

The White and the Red

“Do you know the game Castles, Susan?”

“Aye. My father showed me when I was small.”

*“Then you know how the red pieces stand at one end of
the board and the white at the other.”*

Overhead, a full moon came out from behind a scrim of cloud, painting the clearing and the stream in the tawdry hues of pawnshop jewelry. There was a face in the moon, but not one upon which lovers would wish to look. It seemed the scant face of a skull, like those in the Candleton Travellers' Hotel; a face which looked upon those few beings still alive and struggling below with the amusement of a lunatic. In Gilead, before the world had moved on, the full moon of Year's End had been called the Demon Moon, and it was considered ill luck to look directly at it.

Now, however, such did not matter. Now there were demons everywhere.

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-The Two Faces of Magic-



“Was it like... you know... the mouse?” Dean asked. He glanced briefly at the empty cell when Delacroix had lived with Mr. Jingles, then down at the restraint room, which had been the mouse’s seeming point of origin. His voice dropped, the way people’s voices do when they enter a big church where even the silence seems to whisper. “Was it a...” He gulped. “Shoot, you know what I mean—was it a miracle?”

The three of us looked at each other briefly, confirming what we already knew. “Brought her back from her damn grave is what he did,” Harry said. “Yeah, it was a miracle, all right.”

“Ermot, Ermot!” she cried. “See what’s become of ye!”

There was his head, the mouth frozen open, the double fangs still dripping poison—clear drops that shone like prisms in the day’s strengthening light. The glazing eyes glared. She picked Ermot up, kissed the scaly mouth, licked the last of the venom from the exposed needles, crooning and weeping all the while. Next she picked up the long and tattered body with her other hand, moaning at the holes which had been torn into Ermot’s satiny hide; the holes and the ripped red flesh beneath. Twice she put the head against the body and spoke incantations, but nothing happened. Of course not. Ermot had gone beyond the aid of her spells.

Powers of the White are granted instantly with no skill roll, and generally ask little in return (aside from the drain of Magic points). The magic of the Red is quite different. A Sorcery check is needed to invoke the magic (along with materials, words of power, or anything else required). A failed check (usually) produced no result. A successful check yields the spell, at least in accordance with the caster’s ability.

When making Sorcery checks, a roll of 90+ is an overkill. When an overkill is rolled, the effects of a spell go beyond the caster’s intentions. Locks break, the far-seen sense the caster, etc.

The indicated Sanity Loss may apply to the caster, the recipient, witnesses, or any combination of the above, at the controller’s discretion.

-The White-



That the boy was asking such questions at fourteen and fifteen was bad. That he was getting comparatively honest answers from such timid, watchful men as the Kingdom's historians and Roland's advisors was much worse. It meant that, in the minds of these people, Peter was already almost King—and that they were glad. They welcomed him and rejoiced in him, because he would be an intellectual, like them. And they also welcomed him because, unlike them, he was a brave boy who might well grow into a lionhearted King whose tale would be the stuff of legends. In him, they saw again the coming of the White, that ancient, resilient, yet humble force that has redeemed humankind again and again and again.

He had to be put out of the way. Had to be.

“Hear me well, Rhea, daughter of none, and understand me well. I have come here under the name of Will Dearborn, but Dearborn is not my name and it is the Affiliation I serve. More, 'tis all which lies behind the Affiliation—'tis the power of the White. You have crossed the way of our ka, and I warn you only this once: do not cross it again. Do you understand?”

Jake didn't think that was all. He didn't think so because that sensation of knowing was creeping over him and through him again, the one which had taken possession of him three weeks ago, as he approached the corner of Fifth and Forty-sixth. But on May 9th, it had been a feeling of impending doom. Today it was a feeling of radiance, a sense of goodness and anticipation. It was as if..

as if. . .

White. This was the word that came to him, and it clanged in his mind with clear and unquestionable lightness.

“It's the White!” he exclaimed aloud. “The coming of the White!”

He walked on down Fifty-fourth Street, and as he reached the corner of Second and Fifty-fourth, he once more passed under the umbrella of ka-tet.

The old woman turned to the others. She spoke in a cracked and ringing voice—yet it was the words she spoke and not the tone in which they were spoken that sent chills racing down Jake's back: “Behold ye, the return of the White! After evil ways and evil days, the White comes again! Be of good heart and hold up your heads, for ye have lived to see the wheel of ka begin to turn once more!”

The High Speech

“Speak the High Speech,” he said softly. His voice was flat, with a slight, drunken rasp. “Speak your act of contrition in the speech of civilization for which better men than you will ever be have died, maggot.”

“We mean you no harm,” the gunslinger called. He used the High Speech, and at the sound of it the man’s eyes lit up with incredulity. The woman turned back, swinging her blind face in their direction.

“A gunslinger!” the man cried. His voice cracked and wavered with excitement. “Fore God! I knew it were! I knew!”

The High Speech is the ancient language spoken in certain enlightened circles. It is also known as the Old Tongue, or the Tongue. The low speech is the parlance of everyday interaction, but the High Speech is the language of ritual and magic.

Am - The physical, mortal world.

An-tet - Implies an intimate emotional link. It can also imply sexual intimacy. To sit together *an-tet* is to sit in council.

Aven kal - A tidal wave that runs along the path of the Beam. Literally translated, it means “lifted on the wind” or “carried on the wave.” The use of *kal* rather than the more usual form *kas* implies a natural force of disastrous proportions.

Aven-car - A hunting term which refers to carrying the kill and preparing to make it into something else.

Can Calah - Angels.

Can-ah, can-tah, annah, Oriza - “All breath comes from the woman.” A prayer to Lady Oriza.

Canda - The distance that assures a pair of outnumbered gunslingers will not be killed by a single shot.

Can-tah - Little gods.

Can-toi - Low animals (wolves, spiders, snakes, etc.)

Char - Death.

Chary-ka - One whose *ka* is aligned with death.

Charyou Tree - The ritual bonfire made on the festival of Reap. In the days of Arthur Eld, people were burned on this fire.

Chassit - Nineteen.

Chisset - Eighteen.

Childe - Holy, chosen by *ka*. An ancient, formal term for a knight on a quest.

Chussit - Seventeen.

Commala - The rice plant. Also an alternate name for the courting rite of New Earth (the Sowing Night Cotillion).

Dan-dinh - “May I open my heart to your command?” To seek a leader’s advice and obey without question.

Dan-tete - Little king or little god.

Dash-dinh - A religious leader.

Delah - “Many.” To imply *delah* is to imply an uncountable number.

Devar - Prison.

Devar-toi - “Little prison” or “torture chamber.”

Dinh - Leader or father (as in “father of his people”).

Gunna - All one’s worldly possessions.

Hile - A formal greeting. Also a rallying cry, as in “Hile, gunslingers! To me!”

Howken - The act (and art) of hypnotizing someone.

Irina - The healing madness that comes after terrible loss.

Ka - The universal force that drives all things to their destiny, for good or ill.

Ka-mai - Ka’s fool, or destiny’s fool.

Ka-mates - Those whose fates (or destinies) are entwined with one’s own.

Ka-me - Wisely. It is the opposite of *ka-mai*.

Kas-ka - Prophets.

Ka-shume - The breaking of a ka-tet.

Ka-tel - Those who enter fully into the circle of ka. A graduating class of gunslingers is a *ka-tel*.

Ka-tet - “One made from many.” The bond between *ka-mates*.

Kes - Vitality.

Khef - “The sharing of water.” Birth, life force, and all that is essential to existence.

Khef-kra - A place of great spiritual power.

Ma’sun - A war chest.

Mia - Mother.

Mim - Mother Earth.

Pol-kam - A ritual courtship dance, faster and lighter than a waltz.

Prim - The original magical Discordia, from which the world arose.

Sai - A term of respect, similar to “sir” or “madam.”

Seppe-sai - A poisoner.

Sill - To desire or to yearn.

Steek - A needle.

Tet - A group of people with the same interests and goals.

Te-ka - Destiny’s friend.

Tete - “Little” or “Tiny.”

Throcken - A billy-bumber.

Todana - The invisible mark of death.

Todash - Traveling while dreaming.

Todash tahken - The holes in reality.

Twim - Two. This can also refer to a twin.

Aven-khef

Magic cost: 5

Sanity Loss: 1/1d3*

“Die!” Tyler hears himself screaming. “Die, you old fuck, GO ON AND DIE!”

Burny staggers back another step. His mouth drops open, and part of an upper plate tumbles out and onto the dirt. He is staring down at two loops of his own innards, stretching like gristle from the gaping red-black front of his shirt to the awful child’s right hand. And he sees an even more terrible thing: a kind of white glow has surrounded the boy. It is feeding him more strength to pull Burny’s living guts right out of his body and how it hurt, how it hurt, how it dud dud dud hurr—

*Sanity loss applies only to witnesses

Cloak of Coldness

I do not aim with my hand; she who aims with her hand has forgotten the face of her father.

I can't do it!

I do not shoot with my hand; she who shoots with her hand has forgotten the face of her father.

I'll miss! I know I'll miss!

I do not kill with my gun; she who kills with her gun—

“Shoot it!” Roland roared. “Susannah, shoot it!”

With the trigger as yet unpulled, she saw the bullet go home, guided from muzzle to target by nothing more or less than her heart's fierce desire that it should fly true. All fear fell away. What was left was a feeling of deep coldness and she had time to think: This is what he feels. My God—how does he stand it? “I kill with my heart, motherfucker,” she said, and the gunslinger's revolver roared in her hand.

He didn't know if he was the stuff of which gunslingers were made—the idea seemed fabulously unlikely to him, even though he knew he had managed to hold up his end pretty well during the shootout at Balazar's nightclub—but he did know that part of him liked the coldness that fell over him when he spoke the words of the old, old catechism the gunslinger had taught them; the coldness and the way things seemed to stand forth with their own breathless clarity. There was another part of him which understood that this was just another deadly drug, not much different from the heroin which had killed Henry and almost killed him, but that did not alter the thin, tight pleasure of the moment. It drummed in him like taut cables vibrating in a high wind.

“ ‘I do not aim with my hand; he who aims with his hand has forgotten the face of his father.

“ ‘I aim with my eye.

“ ‘I do not kill with my gun; he who kills with his gun has forgotten the face of his father.’ ” Then, without knowing he meant to do it, he stepped out of the trees and spoke to the trundling robots on the far side of the clearing:

“ ‘I kill with my heart.’ ”

Magic cost: 4

Sanity Loss: 0/1d2

The sensors exploded like clay pigeons, one after the other. Pity was gone from Eddie's heart; there was only that coldness, and the knowledge that he would not stop, could not stop, until the job was done.

He could dimly hear Richie bellowing something, Eddie howling at Beverly to shoot It, shoot It. But Beverly did not. This was her only other chance. It didn't matter; she intended that it be the only one she would need. A clear coldness she never saw again in her life fell over her sight. In it everything stood out and forward; never again would she see the three dimensions of reality so clearly denned. She possessed every color, every angle, every distance. Fear departed. She felt the hunter's simple lust of certainty and oncoming consummation. Her pulse slowed. The hysterical trembling grip in which she had been holding the Bullseye loosened, then firmed and became natural. She drew in a deep breath. It seemed to her that her lungs would never fill completely. Dimly, faintly, she heard popping sounds. Didn't matter, whatever they were. She tracked left, waiting for the Werewolf's improbable head to fall with cool perfection into the wishbone beyond the extended V of the drawn-back sling.

Magic cost: 1
Sanity Loss: 0/1

“I’m telling you for the last time to get out,” he said in a voice he did not recognize as his own. It was too strong, too sure, too full of power. He understood he probably could not put an end to the thing which crouched before him with one cringing hand raised to shield its face from the shifting spectrum of light, but he could make it be one. Tonight that power was his... if he dared to use it. If he dared to stand and be true. “And I’m telling you for the last time that you’re going without this.”

“They’ll die without me!” the Gaunt-thing moaned. Now its hands hung between its legs; long claws clicked and clattered in the scattered debris which lay in the street. “Every single one of them will die without me, like plants without water in the desert. Is that what you want? Is it?”

Polly was with Alan then, pressed against his side. “Yes,” she said coldly. “Better that they die here and now, if that’s what has to happen, than that they go with you and live. They—we—did some lousy things, but that price is much too high.”

The Gaunt-thing hissed and shook its claws at them. Alan picked up the bag and backed slowly into the street with Polly by his side. He raised the fountain of light-flowers so that they cast an amazing, revolving glow upon Mr. Gaunt and his Tucker Talisman. He pulled air into his chest—more air than his body had ever contained before, it seemed. And when he spoke, the words roared from him in a vast voice which was not his own. “GO HENCE, DEMON! YOU ARE CAST OUT FROM THIS PLACE!”

The Gaunt-thing screamed as if burned by scalding water.

Khef-kas

[Better send her across, Shorts I'm warning you."] ["No."] [I'll fuck you over, Shorts. I'll fuck you over big-time. And I'll fuck your friends over. Do you get me? Do you—] *Ralph suddenly raised one hand to shoulder height with the palm turned inward toward the side of his head, as if he meant to administer a karate chop. He brought it down and watched, amazed, as a tight blue wedge of light flew off the tips of his fingers and sliced across the street like a thrown spear.*

Magic cost: 10
Sanity Loss: 0/1
Damage: Khef x5

Doc #3 ducked just in time, clapping one hand to McGovern's Panama to keep it from flying off. The blue wedge skimmed two or three inches over that small, clutching hand and struck the front window of the Burry-Burry. There it spread like some supernatural liquid, and for a moment the dusty glass became the brilliant, perfect blue of today's sky. It faded after only a moment and Ralph could see the women inside the laundromat again, folding their clothes and loading their washers exactly as if nothing had happened.

Ralph lifted his hand to the side of his head again, but something inside had changed. He could bring it down in that chopping gesture again, but he was almost positive that this time no bright blue flying wedge would result.

Somewhere—close by or a thousand miles away—Polly shrieked, "Look out, Alan!" but there was no time to look out; the demon, smelling like a mixture of sulphur and fried shoeleather, was upon him. There was only time to act or time to die.

Alan passed his right hand down the inside of his left wrist, groping for the tiny elastic loop protruding from his watchband. Part of him was announcing that this would never work, even another miracle of transmutation couldn't save him this time, because the Folding Flower Trick was used up, it was...

His thumb slipped into the loop.

The tiny paper packet snapped out. Alan thrust his hand forward, sliding the loop free for the last time as he did so.

"ABRACADABRA, YOU LYING FUCK!" he cried, and what suddenly bloomed in his hand was not a bouquet of flowers but a blazing bouquet of light that lit Upper Main Street with a fabulous, shifting radiance. Yet he realized the colors rising from his fist in an incredible fountain were one color; as all the colors translated by a glass prism or a rainbow in the air are one color. He felt a jolt of power run up his arm, and for a moment he was filled with a great and incoherent ecstasy: The white! The coming of the white!

Gaunt howled with pain and rage and fear... but did not back away. Perhaps it was as Alan had suggested: it had been so long since he had lost the game that he had forgotten how.

The Lesser Pria-kes

Magic cost: 10

Sanity Loss: 0/1d3

Damage:

Caster: 1d2

A jolt slammed through me then, a big painless whack of something. It made me jerk on the cot and bow my back, made me think of Old Toot shouting that he was frying, he was frying, he was a done tom turkey. There was no heat, no feeling of electricity, but for a moment the color seemed to jump out of everything, as if the world had been somehow squeezed and made to sweat. I could see every pore on John Coffey's face, I could see every bloodshot snap in his haunted eyes, I could see a tiny healing scrape on his chin. I was aware that my fingers were hooked down into claws on thin air, and that my feet were drumming on the floor of Coffey's cell.

Then it was over. So was my urinary infection. Both the heat and the miserable throbbing pain were gone from my crotch, and the fever was likewise gone from my head. I could still feel the sweat it had drawn out of my skin, and I could smell it, but it was gone, all right.

"What's going on?" Delacroix called shrilly. His voice still came from far away, but when John Coffey bent forward, breaking eye-contact with me, the little Cajun's voice suddenly came clear. It was as if someone had pulled wads of cotton or a pair of shooters' plugs out of my ears. "What's he doing to you?"

I didn't answer. Coffey was bent forward over his own lap with his face working and his throat bulging. His eyes were bulging, too. He looked like a man with a chicken bone caught in his throat.

"John!" I said. I clapped him on the back; it was all I could think of to do. "John, what's wrong?"

He hitched under my hand, then made an unpleasant gagging, retching sound. His mouth opened the way horses sometimes open their mouths to allow the bit—reluctantly, with the lips peeling back from the teeth in a kind of desperate sneer. Then his teeth parted, too, and he exhaled a cloud of tiny black insects that looked like gnats or noseeums. They swirled furiously between his knees, turned white, and disappeared.

The Greater Pria-kes

Magic cost: 0
Sanity Loss: 0/1d2

“Little girl.”

“Don’t call me that!”

Her hand shot out and closed around Frannie’s wrist. Fran went rigid. Her eyes closed. Her head snapped back. “Don’t D-D-Don’t... OH MY GOD—STU—”

“Here! Here!” Stu roared. “What are you doing to her?”

Mother Abigail didn’t answer. The moment spun out, seemed to stretch into a pocket of eternity, and then the old woman let go. Slowly, dazedly, Fran began to massage the wrist Mother Abigail had taken, although there was no red ring or dent in the flesh to show that pressure had been applied. Frannie’s eyes suddenly widened.

“Hon?” Stu asked anxiously.

“Gone,” Fran muttered.

“What . . . what’s she talking about?” Stu looked around at the others in shaken appeal. Glen only shook his head. His face was white and strained but not disbelieving.

“The pain... the whiplash. The pain in my back. It’s gone.” She looked at Stu, dazed. “It’s all gone. Look.”

She bent and touched her toes lightly: once, then twice. Then she bent a third time and placed her palms flat on the floor without unlocking her knees. She stood up again and met Mother Abigail’s eyes.

“Is this a bribe from your God? Because if it is, He can take His cure back. I’d rather have the pain if Stu comes with it.”

“God don’t lay on no bribes, child,” Mother Abigail whispered. “He just makes a sign and lets people take it as they will.”

Only the lesser form of the *pria-kes* produces the *tam*. If the *tam* are not expelled, the bearer sickens and dies within hours.

Transmutation

"I think I'll keep it," Alan said evenly. A small smile, as thin and sharp as a rind of November ice, touched his mouth. "Let's just call it evidence, okay?"

Magic cost: 10
Sanity Loss: none

"I'm afraid you can't do that, Sheriff." Gaunt stepped off the sidewalk and into the street. Small red pits of light glowed in his eyes. "You can die, but you can't keep my property. Not if I mean to take it. And I do." He began to walk toward Alan, the red pinpricks in his eyes deepening. He left a boot-track in an oatmeal-colored lump of Ace's brains as he came.

Alan felt his belly try to fold in on itself, but he didn't move. Instead, prompted by some instinct he made no effort to understand, he put his hands together in front of the station wagon's left headlight. He crossed them, made a bird-shape, and began to bend his wrists rapidly back and forth.

The sparrows are flying again, Mr. Gaunt, he thought.

A large projected shadow-bird—more hawk than sparrow and unsettlingly realistic for an insubstantial shade—suddenly flapped across the false front of Needful Things. Gaunt saw it from the corner of his eye, whirled toward it, gasped, and retreated again.

"Get out of town, my friend," Alan said. He rearranged his hands and now a large shadow-dog—perhaps a Saint Bernard—slouched across the front of You Sew and Sew in the spotlight thrown by the station wagon's headlights. And somewhere near—perhaps coincidentally, perhaps not—a dog began to bark. A large one, by the sound.

Gaunt turned in that direction. He was looking slightly harried now, and definitely off-balance.

"You're lucky I'm cutting you loose," Alan went on. "But what would I charge you with, come to that? The theft of souls may be covered in the legal code Brigham and Rose deal with, but I don't think I'd find it in mine. Still, I'd advise you to go while you still can."

"Give me my bag!"

Alan stared at him, trying to look unbelieving and contemptuous while his heart hammered away wildly in his chest. "Don't you understand yet? Don't you get it? You lose, Have you forgotten how to deal with that?"

Gaunt stood looking at Alan for a long second, and then he nodded. "I knew I was wise to avoid you," he said. He almost seemed to be speaking to himself. "I knew it very well. All right. You win."

He began to turn away; Alan relaxed slightly. "I'll go—" He turned back, quick as a snake himself, so quick he made Alan look slow. His face had changed again; its human aspect was entirely gone. It was the face of a demon now, with long, deeply scored cheeks and drooping eyes that blazed with orange fire. "But NOT WITHOUT MY PROPERTY!" he screamed, and leaped for the bag.

Transcend

This was that experience to the tenth power. And the hell of it was simply this: he could not describe exactly what had happened, and how the world had changed, to make it so wonderful. Things and people, particularly the people, had auras, yes, but that was only where this amazing phenomenon began. Things had never been so brilliant, so utterly and completely there. The cars, the telephone poles, the shopping carts in the Kart Korral in front of the supermarket, the frame apartment buildings across the street—all these things seemed to pop out at him like 3-D images in an old film. All at once this dingy little strip-mall on Witcham Street had become wonderland, and although Ralph was looking right at it, he was not sure what he was looking at, only that it was rich and gorgeous and fabulously strange. The only things he could isolate were the auras surrounding the people going in and out of stores, stowing packages in their trunks, or getting in their cars and driving away. Some of these auras were brighter than others, but even the dimmest were a hundred times brighter than his first glimpses of the phenomenon.

Magic Cost: 10

Sanity Loss: 2/2d4+1

He saw no little bald doctors, but shortly after five-thirty, he observed a startling shaft of purple light erupt from a manhole cover in the middle of Harris Avenue; it rose into the sky like a special effect in a Cecil B. DeMille Bible epic for perhaps three minutes, then simply winked out. He also saw a huge bird that looked like a prehistoric hawk go floating between the chimneys of the old dairy building around the corner on Howard Street, and alternating red and blue thermals twisting over Strawford Park in long, lazy ribbons.

Lois dug her elbow into Ralph's side, started to point toward an area beyond the Central Information booth, realized there were people all around them, and settled for lifting her chin in that direction instead. Earlier, Ralph had seen a shape in the sky which had looked like a prehistoric bird. Now he saw something which looked like a long translucent snake. It was easing its way across the ceiling above a sign which read PLEASE WAIT HERE FOR BLOOD-TESTING.

"Is it alive?" Lois whispered with some alarm.

Ralph looked more closely and realized the thing had no head... no discernible tail, either. It was all body. He supposed it was alive—he had an idea all the auras were alive in some fashion—but he didn't think it was really a snake, and he doubted that it was dangerous, at least to the likes of them.

"Don't sweat the small stuff, sweetheart, he whispered back to her as they joined the short line at Central Information, and as he said it, the snake-thing seemed to melt into the ceiling and disappear. Ralph didn't know how important such things as the bird and the cyclone were in the secret world's scheme of things, but he was positive that people were still the main show. The lobby of Derry Home Hospital was like a gorgeous Fourth of July fireworks display, a display in which the parts of the Roman candles and Chinese Fountains were being played by human beings.

Lois hooked a finger into his collar to make him bend his head toward her. "You'll have to do the talking, Ralph," she said in a strengthless, amazed little voice. "I'm having all I can do not to wee in my pants."

"That's I.C.U!" she snapped. "Can't go up to I.C.U. without a special pass." Orange hooks began to poke their way out of the glow around her head, and her aura began to look like barbed wire strung across some ghostly no-man's-land.

"I know," Ralph said, more humbly than ever; "but my friend, Lafayette Chapin, he said—"

"Gosh!" the woman in the booth interrupted. "It's wonderful, the way everyone's got a friend. Really wonderful." She rolled a satiric eye toward the ceiling.

"Faye said Jimmy could have visitors, though. You see, he has cancer and he's not expected to live much longer—"

"Well, I'll check the files," the woman in the booth said with the grudging air of one who knows she is being sent upon a fool's errand, "but the computer is very slow tonight, so it's going to take awhile. Give me your name, then you and your wife go sit over there. I'll page you as soon as—" Ralph decided that he had eaten enough humble pie in front of this bureaucratic guard dog. It wasn't as if he wanted an exit-visa from Albania, after all; just a goddam I.C.U. pass would do.

There was a slot in the base of the glass booth. Ralph reached through it and grasped the woman's wrist before she could pull it away. There was a sensation, painless but very clear, of those orange hooks passing directly through his flesh without finding anything to catch on. Ralph squeezed gently and felt a small burst of force—something that would have been no bigger than a pellet if it had been seen—pass from him to the woman. Suddenly the officious orange aura around her left arm and side turned the faded turquoise of Ralph's aura. She gasped and jerked forward on her chair, as if someone had just dumped a paper cup filled with ice-cubes down the back of her uniform.

"Never mind the computer. Just give me a couple of passes, please. Right away."

"Yes, sir," she said at once, and Ralph let go of her wrist so she could reach beneath her desk. The turquoise glow around her arm was turning orange again, the change in color creeping down from her shoulder toward her wrist.

But I could have turned her all blue, Ralph thought. Take her offer. Run her around the room like a wind-up toy.

Yes, he could probably do almost anything he wanted with this orange-haloed grump; his batteries were fully charged. The only problem was that the juice in those batteries—and in Lois's, as well—was stolen goods.

When the information-lady's hand emerged from beneath the desk, it was holding two laminated pink badges marked INTENSIVE CARE/VISITOR.

"Here you are, sir," she said in a courteous voice utterly unlike the tone in which she had first addressed him. "Enjoy your visit and thank you for waiting."

Lois glanced back at the woman in the information booth. She was dealing with her next customer, but slowly, as if she'd just been granted some moderately amazing revelation and had to think it over.

The blue glow was now visible only at the very tips of her fingers, and as Lois watched, that disappeared as well. Lois looked up at Ralph again and smiled.

["Yes ... she is all right. So stop beating up on yourself] ["Was that what I was doing?" ["I think so, yes ... we're talking that way again, Ralph."] ["I know,"] ["Ralph?"] ["Yes?"] ["This is all pretty wonderful, isn't it?"] ["Yes."]

["Stop staring at that baby, Ralph. You're making its mother nervous."]

Ralph glanced at the woman in whose arms the baby slept and saw that Lois was right... but it was hard not to look. The baby, no more than three months old, lay within a capsule of violently shifting yellow-gray aura. This powerful but disquieting thunder light circled the tiny body with the idiot speed of the atmosphere surrounding a gas giant—Jupiter, say, or Saturn.

-The Red-

*Old enough to bleed
Old enough to slaughter
The old farmer said
And grinned at the white
Haystack sky
With sweaty teeth*



*(radiation radiation
your grandchildren will be monsters)
I remember a skeleton
In Death Valley
A cow in the sunbleached throes of antiseptic death*

*and someone said:
Someday there will be skeletons
on the median strip of the Hollywood Freeway
staring up at exhaust-sooty pigeons
amidst the flapping ruins of Botany 500*

“You can mock, but it’s true,” he said quietly. “It’s not King Herod, though—it’s the Crimson King. Herod was merely one of his incarnations. The Crimson King jumps from body to body and generation to generation like a kid using stepping-stones to cross a brook, Ralph, always looking for the Messiah. He’s always missed him, but this time it could be different. Because Derry’s different.

“All lines of force have begun to converge here. I know how difficult that is to believe, but it’s true.”

Tom didn’t speak for a long time. Stu had decided he wasn’t going to answer and he was preparing to go back to the “script” when Tom said: “He looks like anybody you see on the street. But when he grins, birds fall dead off telephone lines. When he looks at you a certain way, your prostate goes bad and your urine burns. The grass yellows up and dies where he spits. He’s always outside. He came out of time. He doesn’t know himself. He has the name of a thousand demons. Jesus knocked him into a herd of pigs once. His name is Legion. He’s afraid of us. We’re inside. He knows magic. He can call the wolves and live in the crows. He’s the king of nowhere. But he’s afraid of us. He’s afraid of.. inside.” Tom fell silent.

The three of them stared at each other, pallid as gravestones. Ralph had seized his hat from his head and was kneading it convulsively in his hands. Nick had put one hand over his eyes. Stu’s throat had turned to dry glass.

His name is Legion. He is the king of nowhere.

“Can you say anything else about him?” Stu asked in a low voice.

“Only that I’m afraid of him, too. But I’ll do what you want. But Tom . . . is so afraid.” That dreadful sigh again.

The Speech of the Unformed

They came up the long aisle of the black infirmary, laughing together like children out on a prank, carrying long tapers in silver holders, the bells lining the forehead-bands of their wimples chiming little silver runs of sound. They gathered about the bed of the bearded man. From within their circle, candleglow rose in a shimmery column that died before it got halfway to the silken ceiling. Sister Mary spoke briefly. Roland recognized her voice, but not the words—it was neither low speech nor the High, but some other language entirely. One phrase stood out—can de lach, mi him en tow—and he had no idea what it might mean.

He realized that now he could hear only the tinkle of bells—the doctor-bugs had stilled.

‘Ras me! On! On!’ Sister Mary cried in a harsh, powerful voice. The candles went out. The light which had shone through the wings of their wimples as they gathered around the bearded man’s bed vanished, and all was darkness once more.

A - Variable term which means both “the” and “of.”

Ah lah? - “Where (is something)?”

Ah lah, him en tow - “Sit down.” Imposing of one’s will on another.

Azka - Also called an *azakah*. It is a small ball with a spider inside. It eats its victim’s pain, swelling in size and causing the wearer’s pain to diminish as long as it is worn.

An Tak - The *khef-kra* of Tak. It is also another name for The Big Combination.

Abbalah - King or Ruler, pejorative or evil connotations.

Cam-ma - Destroy.

Can Tam - The name for the Doctor Bugs.

Can de lach - The heart of the unformed.

Can - Thinking creatures.

Can fin - An exclamation. Also a derogatory form of address.

Can tah - Little stone carvings or little gods.

Can tah, can tak! - “Little gods, big gods!” There are other gods than yours.

Can-Tah Abbalah - The Court of the Crimson King.

Can tak - Big gods.

Can toi - “Children of the desert”. This term is also applied to the Low Men, who exist somewhere between the taheen and the humes.

Cay de mun - Open your mouth.

Chassit - The land of the dead

Dama - Father.

Damane - Son.

Dinnit - Serve.

Din-Tah - The great furnace

Doon - End-World.

En tow - Strong. As in “Our god is strong.”

Gorg - Gorg is Malshun’s crow. Gorg also means death.

Hais - Silence.

Him en tow - God is (Gods are) strong.

Ini - Well of the worlds, Tak's place.

Kadath - A thinking plant.

Me - "It". Used in the phrase "*Ras me! ON! ON!*"

Me en Tak - Possessed of Tak.

Mi him - The watchman's circle.

Mi him, can de lach, mi him, min en tow. Tak! - "Come to me. Come to Tak, come to the old one, come to the heart of the unformed."

Mi him can ini - The empty well of the eye.

Mi him, en tow! - Our god is strong!

Mi tow, can de lach - Fear the unformed.

Min - Come.

Min En Tow - "Come to me" or "Come to the old one."

Montah - Mother.

On - Now.

Os dam - Man.

Os pa - Woman.

Pirin moh - A kind of building. This was the underground prison where Tak was held in the desert.

Pnung - "Be still."

Ram - "Red", or "Crimson" as in Crimson King (*Ram Abbalah*).

Ras - The verb "do" as in "*Ras me! ON! ON!*," which means "Do it! Now! Now!"

Samman - Find.

Si em, tow en can de lach - "We speak the language of the unformed."

So cah set! - an exclamation.

Tak - Tak resides in the ini. Tak is also a word in the Dark Speech that means "big".

Tak ah lah - "Go (somewhere)", as in "*Tak Ah Lah in de Ini?*" (I go to the Ini?)

Tak a lah. Timoh. Can de lach. On! On! - Making an animal attack someone.

Tak ah wan! Tak ah lah! Mi him, en tow! - Talking to the spiders.

T'eelee - "Come." This is a formal term of End-World.

Ter-Tah - The mortal world. This is a derisive term of End-World.

Timoh - Animals.

Timoh sen cah - Certain low animals; wolves, coyotes, snakes, spiders, rats, bats.

Tulpa - A creature of the invisible world capable of possessing the living

Uhlahg - A word of power to command a zombie

Wan - Follow, guard.

-The Art-

Even then Gramma had been getting senile, having her “bad spells.” She had always been a trial to her family, Gramma had. She was a volcanic woman who had taught school for fifteen years, between having babies and getting in fights with the Congregational Church she and Granpa and their nine children went to. Mom said that Granpa and Gramma quit the Congregational Church in Scarborough at the same time Gramma decided to quit teaching, but once, about a year ago, when Aunt Flo was up for a visit from her home in Salt Lake City, George and Buddy, listening at the register as Mom and her sister sat up late, talking, heard quite a different story. Granpa and Gramma had been kicked out of the church and Gramma had been fired off her job because she did something wrong. It was something about books. Why or how someone could get fired from their job and kicked out of the church just because of books, George didn’t understand, and when he and Buddy crawled back into their twin beds under the eave, George asked.

There’s all kinds of books, Senõr El-Stupido, Buddy whispered.

Yeah, but what kind?

How should I know? Go to sleep!

Silence. George thought it through.

Buddy?

What! An irritated hiss.

Why did Mom tell us Gramma quit the church and her job?

Because it’s a skeleton in the closet, that’s why! Now go to sleep!

So his Mom told him that after Granpa and Gramma had gotten married, they had had a baby that was born dead, and a year later they had another baby, and that was born dead too, and the doctor told Gramma she would never be able to carry a child to term and all she could do was keep on having babies that were dead or babies that died as soon as they sucked air. That would go on, he said, until one of them died inside her too long before her body could shove it out and it would rot in there and kill her, too.

The doctor told her that.

Not long after, the books began.

Books about how to have babies?

But Mom didn’t—or wouldn’t—say what kind of books they were, or where Gramma got them, or how she knew to get them. Gramma got pregnant again, and this time the baby wasn’t born dead and the baby didn’t die after a breath or two; this time the baby was fine, and that was George’s Uncle Larson. And after that, Gramma kept getting pregnant and having babies. Once, Mom said, Granpa had tried to make her get rid of the books to see if they could do it without them (or even if they couldn’t, maybe Granpa figured they had enough yowwens by then so it wouldn’t matter) and Gramma wouldn’t. George asked his mother why and she said: “I think that by then having the books was as important to her as having the babies.”

“I don’t get it,” George said.

“Well,” George’s mother said, “I’m not sure I do, either... I was very small, remember. All I know for sure is that those books got a hold over her. She said there would be no more talk about it and there wasn’t, either. Because Gramma wore the pants in our family.”

What was the picture? It was Gramma, of course, Gramma and her books, Gramma who had been driven out of town, Gramma who hadn’t been able to have babies and then had been able to, Gramma who had been driven out of the church as well as out of town.

"Get out of my way!" Carlos squalls. "Abbalah! Abbalah can tak! Demeter can tah! Gah! Gam!"
"Save your spic gabble for someone who gives a rip," the General says. He makes no attempt to get off his knees, simply sways from side to side, looking as mystic (and as deadly) as any snake ever piped out of a fakir's basket. "You want to get past me, son? Then come on. Try for it."

Carlos looks over the old man's shoulder and sees there are still green boughs of ivy looped around the old man's ankles.

"Kadath!" Carlos calls. "Cam-ma! Can tak!" These words mean nothing in themselves. They are invocatory in nature, Carlos Detweiller's way of shaping a telepathic command. He has told Zenith to yank the old man again, to pull him right down the hall into the main growth and crush him.

Instead, the knots around the General's ankles untie themselves and slither away.

"No!" Carlos bawls. He cannot believe that the Dark Powers have deserted him. "No, come back! Kadath! Kadath can tak!"

Curled atop the box was a slim green snake. When she touched its back, its head came up. Its mouth yawned in a silent hiss, displaying four pairs of fangs—two on top, two on the bottom. She took the snake up, crooning to it. As she brought its flat face close to her own, its mouth yawned wider and its hissing became audible. She opened her own mouth; from between her wrinkled gray lips she poked the yellowish, bad-smelling mat of her tongue. Two drops of poison—enough to kill an entire dinner party, if mixed in the punch—fell on it. She swallowed, feeling her mouth and throat and chest bum, as if with strong liquor. For a moment the room swam out of focus, and she could hear voices murmuring in the stenchy air of the hut—the voices of those she called "the unseen friends." Her eyes ran sticky water down the trenches time had drawn in her cheeks. Then she blew out a breath and the room steadied. The voices faded.

She kissed Ermot between his lidless eyes (time o' the Kissing Moon, all right, she thought) and then set him aside. The snake slipped beneath her bed, curled itself in a circle, and watched as she passed her palms over the top of the ironwood box. She could feel the muscles in her upper arms quivering, and that heat in her loins was more pronounced. Years it had been since she had felt the call of her sex, but she felt it now, so she did, and it was not the doing of the Kissing Moon, or not much.

The horror was complete. As her shadow fell over him, the paralysis broke and he screamed into the phone, screamed it over and over again: "Gramma! Gramma! Gramma!"

Gramma's cold hands touched his throat. Her muddy, ancient eyes locked on his, draining his will. Faintly, dimly, as if across many years as well as many miles, he heard Aunt Flo say: "Tell her to lie down, George, tell her to lie down and be still. Tell her she must do it in your name and the name of her father. The name of her taken father is Hastur. His name is power in her ear; George—tell her Lie down in the Name of Hastur—tell her—"

The old, wrinkled hand tore the telephone from George's nerveless grip. There was a taut pop as the cord pulled out of the phone. George collapsed in the corner and Gramma bent down, a huge heap of flesh above him, blotting out the light.

George screamed: "Lie down! Be still! Hastur's name! Hastur! Lie down! Be still!"

Her hands closed around his neck—

"You gotta do it! Aunt Flo said you did! In my name! In your Father's name! Lie down! Be sti—" —and squeezed.

Though the black arts come naturally to some, the touch of Discordia eventually warps even the strongest personality. Every time a spell is successfully learned, the caster blacks out a number of Sanity Points equal to the Sanity cost of the spell, starting from 99 and working backward. Blacked out Sanity points are a ceiling into which current Sanity Points cannot be increased.

Hearth-light

Rhea took two fat logs from Susan's pile and tossed them indifferently onto the coals. Embers spiraled up the dark and faintly roaring shaft of the chimney. There, ye've scattered what's left of yer fire, ye silly old thing, and will likely have to rekindle the whole mess, Susan thought. Then Rhea reached into the fireplace with one splayed hand, spoke a guttural word, and the logs blazed up as if soaked in oil.

Magic cost: 3

Sanity Loss: 0/1

Rhea shrieked again, this time with rage, and seized the cat before it could flee. She hurled it across the room, into the fireplace. That was as dead a hole as only a summer fireplace can be, but when Rhea cast a bony, misshapen hand at it, a yellow gust of flame rose from the single half-charred log lying in there. Musty screamed and fled from the hearth with his eyes wide and his split tail smoking like an indifferently butted cigar.

"Run, aye!" Rhea spat after him. "Begone, ye vile cusk!"

The light was very dim now, the wall-panels across the way a pinkish-orange that suggested sunset. In this light, Coquina looked quite young and pretty... but it was a glamour, Roland was sure; a sorcerous kind of make-up.

Magic cost: 5/hour

Sanity Loss:

Caster: 0/1

Witness: 1/1d4+1

'Is he, now, and him so young and you so old?' Another of the sisters materialized out of the darkness: Sister Tamra, who had called herself one-and-twenty. In the moment before she reached Roland's bed, her face was that of a hag who will never see eighty again... or ninety. Then it shimmered and was once more the plump, healthy countenance of a thirty-year-old matron. Except for the eyes. They remained yellowish in the corneas, gummy in the corners, and watchful.

The box was locked and Jonas had given her no key, but that was nothing to her, who had lived long and studied much and trafficked with creatures that most men, for all their bold talk and strutting ways, would run from as if on fire had they caught even the smallest glimpse of them. She stretched one hand toward the lock, on which was inlaid the shape of an eye and a motto in the High Speech (I see who opens me), and then withdrew it.

Magic cost: 6
Sanity Loss: 0/1

“Oh, my beauty,” she whispered, and touched the lock with her gnarled fingers. A faint glimmer of red light showed between her bunched knuckles, and there was a click. Breathing hard, like a woman who has run a race, she put the box down and opened it.

She passed her fingers over the lock on the front of the box, but it wouldn't fasten. She supposed she had been overeager to have it open, and had broken something inside it when she used the touch. The eye and the motto seemed to mock her: I see who opens me. It could be put right, and in a jiffy, but right now even a jiffy was more than she had.

Familiar

The hag, meanwhile, was watching Susan shrewdly, her bunch-knuckled hands planted on her hips while her cat twined around her ankles. Her eyes were rheumy, but Susan saw enough of them to realize they were the same gray-green shade as the cat's eyes, and to wonder what sort of fell magic that might be. She felt an urge—a strong one—to drop her eyes, and would not. It was all right to feel fear, but sometimes a very bad idea to show it.

Magic cost: 15
Sanity Loss: 1/1d6

Rhea chuckled; the chuckle turned into a hollow gust of coughing. In the corner, Musty looked at the old woman hauntedly. Although far from the emaciated skeleton that his mistress had become, Musty didn't look good at all.

“Come here, boy,” Gramma called in a dead buzzing voice. “Come in here—Gramma wants to hug you.”

George tried to scream and no sound came out. No sound at all. But there were sounds in the other room. Sounds that he heard when Mom was in there, giving Gramma her bed-bath, lifting her bulk, dropping it, turning it, dropping it again. Only those sounds now seemed to have a slightly different and yet utterly specific meaning—it sounded as though Gramma was trying to... to get out of bed.

“Boy! Come in here, boy! Right NOW! Step to it!” With horror he saw that his feet were answering that command. He told them to stop and they just went on, left foot, right foot, hay foot, straw foot, over the linoleum; his brain was a terrified prisoner inside his body—a hostage in a tower. She IS a witch, she’s a witch and she’s having one of her “bad spells,” oh yeah, it’s a “spell” all right, and it’s bad, it’s REALLY bad, oh God oh Jesus help me help me help me—George walked across the kitchen and through the entryway and into Gramma’s room and yes, she hadn’t just tried to get out of bed, she was out, she was sitting in the white vinyl chair where she hadn’t sat for four years, since she got too heavy to walk and too senile to know where she was, anyway. But Gramma didn’t look senile now. Her face was sagging and doughy, but the senility was gone—if it had ever really been there at all, and not just a mask she wore to lull small boys and tired husbandless women. Gramma held her huge arms out to him.

“I want to hug you, Georgie,” that flat and buzzing dead voice said. “Don’t be a scared old crybaby. Let your Gramma hug you.”

George cringed back, trying to resist that almost insurmountable pull. Outside, the wind shrieked and roared. George’s face was long and twisted with the extremity of his fright; the face of a woodcut caught and shut up in an ancient book. George began to walk toward her. He couldn’t help himself. Step by dragging step toward those outstretched arms. He would show Buddy that he wasn’t scared of Gramma, either. He would go to Gramma and be hugged because he wasn’t a crybaby afraidycat. He would go to Gramma now.

He was almost within the circle of her arms when the window to his left crashed inward and suddenly a wind-blown branch was in the room with them, autumn leaves still clinging to it. The river of wind flooded the room, blowing over Gramma’s pictures, whipping her nightgown and her hair.

Now George could scream. He stumbled backward out of her grip and Gramma made a cheated hissing sound, her lips pulling back over smooth old gums; her thick, wrinkled hands clapped uselessly together on moving air.

Magic cost: Target’s Anima
Sanity Loss:

Caster: 0/1

Victim: 1/1d4+1

He went up to the room he shared with Buddy and opened the hot-air register so he could hear what his mother did next. She wasn't going to talk to Aunt Flo, not tonight, because the telephone cord had pulled out; not tomorrow, because shortly before Mom had come home, George had spoken a short series of words, some of them bastardized Latin, some only pre-Druidic grunts, and over two thousand miles away Aunt Flo had dropped dead of a massive brain hemorrhage. It was amazing how those words came back.

How everything came back.

Magic cost: 15

Sanity Loss: 0/1d4

Damage: Caster's Anima

A fish jumped below at us. The man in the black suit frowned, then pointed a finger at it. The trout convulsed in the air, its body bending so strenuously that for a split second it appeared to be snapping at its own tail, and when it fell back into Castle Stream it was floating lifelessly. It struck the big gray rock where the waters divided, spun around twice in the whirlpool eddy that formed there, and then floated away in the direction of Castle Rock. Meanwhile, the terrible stranger turned his burning eyes on me again, his thin lips pulled back from tiny rows of sharp teeth in a cannibal smile.

Invisibility was likewise impossible, at least as far as Flagg himself had been able to determine. Yet it was possible to make oneself... dim.

Magic cost: 3

Sanity Loss: none

Yes, dim—that was really the best word for it, although others sometimes came to mind: ghostly, transparent, unobtrusive. Invisibility was out of his reach, but by first eating a pizzle and then reciting a number of spells, it was possible to become dim. When one was dim and a servant approached along a passageway, one simply drew aside and stood still and let the servant pass. In most cases, the servant's eyes would drop to his own feet or suddenly find something interesting to look at on the ceiling. If one passed through a room, conversation would falter, and people would look momentarily distressed, as if all were having gas pains at the same time. Torches and wall sconces grew smoky. Candles sometimes blew out. It was necessary to actually hide when one was dim only if one saw someone whom one knew well—for, whether one was dim or not, these people almost always saw. Dimness was useful, but it was not invisibility.

He stopped beneath the tree, looking through the open door twenty paces away. He saw what could have been a kitchen; the legs of a table, the back of a chair, a filthy hearthstone. No sign of the lady of the house. But she was there. Roland could feel her eyes crawling on him like loathsome bugs.

I can't see her because she's used her art to make herself dim... but she's there.

And just perhaps he did see her. The air had a strange shimmer just inside the door to the right, as if it had been heated. Roland had been told that you could see someone who was dim by turning your head and looking from the corner of your eye. He did that now.

"Roland?" Cuthbert called from behind him.

"Fine so far, Bert." Barely paying attention to the words he was saying, because... yes! That shimmer was clearer now, and it had almost the shape of a woman. It could be his imagination, of course, but...

But at that moment, as if understanding he'd seen her, the shimmer moved farther back into the shadows. Roland glimpsed the swinging hem of an old black dress, there and then gone.

"To the death?"

"Aye. Hers or mine."

"'Twill be hers," Rhea said, "never fear it. Now refresh me, Cordelia. Give me what I need!"

Cordelia unbuttoned her dress down the front, pushing it open to reveal an ungenerous bosom and a middle which had begun to curve out in the last year or so, making a tidy little potbelly. Yet she still had the vestige of a waist, and it was here she used the knife, cutting through her shift and the top layers of flesh beneath. The white cotton began to bloom red at once along the slit.

"Aye," Rhea whispered. "Like roses. I dream of them often enough, roses in bloom, and what stands black among em at the end of the world. Come closer!" She put her hand on the small of Cordelia's back, urging her forward. She raised her eyes to Cordelia's face, then grinned and licked her lips. "Good. Good enough."

Cordelia looked blankly over the top of the old woman's head as Rhea of the Cöos buried her face against the red cut in the shift and began to drink.

It was at this point, not long after the last toll of noon had faded into the cold air; that the batwing doors opened and two women came in. A good many knew the crone in the lead, and several of them crossed their eyes with their thumbs as a ward against her evil look. A murmur ran through the room. It was the Cöos, the old witch-woman, and although her face was pocked with sores and her eyes sunk so deep in their sockets they could barely be seen, she gave off a peculiar sense of vitality. Her lips were red, as if she had been eating winterberries. The woman behind her walked slowly and stiffly, with one hand pressed against her mid-section. Her face was as white as the witch-woman's mouth was red.

If Roland could have raised his hands, he would have put them to his ears to block those sounds out. As it was, he could only lie still, listening and waiting for them to stop. For a long time—for ever, it seemed—they did not. The women slurped and grunted like pigs snuffling half-liquefied feed out of a trough. There was even one resounding belch, followed by more whispered giggles (these, ended when Sister Mary uttered a single curt word—"Hais!"). And once there was a low, moaning cry - from the bearded man, Roland was quite sure.

If so, it was his last on this side of the clearing.

Magic cost: 5+

Sanity Loss: 1/1d4+1

Damage: 2 per point restored

Timoh-lach

The cop's good eye fixed on him for a moment, and then his head lifted. He pointed at the sky with all five fingers of his left hand. "Tak ah lah," he said in his guttural, gargling voice.

"Timoh. Can de lach! On! On!"

Magic cost: 6

Sanity Loss: 0/1d3

There was a flapping sound. like clothes on a line, and a shadow fell over Johnny's face. There was a harsh cry, not quite a caw, and then something with scabrous, flapping wings dropped on him, its crooked claws gripping his shoulders and folding themselves into the fabric of his shirt, its beak digging into his scalp as it uttered its inhuman cry again.

It was the smell that told Johnny what it was—a smell like meat gone feverish with rot. Its huge, unkempt wings flapped against the sides of his face as it solidified its position, driving that stench into his mouth and nose, jamming it in, making him gag. He saw the Shepherd on its rope, swinging as the peeled-looking bald things pulled at its tail and feet with their beaks. Now one of them was roosting on him—one which had apparently never heard that buzzards were fundamental cowards that only attacked dead things—and its beak was plowing his scalp in furrows, bringing blood.

"Get it off!" he screamed, completely unnerved. He tried to grab the wide, beating wings, but got only two fistfuls of feathers. Nor could he see; he was afraid that if he opened his eyes, the buzzard would shift its position and peck them out. "Jesus. please, please get it off me!"

"Are you going to look at me properly if I do?" the cop asked. "No more insolence? No more disrespect?"

"No! No more!" He would have promised anything. Whatever had leaped out of him and spoken against the cop was gone now; the bird had plucked it out like a worm from an ear of corn.

Now she went to the foot of her bed, knelt, and passed one hand over the earth floor there. Lines appeared in the sour dirt as she did. They formed a square. She pushed her fingers into one of these lines; it gave before her touch. She lifted the hidden panel (hidden in such a way that no one without the touch would ever be able to uncover it), revealing a compartment perhaps a foot square and two feet deep. Within it was an ironwood box.

Magic cost: 4

Sanity Loss: 0/1

The bitch hadn't seen her outside the hut—she surely would have stopped caterwauling, or at least faltered in it if she had—and that was good, but the cursed hidey-hole had sealed itself up again, and that was bad. There was no time to open it again, either. Rhea hurried to the bed, knelt, and pushed the box far back into the shadows beneath.

Fascinate

Susannah tried to pull her gaze from that steadily pulsing glow and at first couldn't do it. Panic bloomed in her mind (if he fascinates you and tells you to jump) and she seized it as a tool, compressing it to an edge with which to cut through her frightened immobility. For a moment nothing happened, and then she threw herself backward so violently in the shabby little cart that she had to clutch the edge in order to keep herself from tumbling to the cobbles. The wind gusted again, blowing stone-dust and grit against her face and into her hair, seeming to mock her.

But that pull... fascination... glammer... whatever it had been, it was gone.

Magic cost: 4

Sanity Loss: 0/1



-The Invisible World-



“There are six Beams, as you did say, but there are twelve Guardians, one for each end of each Beam. This—for we’re still on it—is the Beam of Shardik. Were you to go beyond the Tower, it would become the Beam of Maturin, the great turtle upon whose shell the world rests.”

“Below them is the whole invisible world, those creatures left behind when the Prim receded. There are speaking demons, demons of house which some call ghosts, ill-sick demons which some—makers of machines and worshippers of the great false god rationality, if it does ya—call disease.”

The creatures of the invisible world can enter our world through any thin place, though many demons have a favorite location and dwell only in that hole between the worlds..

“What are those?” she asked in a low voice. “Chips of stone?”

“Look again,” Roland said.

She did, and saw that they were bones. The bones of small animals, maybe. She hoped.

Eddie switched the sharpened stick to his left hand, dried the palm of his right against his shirt, and then switched it back again. He opened his mouth, but no sound came from his dry throat. He cleared it and tried again. “I think I’m supposed to go in and draw something in the dirt.”

Roland nodded. “Now?”

“Soon.” He looked into Roland’s face. “There’s something here, isn’t there? Something we can’t see.”

“It’s not here right now,” Roland said. “At least, I don’t think it is. But it will come. Our khef—our life-force—will draw it. And, of course, it will be jealous of its place. Give me my gun back, Eddie.”

-Proving Honesty-

"Wouldn't dirty her mouth with the words, would she? Well, that's all right. Yer Aunt Rhea's not too nice to say what yer Aunt Cordelia won't. I'm to make sure that ye're physically and spiritually intact, missy. Proving honesty is what the old ones called it, and it's a good enough name. So it is. Step to me."

Spiritual honesty is determined through a combination of mundane examination and magical scrutiny. This is a skill only available to the spiritually aware.

Skill	Base Chance
Prove Honesty	05%

Susan took two reluctant steps forward, so that her bare toes were almost touching the old woman's slippers and her bare breasts were almost touching the old woman's dress. "If a devil or demon has polluted yer spirit, such a thing as might taint the child you'll likely bear, it leaves a mark behind. Most often it's a suck-mark or a lover's bite, but there's others... open yer mouth!"

Susan did, and when the old woman bent closer, the reek of her was so strong that the girl's stomach clenched. She held her breath, praying this would be over soon. "Run out yer tongue."

Susan ran out her tongue.

"Now send yer breezes into my face."

Susan exhaled her held breath. Rhea breathed it in and then, mercifully, pulled her head away a little. She had been close enough for Susan to see the lice hopping in her hair.

"Sweet enough," the old woman said. "Aye, good's a meal. Now turn around." Susan did, and felt the old witch's fingers trail down her back and to her buttocks. Their tips were cold as mud.

"Bend over and spread yer cheeks, missy, be not shy, Rhea's seen more than one pultry in her time!"

Face flushing—she could feel the beat of her heart in the center of her forehead and in the hollows of her temples—Susan did as told.

And then she felt one of those corpselike fingers prod its way into her anus. Susan bit her lips to keep from screaming. The invasion was mercifully short... but there would be another, Susan feared. "Turn around."

She turned. The old woman passed her hands over Susan's breasts, flicked lightly at the nipples with her thumbs, then examined the undersides carefully. Rhea slipped a finger into the cup of the girl's navel, then hitched up her own skirt and dropped to her knees with a grunt of effort. She passed her hands down Susan's legs, first front, then back. She seemed to take special pains with the area just below the calves, where the tendons ran.

"Lift yer right foot, girl."

Susan did, and uttered a nervous, screamey laugh as Rhea ran a thumbnail down her instep to her heel. The old woman parted her toes, looking between each pair. After this process had been repeated with the other foot, the old woman—still on her knees—said: "You know what comes next."

"Aye." The word came out of her in a little trembling rush.



-Todash-



“Todash,” he said, and explained it to them as well as he could. What he remembered best from Vannay’s teachings was how the Manni spent long periods fasting in order to induce the right state of mind, and how they traveled around, looking for exactly the right spot in which to induce the todash state. This was something they determined with magnets and large plumb-bobs.

It started with a low crackling sound. Roland’s first thought was the campfire: one of them had gotten some green fir boughs in there, the coals had finally reached them, and they were producing that sound as the needles smoldered. But—

The sound grew louder, became a kind of electric buzzing. Roland sat up and looked across the dying fire. His eyes widened and his heart began to speed up.

Susannah had turned from Eddie, had drawn away a little, too. Eddie had reached out and so had Jake. Their hands touched. And, as Roland looked at them, they commenced fading in and out of existence in a series of jerky pulses. Oy was doing the same thing. When they were gone, they were replaced by a dull gray glow that approximated the shapes and positions of their bodies, as if something was holding their places in reality. Each time they came back, there would be flat crackling buzz. Roland could see their closed eyelids ripple as the balls rolled beneath.

Dreaming. But not just dreaming. This was todash, the passing between two worlds. Supposedly the Manni could do it. And supposedly some pieces of the Wizard’s Rainbow could make you do it, whether you wanted to or not. One piece of it in particular.

They could get caught between and fall, Roland thought. Vannay said that, too. He said that going todash was full of peril.

“There are endless worlds, your dinh is correct about that, but even when those worlds are close together—like some of the multiple New Yorks—there are endless spaces between. Think ya of the spaces between the inner and outer walls of a house. Places where it’s always dark. But just because a place is always dark doesn’t mean it’s empty. Does it, Susannah?”

There are monsters in the todash darkness.

Who had said that? Roland? She couldn’t remember for sure, and what did it matter? She thought she understood what Mia was saying, and if so, it was horrible.

“Rats in the walls, Susannah. Bats in the walls. All sorts of sucking, biting bugs in the walls.”

“Stop it, I get the picture.”

“That door beneath the castle—one of their mistakes, I have no doubt—goes to nowhere at all. Into the darkness between worlds. Todash-space. But not empty space.” Her voice lowered further. “That door is reserved for the Red King’s most bitter enemies. They’re thrown into a darkness where they may exist—blind, wandering, insane—for years. But in the end, something always finds them and devours them. Monsters beyond the ability of such minds as outs to bear thought of.”

-The Vagrant Dead-

“There!” she cried, pointing across the street. “There! Do you see him? Please, Eddie, please tell me you see him!”

Eddie felt the temperature of his blood plummet. What he saw was a naked man who had been cut open and then sewed up again in what could only be an autopsy tattoo. Another man—a living one—bought a paper at the nearby newsstand, checked for traffic, then crossed Second Avenue. Although he was shaking open the paper to look at the headline as he did it, Eddie saw the way he swerved around the dead man. The way people swerved around us, he thought.

“There was another one, too,” she whispered. “A woman. She was walking. And there was a worm. I saw a worm c-c-crawling—”

They looked. A child was wandering slowly toward them. it was only possible to tell it was a girl because of the red-and-blue dress she wore. When she got closer, Eddie saw that the blue was supposed to be the ocean. The red blobs resolved themselves into little candy-colored sail-boats. Her head had been squashed in some cruel accident, squashed until it was wider than it was long. Her eyes were crushed grapes. Over one pale arm was a white plastic purse. A little girl’s best I’m-going-to-the-car-accident-and-don’t-know-it purse.

Susannah drew in breath to scream. The darkness she had only sensed earlier was now almost visible. Certainly it was palpable; it pressed against her like earth. Yet she would scream. She must scream. Scream or go mad.

“Not a sound,” Roland of Gilead whispered in her ear. “Do not disturb her, poor lost thing. For your life, Susannah!” Susannah’s scream expired in a long, horrified sigh.

“They’re dead,” Jake said in a thin, controlled voice. “Both of them.”

“The Vagrant dead,” Roland replied. “I head of them from Alain Johns’s father.”

“In any case, it whas Burning Chris who warned us that if we ever went todash, we might see vags.” He pointed across the street to where the naked dead man still stood. “Such as him yonder have wither died so suddenly they don’t yet understand what’s happened to them, or they simply refuse to accept it. Sooner or later they do go in. I don’t think there are many of them.”

“There were enough,” Callahan said, “and they knew I was there. Mangled people on Park Avenue, one of them a man without eyes, one a woman missing the arm and leg on the right side of her body and burned all over, both of them looking at me, as if they thought I could . . . fix them, somehow.”





-Migrating-



He had broken the connection before Gardener could say any more, and lain back on the bed. He had crossed his hands on his stomach and closed his eyes. There was a moment of weightlessness... just a moment... and then he felt a sensation of movement beneath him. He heard the creak of leather traces, the groan and thump of rough iron springs, the curses of his driver.

He had opened his eyes as Morgan of Orris.

As always, his first reaction was pure delight: this made coke seem like baby aspirin. His chest was narrower, his weight less. Morgan Sloat's heartbeat ran anywhere from eighty-five beats a minute to a hundred and twenty when he was pissed off; Orris's rarely went higher than sixty-five or so. Morgan Sloat's eyesight was tested at 20/20, but Morgan of Orris nonetheless saw better. He could see and trace the course of every minute crack in the sidewall of the diligence, could marvel over the fineness of the mesh curtains which blew through the windows. Cocaine had clogged Sloat's nose, dulling his sense of smell; Orris's nose was totally clear and he could smell dust and earth and air with perfect fidelity—it was as if he could sense and appreciate every molecule.

Behind him he had left an empty double bed still marked with the shape of his large body. Here he was sitting on a bench seat plusher than the seat in any Rolls-Royce ever made, riding west toward the end of the Outposts, toward a place which was called Outpost Depot. Toward a man named Anders. He knew these things, knew exactly where he was, because Orris was still here, inside his head—speaking to him the way the right side of the brain may speak to the rational left during daydreams, in a low but perfectly clear voice. Sloat had spoken to Orris in this same low undertone on the few occasions when Orris had Migrated to what Jack had come to think of as the American Territories. When one Migrated and entered the body of one's Twinner, the result was a kind of benign possession. Sloat had read of more violent cases of possession, and although the subject did not greatly interest him, he guessed that the poor, unlucky slobs so afflicted had been taken over by mad hitchhikers from other worlds—or perhaps it was the American world itself which had driven them mad. That seemed more than possible; it had certainly done a number on poor old Orris's head the first two or three times he had popped over, although he had been wildly excited as well as terrified.

As the taste filled his throat, the world swayed under them, around them. Wolf cried out, "Jacky, it's working!"

It startled him out of his fierce concentration and for a moment he became aware that it was only a trick, like trying to get to sleep by counting sheep, and the world steadied again. The smell of the Lysol flooded back. Faintly he heard someone answer the phone querulously: "Yes, hello, who is it?"

Never mind, it's not a trick, not a trick at all — it's magic. It's magic and I did it before when I was little and I can do it again, Speedy said so that blind singer Snowball said so, too, THE MAGIC JUICE IS IN MY MIND —

He bore down with all his force, all his effort of will... and the ease with which they flipped was stupefying, as if a punch aimed at something which looked like granite hit a cleverly painted papier-mâché shell instead, so that the blow you thought would break all your knuckles instead encountered no resistance at all.

To Jack, with his eyes screwed tightly shut, it felt as if the floor had first crumbled under his feet... and then disappeared completely. Oh shit we're going to fall anyway, he thought dismally.

But it wasn't really a fall, only a minor sideslip. A moment later he and Wolf were standing firmly, not on hard bathroom tile but on dirt. A reek of sulphur mingled with what smelled like raw sewage flooded in. It was a deathly smell, and Jack thought it meant the end of all hope. "Jason! What's that smell?" Wolf groaned. "Oh Jason that smell, can't stay here, Jacky, can't stay—"

Jack's eyes snapped open. At the same moment Wolf let go of Jack's hands and blundered forward, his own eyes still tightly shut. Jack saw that Wolf's ill-fitting chinos and checked shirt had been replaced by the Oshkosh biballs in which Jack had originally seen the big herdsman. The John Lennon glasses were gone. And—

—and Wolf was blundering toward the edge of a precipice less than four feet away.

The only thing that had kept Jack alive this long was the maddening fact of his single nature—when the whelp flipped to a place, he was always in the analogue of the place he had left. Sloat, however, always ended up where Orris was, which might be miles away from where he needed to be... as was the case now. He had been lucky at the rest area, but Sawyer had been luckier.

Migrating is the learned ability to travel between worlds at will. There are two forms of migrating, the *horizon road* and the *an-te-tet*, also called *an-tah* or *an-twim*.

The horizon road can only be traveled by singletons (those without any Twinners in the entire multiverse). Those who share *an-twim*—that is, those with a Twinner, or *harp*—in the Territories or elsewhere can transpose their being into their Twinner's body, but cannot physically travel to a world where their Twinner lives.

He studies the tiny dressings that cover the tips of her fingers, and muses on how hard Sophie and Judy have tried to get through that wall to each other. Morgan Sloat could apparently become Morgan of Orris at will. As a boy of twelve, Jack had met others with that same talent. Not him; he was single-natured and had always been Jack in both worlds. Judy and Sophie, however, have proved incapable of flipping back and forth in any fashion. Something's been left out of them, and they could only whisper through the wall between the worlds. There must be sadder things, but at this moment he can't think of a single one.

-Learning to Flip-

The first time someone Migrates is usually an accident. In some instances, the ability can be shown and taught to others, especially if they share *khef*.

Horizon road:

The first Migration may happen through accident or outside forces. A Sanity Check is needed as soon as the singleton appears in the other world. If successful, Sanity is *raised* by 1d4 points, as the true nature of the multiverse becomes clearer.

An-twim:

As soon as the Migration occurs, both Twinners must roll a Sanity Check to cope with the shock of the experience. If the roll succeeds, both are stunned for 1d3 rounds while they sort each other out. After this initial period of confusion, they almost always operate in complete harmony, with either one controlling the physical body, and Sanity is raised by 1d2 points.

After the first Migration, further traveling can be accomplished with the newly-gained skill:

Skill	Base Chance
Migration	15%

The chance of success can be augmented by physical means (like magic juice), the outpouring of *khef* from one who shares one's own *ka*, or by attempting the flip in a thin place. Unlike other skills that only increase once per game, the chance of a successful Migration increases by 1d6 with *every flip*, to a maximum of the character's Anima x5.

-Can-ini-

It is possible for Twinners who serve the Red to invoke *can-ini*, or the empty well between worlds. In doing this, the Migrator forces open a hole between two realities, through which he and his Twinner can travel. While there are certain objects that *ka* has decreed carry the power of *can-ini*, it is unknown whether or not Twinners can achieve this on their own.

Wolf stopped talking and looked around, startled.

"Wolf? What's wr—"

"Shhhh!"

Then Jack heard it. Wolf's more sensitive ears had picked the sound up first, but it swelled quickly; before long, a deaf man would have heard it, Jack thought. The cattle looked around and then began to move away from the source of the sound in a rough, uneasy clot. It was like a radio sound-effect where someone is supposed to be ripping a bedsheet down the middle, very slowly. Only the volume kept going up and up and up until Jack thought he was going to go crazy. Wolf leaped to his feet, looking stunned and confused and frightened. That ripping sound, a low, ragged purr, continued to grow. The bleating of the cattle became louder.

"Wolf!" Jack shouted, but Wolf couldn't hear him. Jack could barely hear himself over that ragged ripping sound. He looked a little to the right, on this side of the stream, and gaped with amazement. Something was happening to the air. A patch of it about three feet off the ground was rippling and blistering, seeming to twist and pull at itself. Jack could see the Western Road through this patch of air; but the road seemed blurry and shimmery, as if seen through the heated, rippling air over an incinerator.

Something's pulling the air open like a wound—something's coming through—from our side? Oh Jason, is that what I do when I come through? But even in his own panic and confusion he knew it was not.

Jack had a good idea who would come through like this, like a rape in progress.

Panting, his soaked hair hanging in his eyes, Jack looked over his shoulder... and directly into the rest area on I-70 near Lewisburg, Ohio. He was seeing it as if through ripply, badly made glass... but he was seeing it. The edge of the brick toilet was on the left side of that blistered, tortured patch of air. The snout of what looked like a Chevrolet pick-up truck was on the right, floating three feet above the field where he and Wolf had been sitting peacefully and talking not five minutes ago. And in the center, looking like an extra in a film about Admiral Byrd's assault on the South Pole, was Morgan Sloat, his thick red face twisted with murderous rage. Rage, and something else. Triumph? Yes. Jack thought that was what it was. He stood at midstream in water that was crotch-deep, cattle passing on either side of him, baaing and bleating, staring at that window which had been torn in the very fabric of reality, his eyes wide, his mouth wider.

He's found me, oh dear God, he's found me.

"There you are, you little shithead!" Morgan bellowed at him. His voice carried, but it had a muffled, dead quality as it came from the reality of that world into the reality of this one. It was like listening to a man shout inside a telephone booth. "Now we'll see, won't we? Won't we?"

Morgan started forward, his face swimming and rippling as if made of limp plastic, and Jack had time to see there was something clutched in his hand, something hung around his neck, something small and silvery. Jack stood, paralyzed, as Sloat bulled his way through the hole between the two universes. As he came he did his own werewolf number, changing from Morgan Sloat, investor, land speculator, and sometime Hollywood agent, into Morgan of Orris, pretender to the throne of a dying Queen. His flushed, hanging jowls thinned. The color faded out of them. His hair renewed itself, growing forward, first tinting the rondure of his skull, as if some invisible being were coloring Uncle Morgan's head, then covering it. The hair of Sloat's Twinner was long, black, flapping, somehow dead-looking.