



LOOKS LIKE A BOMB WENT OFF IN HERE...



...A VERITABLE MEGATON OF MUCOUS.

YEAH, ARE YOU DONE NOW? I BROUGHT YOU HERE TO HELP, NOT POINT OUT THE OBVIOUS WITH LAME JOKES.

BOB IS A SPIRIT OF PURE INTELLECT, THOUGH YOU'D NEVER KNOW IT BY HIS PERSONALITY.

HE'S COMPLETELY AMORAL, AND DOESN'T LIKE BEING TRAPPED IN A SKULL.

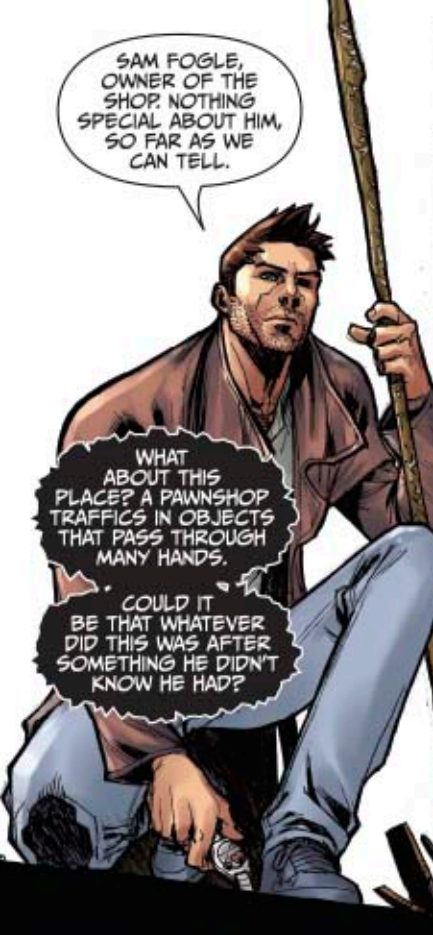
BUT AS A LIVING ENCYCLOPEDIA OF ALL THINGS SUPERNATURAL, HE'S AN INVALUABLE RESOURCE FOR SOMEONE LIKE ME.

SO TALK IT OUT. WHAT DO WE KNOW SO FAR?

THAT MUCOUS YOU REFERRED TO IS A RESINOUS SUBSTANCE THAT-- BECAUSE IT DIDN'T DISAPPEAR UPON SUNRISE OR BEING SEPARATED FROM ITS MAIN MASS-- CAN'T BE MAGICAL IN ORIGIN.

WHAT ABOUT THE VICTIM?





SAM FOGLE, OWNER OF THE SHOP. NOTHING SPECIAL ABOUT HIM, SO FAR AS WE CAN TELL.

WHAT ABOUT THIS PLACE? A PAWNSHOP TRAFFICS IN OBJECTS THAT PASS THROUGH MANY HANDS.
COULD IT BE THAT WHATEVER DID THIS WAS AFTER SOMETHING HE DIDN'T KNOW HE HAD?



THAT'S WHAT MY FIRST THOUGHT WAS, BUT AGAIN, NO. MOLLY WAS ABLE TO GET A GLIMPSE OF FOGLE'S LAST MOMENTS.

HIS ATTACKER WAS THERE FOR ONE REASON, AND ONE REASON ONLY--TO KILL HIM.

SHE'S A TALENTED GIRL, THAT MOLLY...



...SHAME YOU'VE NEVER ALLOWED HER TO BENEFIT FROM MY KNOWLEDGE.

YEAH, A REAL SHAME I HAVEN'T EXPOSED HER TO YOUR UNIQUE CHARM AND NONEXISTENT MORAL COMPASS.



THE KID'S BEEN TEMPTED ENOUGH BY DARK MAGIC WITHOUT--

BA-THUMP

CLINK



SHHHH.



YEAH... RIGHT. ANYWAY. WHAT'S YOUR TAKE ON ALL THIS?

NEXT DOOR'S A LAUNDROMAT. COULD HAVE JUST BEEN ONE OF ITS OLD MACHINES THUMPING AWAY.

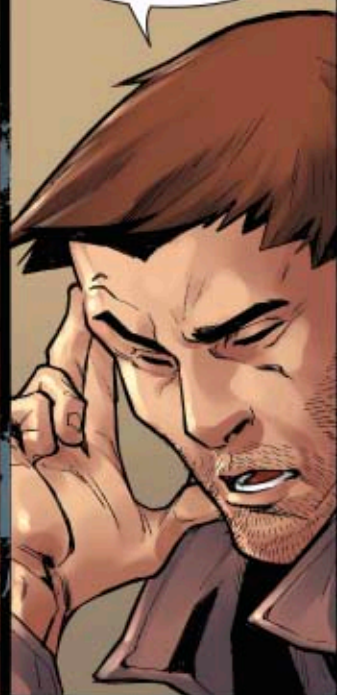
WELL, I THINK IT'S OBVIOUS--THE ATTACKER WAS A **MAGICAL CONSTRUCT**, UTILIZING OTHERWISE INANIMATE MATERIALS FROM THIS PLANE.

YES, BOB, I THINK IT'S OBVIOUS, TOO. THAT'S WHY I BROUGHT YOU HERE--TO HELP WITH THE STUFF THAT *ISN'T* SO OBVIOUS!

SIGH
I DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THIS.

YOU MAY NOT GIVE A DAMN, BUT WHATEVER KILLED SAM FOGLE COULD BE BEARING DOWN ON SOME OTHER POOR SLOB RIGHT THIS VERY--

FINALLY, HE ADMITS IT! THE GREAT HARRY DRESDEN IS A MASTER OF THE OBVIOUS.



THIS WASN'T POSSIBLE, I TOLD MYSELF.

NO WAY THE KILLER WOULD COME BACK TO VIRTUALLY THE SAME SPOT--

NEEDLESS TO SAY,
I WAS WRONG.

STARS AND
STONES...!


ALL OF A SUDDEN, I
LONGED FOR A VAMPIRE
OR THREE TO THROW
DOWN WITH.

AT LEAST I KNEW
HOW TO FIGHT THEM--
WHERE THEY WERE
VULNERABLE, HOW
THEY THOUGHT.



I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW
IF THIS MONSTROSITY
HAD INDEPENDENT
THOUGHT
OR INSTINCT.

DOLLAR
BILL
CHANGER



NONE OF WHICH MATTERED
TO THE GUY IT WAS ABOUT
TO FLATTEN.

OUT OF
THE WAY,
MAN--!

TAKING NO CHANCES, I
DON'T HOLD BACK--

FORZARE!

--FOR ALL THE
GOOD IT DOES ME.

THE THING MOVES
FASTER THAN SOMETHING
ITS SIZE SHOULD BE
ABLE TO, CROSSING THE
DISTANCE BETWEEN US
IN A HEARTBEAT.

I'M ABLE TO CONJURE A SHIELD
JUST IN TIME, BUT I STILL GET
A SENSE OF THE CREATURE'S
SHEER POWER--

--WHICH, IF ANYTHING,
SEEMS TO BE GREATER
THAN ITS MASS WOULD
SUGGEST.