a live 220-volt electricity cable was crackling on the floor and beside it Rhonda Simard was doing a crazed puppet dance in her green tulle formal. Its full skirt suddenly blazed into flame and she fell forward, still jerking.

It might have been at that moment that Carrie went over the edge. She leaned against the doors, her heart pumping wildly, yet her body as cold as ice cubes. Her face was livid, but dull red fever spots stood on each cheek. Her head throbbed thickly, and conscious thought was lost.

Telepathy

"You shine on, boy. Harder than anyone I ever met in my life. And I'm sixty years old this January."

"Huh?"

"You got a knack," Hallorann said, turning to him. "Me, I've always called it shining. That's what my grandmother called it, too. She had it. We used to sit in the kitchen when I was a boy no older than you and have long talks without even openin our mouths."

"Really?"

Hallorann smiled at Danny's openmouthed, almost hungry expression and said, "Come on up and sit in the car with me for a few minutes. Want to talk to you." He slammed the trunk.

In the car Hallorann was saying: "Get you kinda lonely, thinkin you were the only one?"

Danny, who had been frightened as well as lonely sometimes, nodded. "Am I the only one you ever met?" he asked.

Hallorann laughed and shook his head. "No, child, no. But you shine the hardest."

"Are there lots, then?"

"No," Hallorann said, "but you do run across them. A lot of folks, they got a little bit of shine to them. They don't even know it. But they always seem to show up with flowers when their wives are feelin blue with the monthlies, they do good on school tests they don't even study for, they got a good idea how people are feelin as soon as they walk into a room. I come across fifty or sixty like that. But maybe only a dozen, countin my gram, that knew they was shinin."

She'll see we've been up to something, Bobby thought with dismay. It's all over my face.

'No,' Ted said to him. 'It is not. That is her power over you, that you believe it. It's a mother's power.'

Bobby stared at him, amazed. Did you read my mind? Did you read my mind just then?

Resistance: 10

Darks expended: 1-4

Sanity Loss: 1/1d4+1

Teleportation

Susannah's heart sank. The mountain—or perhaps you called something like that a butte—had to be eight or ten miles away. At the very limit of vision, in any case. Eddie and Roland and the two younger men in Ted's party couldn't carry her that far; she didn't believe. And how did she know they could trust these new fellows, anyway?

On the other hand, she thought, what choice do you have?

"You won't need to be carried," Ted told her, "but Stanley can use your help. We'll join hands, like folks at a séance. I'll want you all to visualize that rock formation when we go through. And hold the name in the forefront of your mind: Steek-Tete, the Little Needle."

Resistance: 16

Darks expended: special

Sanity Loss: 0/1

Across the room: 4

Shouting distance: 6

Line-of-sight: 9

Familiar location: 10

Unfamiliar location: 12

Different world: 15

Thought Control

Andy took off his corduroy jacket, folded it, and slipped it under her head. He had begun to feel a thin hope. If he could play this right, it might work. Lady Luck had sent him what Andy thought of (with no prejudice at all) as a pushover. He was the sort that seemed the easiest to push, right down the line: he was white (Orientals were the toughest, for some reason); he was quite young (old people were nearly impossible) and of medium intelligence (bright people were the easiest pushes, stupid ones harder, and with the mentally retarded it was impossible).

Andy pulled his wallet, which contained a single dollar bill. He thanked God that this was not one of those cabs with a bulletproof partition and no way to contact the driver except through a money slot. Open contact always made it easier to push. He had been unable to figure out if that was a psychological thing or not, and right now it was immaterial.

Resistance: varies*

Darks expended: 4

Sanity Loss: 1/1d4

*Resistance = 25 - (target's Wit)