

## The Dream Walker

A short story by Matthew Tansek

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If you were picturing the realm of the Oneiromancer to be something like the opium dens of 100 years ago, you wouldn't be far off. If you were thinking that soliciting help from one would be cheap, you would be. But I was a man pushed to desperation, willing to do anything and pay anything to find my son. It had been nearly four days since that scab covered thing had abducted him from our home, and each passing moment felt like defeat. The high pitched screams of confusion and terror that my little boy had made that night still ring in my ears, galvanizing the whole of me. My relentless search for anything that could help had lead me down a seemingly bottomless occult rabbit hole, and to this place; which I entered with a lump in my throat and a large withdrawal from my bank account in my pocket.

An attractive young woman wrapped in ornate silks parted me from my money as I was lead down into the cool viridian tiled chambers beneath that decaying brick building. The smells of incense, marijuana, bodily excretions and of other less familiar things intermixed gently in the great hanging veils of smoke. As we softly padded our way deeper I observed the chambers we passed as best I could, made difficult from the eclectic and sporadic placement of lamps and dangling bare bulbs. The rooms were partially curtained in great sheets of rippling violet fabric and held all manner of bedding, adornments and dreamers who as we slipped by could be heard muttering incoherently to themselves, or in the case of one individual, shrieking in the throes of violent nightmare.

When at last we came to a great arched wooden door, which noiselessly was pushed aside by my guide to reveal a low ceilinged circular room lined with squat antique bookshelves. The numbing silence of the space enveloped me and my attention was directed to a colossal black bed which dominated the far side of the room, and who's for posts formed ionic pillars from floor to ceiling.

The man who rose from that bed and donned a great dressing gown that hung beside it, moved slowly, as if not fully awake and aware of his actions. His exact nature I cannot fully articulate, but it felt to me like being in the presence of a great tree, or something that acts slow and deliberate. A soul that has an aspect of one that has witnessed a lifetime of experiences. I found that I was terrified when he beckoned to me, and only through sheer force of will was I able to move and approach. His eyes, half concealed by great drooping lids sparkled intelligently and somehow shown within them impressions of triumph and depravity, the likes of which made me shudder.

But it was a shudder of hope that passed through me, for if those sparkling eyes could see beyond this world like they say, they might also be able to see my son.