**Firestarter**  
*by Donna Marvin*

Stephen King's newest novel, *Firestarter*, involves a secretive government agency and a young child with pyrokinetic powers, creating a spine-tingling chiller.

The story centers on a young couple, Andy and Vicky, who meet at a drug store. Both have volunteered to be human guinea pigs for an experiment called Lot 6, run by the Shop complex down, killing everyone in it, an attempt to get revenge for all they did to her and her family. At the story's end, she is alone and is about to be pursued again, but this time she will not be taken. Before anyone can harm her, she takes her story to a newspaper so that everyone can know of her plight.

Although King gives his characters special powers in almost all his novels, like *The Shining* and *The Dead Zone*, he also places them in real situations that make the stories seem all the more believable and frightening. As he tells us about the secret maze of The Shop and their widespread power, we feel almost as if this is something that could be happening right now. Except in King's novel, the theme of life that good will eventually win out over evil, and that revenge will come to those who want it is predominant.

All the major characters in the novel are well-developed and almost all are interesting—evil even. Charlie was especially lively and real as the child who is frightened, yet awed, by the power within her. She is concerned about not hurting people, afraid that once she unleashes her rage, she'll never be able to stop. Her headstrong nature and stubborn will are the qualities that carry her through to victory.

Andy McGee was also convincing as her father who runs with her because he doesn't want to see her caged up like an animal in an experiment. He progresses in the novel from a fighter to a thinker, using his special power to 'push' people, rather than just running.

Rainbird, the villain fascinated by death and killing, is a character who admires and falls in love with 9-year-old Charlie's inner strength and will. He tries to trick her by getting her to his side, but suffers from her revenge when she finds out he has betrayed her.

Like his past novels, King combines just enough reality with his extraordinary events and comes up, once again, with a winner.