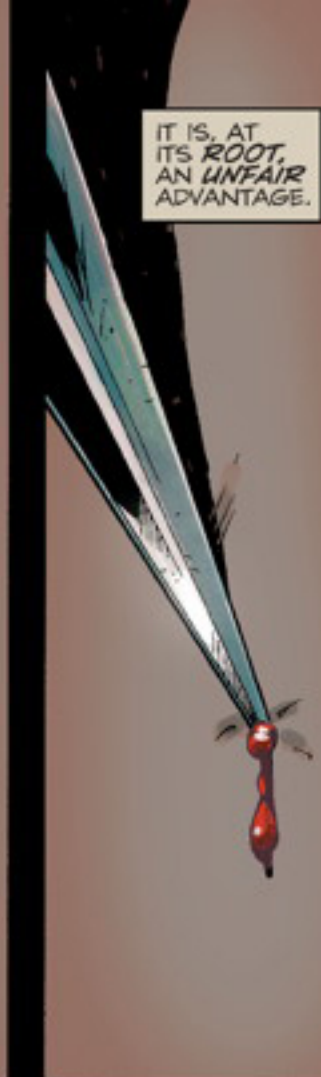
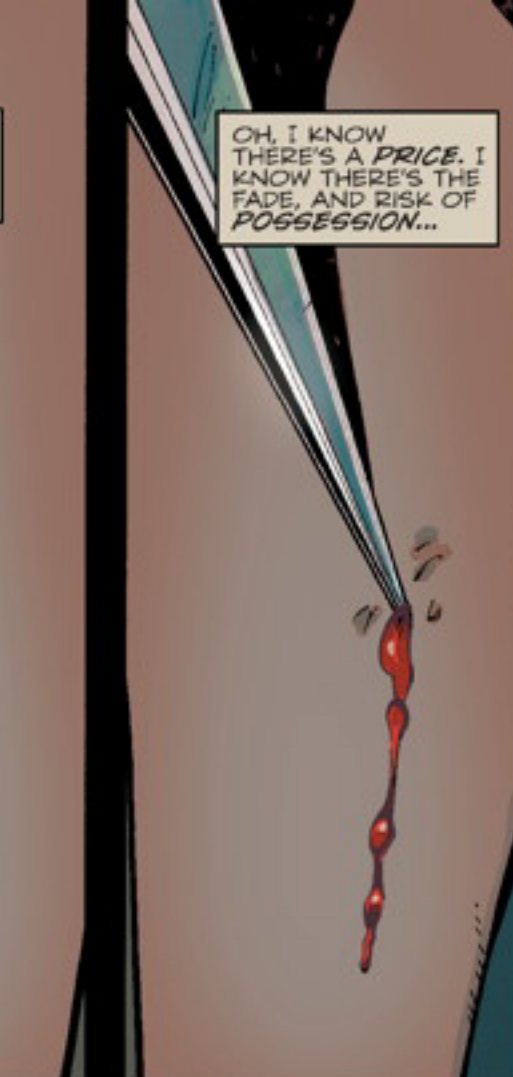


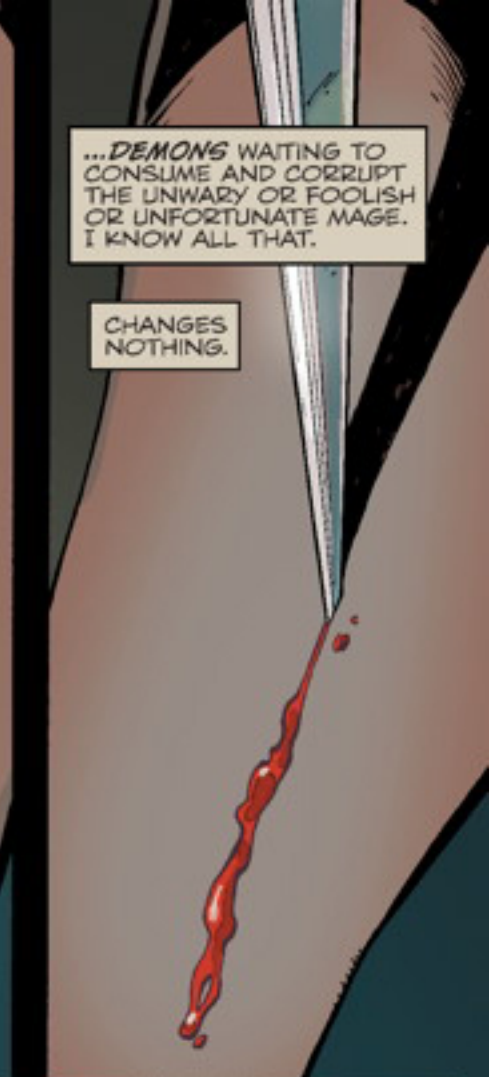
THE PROBLEM WITH MAGIC IS THAT IT CHEATS.



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

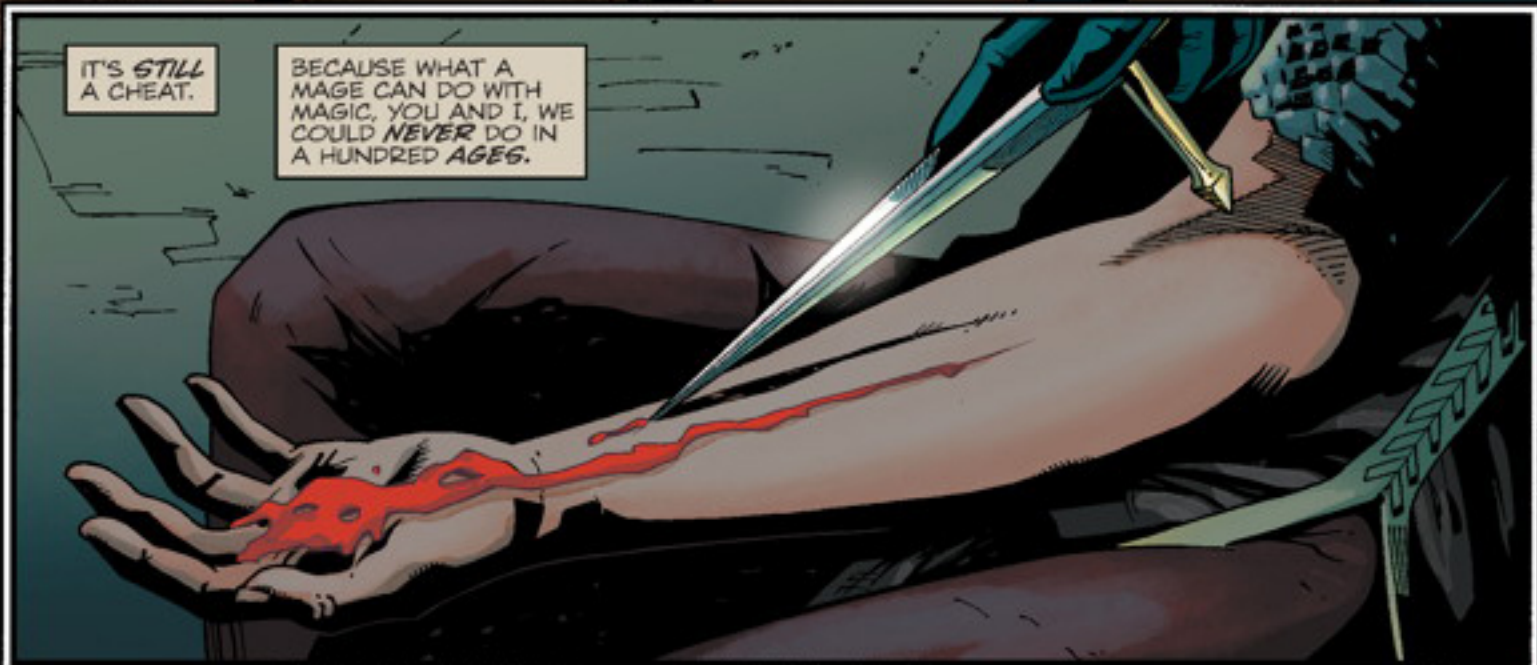


OH, I KNOW THERE'S A *PRICE*. I KNOW THERE'S THE *FADE*, AND RISK OF *POSSESSION*...




...*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 *THE* DEDAS 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.





...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.