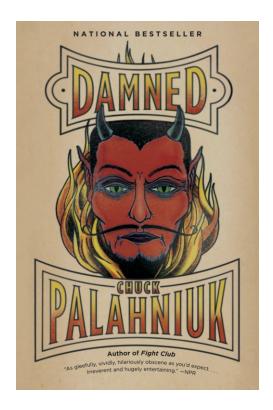


## **DAMNED**



## **Book Summary:**

A thirteen-year-old girl trapped in hell, recalls her life.

## **Summary of Concerns:**

This book contains obscene sexual activities; explicit sexual nudity; inexplicit references to necrophilia; profanity/derogatory term use; drug abuse involving minors; references to selfharm; controversial and inflammatory references to religion; controversial social commentary; and inflammatory racial and sexual commentary.

Adult

## **By Chuck Palahniuk**

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1	I wish I could lie and tell you I'm bone-thin with blond hair and big ta-tas. But, trust me, I'm fat for a really good reason.
3	We can forgive some stranger her choice to practice Catholicism or engage in homosexual acts, but not her submission to deathWorse than alcoholism or heroin addiction, dying seems like the greatest weakness, and in a world where people say you're lazy for not shaving your legs, then being dead seems like the ultimate character flaw.
4	The first time we meet another person an insidious little voice in our head says, "I might wear eyeglasses or be chunky around the hips or a girl, but at least I'm not Gay or Black or a Jew."So I hesitate to even mention that I'm dead because everyone already feels so darned superior to dead people, even Mexicans and AIDS people.
5	When I died, I won't go into the details, but let's say some Mr. Pervy McPervert mortician got to see me naked and pump out all my blood and commit God only knows what deranged carnal high jinks with my virginal thirteen-year-old bodyAfter all the permanent waves and ballet lessons my mom paid for, here I am getting a hot-spit tongue bath from some paunchy, depraved mortuary guy.
11	My neighbor I'd wager is a high school junior, because she has the hip development to hold up a straight-line skirt and she has breasts instead of just frills or smocking to fill out the front of her blouseThis teenage girl in the next cell calls over, asking, "What are you damned for?" Getting to my feet, stretching my arms. and dusting off the legs of my skort, I reply, "Smoking marijuana, I guess."
12	It's my experience that girls tend to be terrifically smart until they grow breasts.
13	Let girls get their menstruation or boys have their first wet dream, and they instantly forget their own brilliance and talentYes, and I know that when a supersexy older girl with hips and breasts and nice hair wants to take off your glasses and to paint you a smoky eye she's merely trying to enroll you in a beauty contest she's already wonEither that, or the attractive older girl is a lesbian.
16	My mom and dad said you and God were invented in the superstitious, backward pea brains of hillbilly preachers and Republican hypocritesI mean, my parents both said how important it was for me to see them walking around naked all the time or I'd grow up to be totally a Miss Pervy McPervert.
17	That one film, she got nominated for playing a nun who gets bored and unfulfilled, so she ditches her vows to do prostitution and heroin and have some abortions before she gets her own top-rated daytime talk show and marries Richard Gere. A total of nobody went to the film in theatrical release, but the critics creamed all over it.
19	What a fat load of good that did now look at me: dead from a marijuana overdose and damned to Hell, scratching my cheeks raw in an attempt to convince my next-door-cell neighbor I suffer from communicable psoriasisAnd it was my parents who told me to act out, a little, and experiment with recreational drugs.
20	That's what my parents considered our spiritual salvation. We'd see approximately a quatrillion Catholics throwing incense at some plaster statue, or a billion-zillion Muslims



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	all lined up on their knees and facing New York City, and my dad would say, "Those poor ignorant bastards"
21	I keep hoping I'll grow really big boobs, like Babette in the adjacent cell. Or reach a hand into my skort pocket and find a Xanax. I cross my fingers that if a demon dunks me in a vat of boiling lava I'll get thrown together naked with River Phoenix, and that he'll say I'm cute and try to kiss me.
23	Increasingly, I'm not sure to which I was more addicted: hope or Xanax.
	Shaking the little bottle of nail varnish, Babette says, "Thursday is like a really, really good second date, when you still think that the sex might be okay"
25	Babette parries my counterlie with, "I think your breasts grew a little."
	"Ladies and gentlemen, may I present the Great Ocean of Wasted Sperm" All ejaculate, according to Archer, expelled in masturbatory emissions over the course of human history, at least since Onan—it all trickles down to accumulate here. Likewise, he explains, all blood shed on Earth trickles down and collects in Hell. All tears. Every spit gob spat on the ground ends up hereabouts. "Since the introduction of VHS tapes and the Internet," Archer says, "this ocean has been rising at record rates."
	In Hell, porn is creating an effect equivalent to that of global warming on earth "Now that this twerp is dead," Patterson says, as he cuffs Leonard on the back of the head, "maybe the ol' sperm sea won't be filling up so fast."  Leonard rubs his own scalp, wincing, and says, "Don't look now, Patterson, but I think I can see some of your ball juice floating out there." Archer, still ogling her, says, "Hey, Babs, you ever been up to your foxy eyes in hot sperm?"
45	Patterson swallows, shrugs his shoulders, and says, "You guys want to see the Swamp of Partial-birth Abortions?"
47	I say maybe we should swing by that swamp of terminated pregnancies. There's a good possibility that I might run into a long-lost sibling or two.
50	Furthermore, both my mother and father had been free of social status and therefore had nothing to lose by cavorting nude, their swollen genitals smeared with muckI was forever opening my boxed lunch at school to discover a cheese sandwich, a carton of apple juice, carrot sticks, and a five-hundred-milligram Percocet. Tucked within my Christmas stocking—not that we celebrated Christmas—would be three oranges, a sugar mouse, a harmonica, and quaaludes. In my Easter basket—not that we called the event Easter—instead of jelly beans, I'd find lumps of hashishThe moment the colorful papier-mâché burst, instead of Tootsie Rolls or Hershey's Kisses, everyone present was showered with Vicodins, Darvons, Percodans, amyl nitrate ampoules, LSD stamps, and assorted barbiturates.
64	It wasn't a frank, honest workshopping of my sexuality that I wanted. It was Goran I wanted, someone ruddy and moody. Pirates and tightly laced bodices. Masked highwaymen and kidnapped wenches. The second night I slept naked, I awoke needing to pee.
66	At this point I slept naked. I walked and ate and read naked so often that the thrill had evaporated. Even while reading Forever Amber with my tits out I'd lost that special



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	forbidden feelingOther girls told lies or cut themselves with razorsThe cold air made my hair stand up from the roots the way my nipples stood erect, every follicle on my arms and legs becoming a tiny clitoris, and every cell of me awake and alert at rigid attention.
	I wanted to be seen at the very h80eight of my prepubescent power, my tits-out, bare-fanny, legally off-limits kiddie-porn Lolita powerNor did a lustful, groping security guard catch me. Darn it.
71	It's true that I've read the Kama Sutra, but why anyone would bother to attempt such revolting gymnastics remains largely a mystery to me. In regard to sex, mine is a kind of complete intellectual understanding with no real aesthetic appreciation whatsoever. Forgive my uneducated distaste. While I know what organ stimulates what, the bizarre, sordid business of phallus and orifice interaction, the exchange of chromosomes required for procreation of the species, I have yet to grasp the appeal.
73	Yes, I might be dead and rather imperious and steadfastly opinionated, but I know the blunt stink of misogyny when I smell it. And that it's very likely Jonathan Swift found himself the victim of childhood sexual abuse, and was now venting his rage in the passive-aggressive avenue of fantasy fiction.  In his own unhelpful way, my father would tell you, "A woman eats to feed her pussy." Meaning: Anything we do to excess is in compensation for not getting a minimum amount of sexual gratification.  My mother would say that men overimbibe alcohol because their penises are thirsty. And no, I've never enjoyed an orgasm of my own, but I have read The Bridges of Madison County and The Color Purple, and if I learned nothing else from Alice Walker I learned that if you can help a woman discover the curative power of manipulating her own clitoris she'll serve as your loyal devotee and best friend forever.
	First, I shuck off my remaining penny loafer and place it at a safe distance from the giant. I pull off my school cardigan, fold it, and settle it neatly on top of the shoe. Unbuttoning the cuffs of my blouse, I roll the sleeves back to each elbow, all the while gazing up the length of the giant's hairy legs, looking skyward to see her shins, the knees, the muscled naked thighs, craning my neck to see the Brobdingnagian mons pubis beyond. Still climbing, I skirt my way around the wrinkled folds of the labia majora, hauling myself, like Jonathan Swift's worst nightmare, through pungent thickets of curling, dense pubic hair. Above me hangs the foreboding cornice of two enormous breasts. Even though my knowledge is largely theoretical, based on years of witnessing naked family friends on French beaches, I do know my way around the adult female genitalia. Clinging to the abundance of lush hair, I locate the clitoral hood and deftly manipulate the sheltering skin, thrusting my arm within to find the retracted organ of such fabled womanly pleasure. On this scale, merely brailled blindly within the warm enclosure of the clitoral hood, it feels to be roughly the size and shape of a Virginia ham.  The severed head of Archer watches my actions. Licking his lips, Archer says, "Little girl, you are sick" Smiling, he says, "The bitch monster ate me so, hey, the least I could do is return the favor."  Retrieving my forearm from the warm depths of the fleshy hood, I take the hank of blue hair from my mouth. Holding the head so that I gaze directly into Archer's green eyes, I say, "Take a deep breath, and make yourself useful," and I stuff the grinning, salivating



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Page	head deep into the hooded depths.  For a beat, not much occurs. Above me the vast mouth continues to masticate the cud of Archer's body, his blue jeans and boots. From below, the trio of Babette, Patterson, and Leonard stare, slack-jawed. Something stirs, moaning and slurping like a ravenous beast, moving within the skin of the clitoral hood. Then gradually, the giant's lips cease to chew. The giant's breathing deepens and slows. A warm pink glow suffuses the acres and acres of skin, a great landscape of blush covering the giant's face, chest, and thighs. A shudder, tremulous as an earthquake, shakes the towering body, and I'm compelled to grip the pubic hairs more tightly lest I plummet to the fingernail fields far below. The giant's knees begin to tremble, to weaken and buckle a little. The labia become more pronounced and highly colored, flooded with fresh blood flow.  At this point, I reach into the fleshy hood, where the hardening clitoris threatens to eject Archer's slathering, slurping noggin. Grasping the hidden head, I pull it free.  In the open air, slick with the juices of female passion and drooling wildly, Archer gasps a huge breath. His eyes dilated and crossed with pleasure, he shouts. His lips webbed with the noxious fluids inherent in adult sexual congress, Archer shouts, "I AM THE LIZARD KING!"  At that, I stuff his head back to do hidden oral battle with the stiffening, engorged clitoral tissues.  The giant looks down upon me, her eyes also glazed with orgasmic ecstasy. Her head lolling loosely on her neck. Her nipples jut, the size and hardness of sidewalk fire hydrants, the same bright red color.  In the blue-jeaned leg which remains dangling from between Psezpolnica's lips, the severed leg of Archer, clearly outlined within one denim pant leg appears the sizable bulge of a male erection.  Looking up, I meet the giant's loose, sloppy grin with my own cheerful, competent smile. With one hand gripping the pubic hair to maintain my position, my other hand holds Archer's head within the
	below.
80	Our hostess-slash-SUV is the offspring of angels who gazed down from Heaven and fell madly in lust with mortal women. All this history, Leonard says, comes down from no less a source than Saint Thomas Aquinas, who wrote in the thirteenth century that these angels appeared on earth as incubi—these revved-up, way-horny divine superbeings. The angels did the Hot Nasty Thing with mortal women, and giants such as Psezpolnica were conceived. The horny angels themselves were cast into Hell to become demons.
84	And, yes, I am thirteen years old, fat, and dead—but I am not overcompensating in the same manner as insecure homosexuals who constantly trot out Michelangelo and Noël Coward and Abraham Lincoln in order to bolster their own fragile self-esteem.
88	No, it's not fair, but my mom and dad were always happy to tell me the sordid details of every sex act or fetish that existed. Other girls might get a training bra at thirteen, but my



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	mom offered to have me fitted for a training diaphragm. Beyond the birds and the bees—and tea-bagging, rimming, and scissoring—my parents never taught me a single thing about death.
	AS IF I really regret not getting to grow up and have blood gush out of my woo-woo every month and learn to drive a fossil-fueled internal-combustion vehicle and watch crappy R-rated movies without a parent or guardian, then drink beer out of a keg, frittering away four years to snag a softball degree in art history before some boy squirts me full of sperm and I have to lug some big baby around inside me for almost a whole year.
93	The demon says, "Do you view sexual acts between individuals of the same gender to be an abomination?"
	Technically, because Goran doesn't speak enough English to order pay-per-view cable porn, I'll be babysitting him, but we're required to watch the awards on television so we can tell mom whether she ought to bother doing them again next season.
	Strictly by accident, mind you, one time—I swear, I'm no Miss Wanton McSlutski—but I toggled Ctrl + Alt + T and caught a gander of Goran taking a shower, naked. Not that I was peeking on purpose, but I did see that he already had some hair down there. To understand my panting pursuit of Goran, he of the plush lips and frigid glare, you need to know my first baby picture appeared on the cover of People magazine.
	As far as I can tell, you have a choice between two types of caree07rs in Hell. Your first option is to work for one of those Web sites which everyone assumes are run in Russia or Burma, where naked men and women stare unflinchingly into the webcams, a dazed look in their glassy eyes, while they lick their fingers and insert greasy plastic model airplanes or plantain bananas halfway into their shaved woo-woos or hoo-hoos. Either that, or they fake-smile while sipping their own urine out of champagne flutes. You see, Hell is responsible for about 85 percent of the Internet's total smut content. The demons just tack up some old, soiled bedsheet to serve as a backdrop, they throw a foam-rubber mattress on the ground, and you're expected to flop around, putting junk inside yourself and responding to the real-time webchat of alive perverts, worldwide.
	But just in case you don't want to spend eternity giving yourself high colonics on some sleazy Web site, ogled by millions of men with serious intimacy problems, the other type of work which most people do in Hell is—telemarketingTrust me, the vast majority of telemarketing people who ring you up, they're dead. As are pretty much all Internet porn models.  Okay, it's not as if I'm practicing brain surgery or tax law, but it beats sticking crayons inside my hoo-hoo on a Web site called "Crazy Nympho Girly Plesures Self Using School Supply [sic]."
	My Bhutanese little sister of about a day, she kept downing the Xanax my mom was happy to offer and spiraled into drug abuse.
	Just so you know, before you decide to do telemarketing over doing Internet porn, the sleazy Pervy Vanderpervs who text you with one hand while they abuse themselves with their other—at least they're not going to break your heart.
	One of my mom's deepest political convictions is that, if people want so desperately to come to the United States, wading across the Rio Grande at great risk to their life and limb simply for the opportunity to pick our lettuce and iron our hair, well, we should allow them. Entire nations would enjoy nothing more than the opportunity to scrub our kitchen



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	floors, she says, and to prevent them from doing so would be a violation of their most basic human rightsIt never fails to impress me how so many of the huddled masses and wretched refuse can flee the political oppression and torture of a foreign government, then arrive in America ready and eager to inflict largely the same tortures on the ruling classes here.	
115	In the spa, the stylists and artists hover around us, those minions as dense as the worst Harpies of Hell, circling and offering the information—always credited to a way-inside source—that while Dakota makes a lovely girl, she was in fact born with superfluous male genitalia. My mom's personal assistant, Cherry or Nadine or Ulrike or whoever, she brays that Cameron is so dense that she bought the morning-after abortion pill and, instead of swallowing, stuck one up inside her woo-woo.  According to my mom, national boundaries must be adequately porous, and incomes must be redistributed to allow all people, regardless of race and religion and circumstances of birth, to be able to purchase her films.	
116	Instead of spending their lives as pregnant, dirt-eating, genitally mutilated victims of some crushing theocracy now, third-world ladies can aspire to become cosmo-swilling, Jimmy Choo—wearing sexual predators.	
117	If I wanted to practice my feminine wiles on Goran, my time was running out.	
118	Of course, my dad wanted to introduce the concept of discipline and consequences into Goran's life, but a boy who's no doubt been tortured with electroshocks and waterboarding and intravenous injections of liquid drain cleaner, he's not going to be easily cowed by the threat of a spanking and a one-hour time-out. No matter how hybrid a Frankenstein skunkweed, they would pack the sticky resinous mess into a pipe and torch it.	
120	In the same way my parents imagined all the little boys and girls of the third world wanted to become them my folks thought my childhood should be the childhood they'd wanted to have, resplendent with meaningless sex, recreational drugs, and rock music All their peers feel pretty much the same, and it leads to children whom the public believes to be nine years old becoming pregnant. Thus the paradox of teaching nursery rhymes along with contraception skills. Birthday presents such as Hello Kitty diaphragms and Holly Hobbie spermicidal foam and Peter Rabbit crotchless panties.	
126	According to Babette's statistics, 100 percent of people who die of AIDS are consigned to Hell. As are all aborted babies. And all people killed by drunk drivers.	
130	My mother retrieves the evening purse from the seat beside her. Snapping open the clasp, she reaches out a pill bottle, saying, "Would you like a Xanax, Maddy?""Now," my dad says, "when a man loves a woman very, very much" "Or," my mom adds, shooting him a look, "when a man loves a man or a woman loves a woman."	
	My father nods. "Your mother is right." He adds, "Or when a man loves two women, or three women, backstage after a big rock concert"  "Or," my mom says, "when a whole cell block of male prisoners love one new inmate very, very much"  "Or," my dad interjects, "when a motorcycle gang making a meth run across the Southwestern United States loves one drunken biker chick very, very much"	
	Finally, my dad says, "Oh, to hell with it." Reaching a hand into his tux jacket, he extracts	



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	a personal digital assistant, or PDA, from the inside pocket. He crouches next to the chair, bringing the tiny computer level with my face. Flipping the screen open, he keyboards Ctrl + Alt + P, and the screen fills with a view of our media room in Prague. He toggles until the wide-screen television fills the entire computer screen, then keys Ctrl + Alt + L and scrolls down through a list of movie titles. Tabbing down the list, my father selects a movie, and a keystroke later the computer screen fills with a tangle of arms and legs, dangling hairless testicles, and quivering silicone-enhanced breasts.  Yes, I may be a virgin, a dead virgin, with no knowledge of carnality beyond the soft-focus metaphors of Barbara Cartland novels, but I can well recognize a fake booby when I see one.  The camerawork is atrocious. Anywhere from two to twenty men and women grapple, frantically involved in violating every orifice present with every digit, phallus, and tongue available to them. Whole human bodies appear to be disappearing into other bodies. The lighting is abysmal, and the sound has obviously been looped by nonunion amateurs working without a decent final draft. What appears before me bears less resemblance to sexual congress than it does to the writhing, squirming, not-quite-dead-yet-already-partially-decomposed occupants of a mass grave.  My mom smiles. Nodding at the PDA screen, she says, "Do you understand, Maddy?" She says, "This is where babies come from."  My dad adds, "And herpes." In the center of the tiny pornographic movie, the hideous little orgy is interrupted. The words Incoming Call superimpose themselves over the grappling bodies. A red light blinks at the top of the PDA case, and a shrill bell rings. My dad says, "Wait," and he holds the PDA to his ear, where the gruesome assemblage of entwined limbs and genitals squirm against his cheek; videotaped penises erupt their vile sputum dangerously near his eye
135	and mouth.  To change the subject, I ask Emily how it was that she contracted AIDS.  "How else?" Emily says. "From my last therapist, of course."  I ask, Was he cute?  Emily shrugs audibly, saying, "Cute enough, for a sliding-scale therapist."
140	These three girls were always together, usually cutting themselves or helping one another to vomit; within the insular sphere of the boarding school, they were infamous.
151	There, the cuff of her blouse has pulled back to reveal dark red lines on the inside of her wrist. Running from the sleeve to the base of her palm, gouged scars gape, raw as if they'd been recently cut.  And yes, I know suicide is a mortal sin, but Babette has always insisted she was damned for wearing white shoes after Labor Day.  With old Mr. Halmott and Mrs. Trudy smiling at me, I myself am staring point-blank—first, at Babette's suicide scars—then at her sheepish grin.
152	I torched a spliff of my parents' best hybrid skunkweed, took a toke, and handed the stinking doobie to the object of my preteen adorationGoran took the joint and puffed. He tapped the ash onto a dinner plate, next to a halfeaten cheeseburger and an array of stale potato chips. We both sat, silent, holding the smoke in our lungsGoran slips the smoldering roach between my fingers. I take another hit, and hand it back.





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	Goran laughs, blasting out great clouds of sour dope stenchGoran takes the smoking roach from between my fingers. He takes another hit, chasing the smoke with a swig of chocolate milk shake. Once more mouthing the damp butt of the shared marijuana cigarette, I attempt to discern the flavor of my beloved's salivaIn the bathroom mirror, my eyes look red-rimmed and bloodshot.
155	I am so high. I pull open a drawer next to the sink and retrieve the long strip of Hello Kitty condoms. I reemerge from the bathroom, presenting myself before Goran with the strip of condoms looped around the back of my neck like a feather boa. The air in the suite hangs misty, foggy with dope smoke. I knot the strip of condoms around my neck and pull the knot tight, saying, "You want to play a game?" I say, "You only need to blow into my mouth." I step forward, slinking toward my beloved, and say, "It's called the French-kissing Game."
157	Everybody alive feels so superior to the dead, even homosexuals and American Indians.
158	The stink of our every exhaled breath hung heavy, clouding the suite with its skunkweed reek.
165	In reality, the dead are always around the living. I hung around with my parents for a week; seriously, it beat tagging along to watch the Mr. Skeazy Vanderskeaze mortuary guy pump out my blood and monkey with my naked thirteen-year-old corpse.
	In greater numbers, a bevy of blond production assistants glom onto my dad, all of them wearing sexy black stripper gloves and trying to out-leg one another by letting their black miniskirts ride up too far on their tanned-and-waxed thighs while they clutch little brandnew, black leather-bound Bibles the same way they would Chanel pocketbooks, and all told it's obvious they're all sleeping with him—my father, with all his noble-sounding, high-minded, left-wing platitudes—but he can't expense their various salaries to any project's shooting budget if he admits that the only job they ever perform is blow jobs.
	My initial selection was the Sea of Insects; however, with additional consideration I revised my choice to the Swamp of Partial-birth Abortions. There it is, in the hell of Hell, that boggy landscape of nightmares where stewed infants simmer beneath an enormous movie screen, an inescapable billboard, upon which The English Patient plays in a neverending Technicolor loop, that's where Herr Hitler resides, shorn of mustache and identity.
197	Barely breaking my stride, I vanquish the infamous Bluebeard, Gilles de Rais, adding his braquemard—the rod with which he'd suffocated six hundred children while sodomizing them—to the grotesque trophies which dangle and sway from my waist.
206	With the gates not yet a shoulders' width apart, a figure appears from the interior, a young woman with nice breasts and good hair; wearing beat-up fake Manolo Blahnik shoes, dime-size cubic zirconium earrings, a counterfeit Coach bag slung over one arm, there stands—Babette.
210	Into my telephone, I assure this dying Texas person that her permanent record is open on the desk in front of me, and it shows she's been pretty much on the fast track to Hell since the age of twenty-three, when she committed adultery. Despite the fact that she'd been married to her husband for barely two weeks, she engaged in sexual intercourse with a local mail carrier, largely because he reminded her of a former beau.



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217	A crew of sinister Snarky Miss Snarky-pants girls at my old boarding school, the infamous
	three who taught me the French-kissing Game, they once professed to educate me about
	human reproduction. As they told it to me, the reason boys desire so desperately to kiss
	girls is because, with each kiss, the activity makes the boy's wanger grow larger. The more
	girls a boy can kiss, the larger a wanger he'll eventually possess, and the boys boasting the
	largest are awarded the best-paying, highest-status jobs. Really, it's all very simple. All
	boys devote their lives to amassing the most elongated genitals, growing the nasty things
	so that when they eventually wedge them inside some unfortunate girl, the distant end of
	the enlarged wanger actually breaks off—yes, the wanger flesh becomes so hardened that
	it shatters—and the broken portion remains lodged within the girl's hoo-hoo. This natural
	event is much like those lizards that live in arid deserts and can voluntarily detach their
	squirming tails. Any amount, from the pointed tip to almost the entire wiener, can literally

snap off inside a girl, and she's fully unable to remove it.

<b>Profanity/Derogatory Terms</b>	Count
Ass	13
Bitch	3
Fag	2
Fuck	9
Nigger	2
Piss	1
Pussy	2
Shit	18
Tit	3