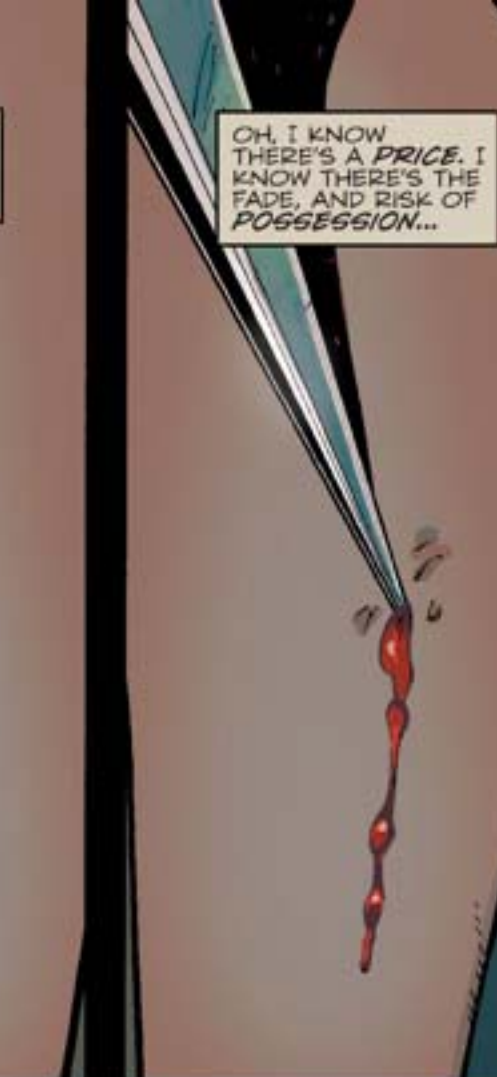




THE PROBLEM
WITH MAGIC
IS THAT IT
CHEATS.



IT IS, AT
ITS *ROOT*,
AN *UNFAIR*
ADVANTAGE.



OH, I KNOW
THERE'S A *PRICE*. I
KNOW THERE'S THE
FADE, AND RISK OF
POSSESSION...



...*DEMONS* WAITING TO
CONSUME AND CORRUPT
THE UNWARY OR FOOLISH
OR UNFORTUNATE MAGE.
I KNOW ALL THAT.

CHANGES
NOTHING.



IT'S *STILL*
A CHEAT.

BECAUSE WHAT A
MAGE CAN DO WITH
MAGIC, YOU AND I, WE
COULD *NEVER* DO IN
A HUNDRED AGES.



AND WITH MAGIC,
A MAGE CAN HAVE
A HUNDRED AGES
AND *MORE*.



AND IF THEY HAVE *ALL* THAT POWER, HOW DO YOU DEFEND AGAINST IT?

BECAUSE *POWER* CORRUPTS, AND ALL YOU NEED IS A LOOK AROUND THEDAS TO SEE THE PROOF.

SHOW ME A MAGE WHO *DOESN'T* WANT MORE POWER...

...AND I'LL SHOW YOU ONE OF THE TRANQUIL.

EITHER THAT, OR I'LL SHOW YOU A *CORPSE*.

WHICH BEGS THE QUESTION: HOW DO YOU KILL A MAGE?

ANSWER: YOU DON'T.



WE DO.

THAT'S MARIUS.
I'M TESSA.

WE'RE SPECIALISTS.

WE KILL
MAGES.

IF THE
PRICE IS
RIGHT.



WE STAY ON THE MOVE.



WE KEEP OUR HEADS DOWN.



AT LEAST, WHEN WE'RE NOT LOOKING OVER OUR SHOULDERS.



IT'S A GIVEN THAT YOU'LL MAKE **ENEMIES** IN THIS LINE OF WORK.

SOMEONE LOOKING TO SETTLE THE BOOKS...





...SOMEONE
LOOKING TO
PUT A STOP TO
WHAT WE DO.



MAYBE EVEN SOMEONE
FROM THE PAST.

TWO
THINGS...



...MASTER
BUCKINGHAM IS
SAFELY HOME AND
HIS FATHER IS MOST
CONTENTED...



...SO
MUCH SO
HE OFFERED
TO DOUBLE
PAYMENT.

I DECLINED,
MOSTLY BECAUSE
I KNEW YOU'D MAKE
ME RETURN IT IF
I ACCEPTED.



SECOND, I WAS
FOLLOWED FROM
THE PIER.



BUT
YOU KNEW
THAT.