

MY MIND SCRAMBLED
TO PROCESS WHAT
WAS UNFOLDING.

"GENTLEMAN" JOHNNY
MARCONE HAD FORCED
HIMSELF INTO OUR MISSION
TO TAKE DOWN THE
SORCERER RESPONSIBLE
FOR TWO KILLINGS...

...OSTENSIBLY TO PREVENT
THE MURDER OF THIS
POOR BASTARD WHO, LIKE
THE OTHERS, HAD BEEN
PAYING FOR MARCONE'S
PROTECTION.

NOW...

THE HELL
ARE YOU UP TO,
MARCONE?

WHAT ABOUT
ALL THAT TALK OF
PROTECTING THE
CITY? YOUR
CLIENT?





LOOK AT HIM, DRESDEN.

THE SORCERER INFECTED HIM WITH SOMETHING... SOME ARCAIC CONTAGION THAT MAY HAVE ALREADY SPREAD TO US.



I STUDIED THE MAN WHO'D BEEN PULLED FROM THE RELATIVE COMFORT OF HIS PAYCHECK-TO-PAYCHECK LIFE FOR THE FIRST TIME.

HE WAS OBVIOUSLY SICK, AND IT DEFINITELY DIDN'T APPEAR NATURAL.

I THINK--

≡KAFF≡

≡KAFF≡




I THINK HE MAY BE RIGHT.

THAT LUNATIC M-MADE ME DRINK SOMETHING... I THOUGHT I WAS BUYING MYSELF TIME. I'D HAVE DONE WORSE IF IT MEANT GIVING MYSELF A CHANCE AT SURVIVAL.

SHIT.

THAT GUNK COMING OUT OF HIM--

YES. WHATEVER HE INGESTED IS RAPIDLY METASTASIZING INTO A SUBSTANCE NOT UNLIKE THAT WHICH MAKES UP THE GOLEM'S MASS.



THE SORCERER MUST HAVE INTENDED IT TO SPREAD TO THE SURFACE POPULACE, ALLOWING HIM TO IMPOSE HIS WILL ON THEM.



IN OTHER WORDS, I AM RIGHT.

BUT THE SORCERER IS DEAD! DOESN'T THAT RENDER THE THREAT MOOT?



YES AND NO. HE CAN NO LONGER INFLUENCE OTHERS THROUGH THE VIRUS, BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN WE CAN ALLOW THE BUG TO BE SPREAD UNCONTROLLABLY.

THE ANSWER, HOWEVER ISN'T KILLING THIS MAN. WE NEED TO GET HIM INTO *QUARANTINE* AT A HOSPITAL...



...BUT FIRST WE NEED TO STOP THE GOLEM. THE SORCERER'S DEATH MEANS WE HAVE NO MEANS OF CONTROLLING IT, EITHER.



THAT'S NOT ENTIRELY TRUE, WIZARD.

I'M ALL EARS, JOHN.



THE HOSPITAL IS ALREADY IN THE CREATURE'S MIND. THE ONLY WAY TO KEEP IT AWAY FROM THERE...

...IS TO GIVE ITS PROGRAMMING A NEW TARGET.

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THIS IS MY CITY, AND I TAKE COMPLETE RESPONSIBILITY FOR IT.

MARCONE HAD JUST MADE HIMSELF THE TARGET OF AN UNSTOPPABLE KILLING MACHINE.

HE MAY BE ALL TOO WILLING TO SACRIFICE AN INNOCENT'S LIFE FOR WHAT PASSES, IN HIS TWISTED VIEW, AS THE GREATER GOOD...

WHOOA.

...BUT AT LEAST HE'S NOT AFRAID TO PUT HIS OWN ASS ON THE LINE, TOO.

I COULD LET THE GOLEM COME BACK, KILL YOU, AND WALK AWAY FREE AND CLEAR.

YOU COULD, BUT WE BOTH KNOW YOU WON'T.



SO LET'S SKIP TO THE PART WHERE YOU IMPROVISE A WAY TO STOP THAT THING.

I TRIED NOT TO LOOK DESPERATE AS I SCANNED OUR SURROUNDINGS.

THE CREATURE WAS IMPERVIOUS TO EVERYTHING I'D THROWN AT IT SO FAR, AND THE SORCERER DIDN'T SEEM TO HAVE ANYTHING BUT GARBAGE STREWN ABOUT HIS LAIR.



OF COURSE, MAYBE SOMEONE OTHER THAN THE SORCERER HAD LEFT SOMETHING USEFUL HERE...



THE PLAN FORMING IN MY MIND--SUCH AS IT IS--WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO PULL OFF BUT IT WAS OUR ONLY SHOT.

HEY, UH, MR...?

BEFORE THE THING CAME STORMING BACK IN HERE, I NEEDED TO MAKE SURE THE BENEFICIARY OF MARCONE'S PROTECTION RACKET COULD KEEP HIMSELF TOGETHER.



I DON'T THINK ANY OF US ARE EVER GOING TO SEE THE LIGHT OF DAY AGAIN.

I UNDERSTAND. YOUR WORLDVIEW IS IRREVOCABLY CHANGED.

I TRY TO KEEP THIS PART OF REALITY SAFELY AWAY FROM REGULAR FOLKS, SO THEY CAN LIVE THEIR LIVES WITHOUT HAVING TO WORRY ABOUT WHAT LURKS IN THE DARKNESS.

HALLIGAN. I'D SHAKE YOUR HAND... BUT THAT'S PROBABLY NOT A GOOD IDEA.

WE'RE GOING TO GET YOU OUT OF HERE, PAL--BUT I'M GOING TO NEED YOU TO FIND THE SAFEST CORNER YOU CAN UNTIL WE FIND A WAY TO STOP THIS THING.

AND EVEN IF WE DO, HOW COULD I JUST GO BACK TO MY OLD LIFE, WALK THE STREETS OF CHICAGO, KNOWING SOMEWHERE BELOW ME THERE'S A REAL-LIFE HELL?



YOU AREN'T SO LUCKY. YOU'VE GLIMPSED WHAT'S OUT THERE, BUT YOU KNOW WHAT...?

THERE ARE ALSO A LOT OF GOOD BEINGS HIDDEN IN THOSE SHADOWS.

IN A LOT OF WAYS, THEY'RE NO DIFFERENT FROM YOU.