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The Magnus Protocol

Episode 19 "Hard Reset"

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Edited by Jonathan Sims**

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ANNOUNCER

This episode is dedicated to Dove Halber - Ceassless Watcher dedicate this now to my dearest sister. A true disciple of the eye. Haunting my waking nightmares even now. And the best sister a girl could ask for!

[Intro Theme]

ANNOUNCER

**Rusty Quill Presents: The Magnus Protocol.
Episode Nineteen – Hard Reset**

[Music]

1. INT. OIAR BREAKROOM – NIGHT, RAINING (CCTV)

SAM enters and pours bad coffee for himself.

SAM

You need topping up or...

CELIA

**(shuffling papers
distracted)**

No, I'm good thanks.

SAM

(walking over)

Looks like you raided every photocopier in the building this time.

CELIA

Hmmmm?

SAM

(sitting)

The papers? There seems to be more of them every time I come in here.

**You're lucky Lena hasn't noticed,
she's pretty uptight about how much
stuff we print.**

He catches sight of what she is working on.

SAM

(cont.)

Celia, what is all this?

CELIA

(still shuffling papers)

Just research.

SAM

Is that... alchemy?

CELIA

**(suddenly paying
attention)**

You recognize it?

SAM

Some of it.

He starts leafing through some of the papers.

SAM

(cont.)

**This one's something to do with
transference and this one... yeah, it's
all about spiritual substitution of
elements although looks like its
incomplete.**

CELIA

(incredulous)

You're what, an alchemist now?

SAM

**Hardly. I ran into a bunch of this
when I was looking into The Magnus**

Institute. Turns out they were pretty deep into all this stuff. What's got you looking into it?

CELIA

Just curious. Speaking of, how's the research into the Institute going?

SAM

I dunno. I think I'm going to drop it.

CELIA

Really?

SAM

Yeah, Alice keeps saying I'm getting obsessed and- don't tell her I said this- but I think she might have a point. I've never been good with loose ends.

CELIA

If you're sure. Seemed like you were handling it ok to me...

SAM

You think? Well either way, I've got enough cases piling up I doubt I'd have the time anyway.

CELIA

Tell me about it.

SAM

(standing)

Speaking of, I should probably get back to it. Enjoy... whatever this is.

CELIA

Will do. And if I find anything to do with the Institute, I just keep it to myself yeah?

SAM

Oh, well, I mean... I wouldn't go that
far...

2. CYBERSPACE – N/A, N/A

CHESTER

To my esteemed Colleague and friend, the honorable Fellow of the Royal Society Robert Boyle, from the bureau of Robert Hooke, Curator of Experiments of the same, regarding enactment of that most regrettable protocol in the service of God, King and Country against the Fellow Isaac Newton, penned in the year of our lord 1684.

I write to you now with intelligence of the gravest nature and a proposal most severe. I pray that my words do not further estrange you from me and that you believe me when I assure you that the suggested action is profoundly necessary for the continuation and preservation of Good Science.

We have much discussed the great divide between Isaac's experimentations and your own essential works and so I have oft found myself at odds with you for, though much of his work is dubious in its moral principle, his studies have always proven most illuminative and have many times assisted my own researches. I fear however, his most recent works have

disturbed this precarious equilibrium, turning instead to most improper, perhaps blasphemous, ends and I find myself left with no recourse other than to make it known to you in the hope that I might reawaken our previously close concord, which has lain dormant these long years, in service of a wholesale rejection of his creation which, I am of the firm opinion has finally erred towards the abominable and must be halted.

I recall with much shame that it was myself who pressed you so vociferously for restraint the last time this Protocol was enacted. It was I who begged patience, certain as I was that my work on Micrographia might have rendered a remedy for that most awful plague. It was I who warned that to enact a Protocol against the great city of London itself was a step beyond the rights of our position, but you were, as is so oft the case, correct in your steadfastness and I confess purgation of all that most dangerous and unfit knowledge was both necessary and good. It was only through the Protocol that we were spared from that Dread emission and I fear that such an act is once again required, though it is my fervent hope that on this occasion there is still sufficient time to limit the breadth of the poisonous act.

As well you know, despite Isaac's

standing as a Fellow within the estimable Society, his experiments persist in prying into such knowledge as we both know to be anathema to Good Science. His work on the vegetative propagation of metals has proceeded unabated these recent years and I am now most certain that the fruits of his labor will lead to tragedy, death and damnation if they are left to mature unchecked.

I have of late been a somewhat more frequent visitor to Isaac than you may have suspected and I fear that of the many sins I have committed in my time upon this earth, this may be one of those I come most to regret.

I had, of course, no knowledge of the perilous extent of his experiments and had I known such I would never have deigned to further associate myself with him, but his most recent letters promised work of a quite astonishing nature and, may god forgive me, my curiosity could not be assuaged without witness.

Upon his insistence I visited his laboratory in Trinity in a sanguine mood, though this was immediately disturbed by the damnable presence of that stunted dog he keeps, worrying my coat tails as I approached the threshold. As is his wont, Isaac failed to notice my approach, preoccupied as he was with his work, and it was only by

declaring myself most forcefully that he could be sufficiently distracted to acknowledge my presence.

Forgoing the customary pleasantries, he instead proceeded straight to his laboratory wherein I saw he had a glass flask of great proportions, at least thirty gallons or thereabouts, within which there was an element of such overwhelming radiance that to look upon it directly was to dazzle the eyes and throw the mind into confusion.

Composing myself, I queried Isaac on the nature of this creation, whereupon he explained with customary disinterest that he had finally perfected the work of Wilhelm Homberg to produce what he termed the Arbor Philosophorum Perfecta.

I was naturally most intrigued but despite my questioning he refused to elaborate, instead passing me a smoked glass that I might gaze upon his creation with greater clarity and when I did so I came to understand that what I was looking at was a small tree ensconced in a clear solution.

At first I presumed it to be merely another work of dendritic silver as we have seen before, albeit one of surpassing quality and finesse. However, I soon came to realize this was something altogether grander and profoundly abhorrent.

It's branches were exquisite and delicate, swaying slightly from small eddies in the liquid and they shone with every spectra. I must confess that to look upon it, one was filled with profound wonder at its exquisite elegance. I professed as much to Isaac and he replied quite solemnly "as are all of the Lord's living works."

This struck me as somewhat incongruous and gave me moment to pause for, though impressive, the tree was quite clearly mineral in nature and as such must be lacking in that essential vitality that only the Lord God can bestow.

I presumed his words an unfortunate jest, but he then asked me if I would taste of its fruit. I refused, of course, assuming the offer another of his odd japes but his face was grave. He then opened the flask and reached inside muttering as he did so: "de ligno autem scientiae boni et mali ne comedas in quocumque enim die comederis ex eo morte morieris".

Even I, steeped in worldly matters as I am, recognized The Lord's words to Adam and was much dismayed at the implication. Isaac then plucked the delicate fruit with ungloved hands and held it before me.

I began to not only doubt Isaac in that moment but even fear him, for I

knew he had finally transgressed the limits of anything within the bounds of mortal philosophy.

Until that moment, our encounter had been if not typical, at least explicable. Mayhap Isaac had made a legitimate discovery and was merely indulging in some grand performance before providing some less grotesque explanation. But such was not to be, for no sooner had I seen the fruit upon his palm before he tipped it into the waiting mouth of that cursed dog I had failed to see skulking at my feet.

Isaac's eyes never left mine but I could not help but watch as the wretched canine swallowed it. There was a moment's stillness within which Isaac watched me closely, for my reaction was seemingly of more interest to him at that moment than the fate of the animal. And my reaction was terror.

The dog remained motionless, at first seemingly unaffected by its unnatural feast but as the moments passed I espied a growing torpor in its manner, with slowed breathing, sagging posture and drooping jowls.

It lay down as if to sleep whereupon it grew ever more peaceful and still. I almost believed it dead, poisoned by my companion, but then I saw something far more distressing. The creature was taking root. Strands of its mottled brown hair were

extruding downwards between the floor, seeking the dark earth below. Then, too, its back began to sprout, radiant branches unfurling and thickening before me, reaching upwards towards the sunlight with a seemingly insatiable desire.

The dog then opened one eye and stared at me and this was the most disturbing thing of all, for that orb was also shimmering with that unnatural light, but more than that, it looked upon me and it knew me not as a beast knows its master but as one man knows another and though such a creature must by all natural law lack that essential and ephemeral anima that is required for such awful knowledge I tell you here Robert, it saw me and it knew me.

I felt myself grow insensible at that violation and before I could restrain myself I had grasped a heavy instrument with which I might dash its skull upon the floor! Isaac however, intervened and for the first time since feeding the animal that accursed fruit he spoke and bade me to remain calm. He then reached back to the flask with a smaller cup and decanted a portion of the solution into it. Then, seemingly without concern, he poured it upon the rapidly growing monstrosity.

There was a brief hiss and a release of steam which occluded my vision entirely, quickly followed by a slight

tugging at my trouser legs from which I recoiled in horror, fearing the creature had reached out to claim me in its insidious grip, but when the vapor cleared I found myself cowering from nothing more than that mange-ridden dog, no longer sprouting and burdened with knowledge, it was reduced to a mere beast once again.

Isaac laughed at this ignominious display and suggested I step away to recover so that I might “better appreciate that which had been revealed to me” I instead took my leave and hurried out of not just his chambers but the entire college as fast as I was able.

Thus it is that I find myself writing this account for you that you might better understand my concerns. No doubt you agree with me that I have witnessed something which is far outside that which we could, in good conscience and understanding, describe as Good Science, for if such a transmutation can be elicited from a lower creature devoid of soul or reason I tremble to consider how it might affect the children of Adam, blessed as we are with greater faculty and insight for both good and evil.

Though it pains me to speak so poorly of one so well regarded as Isaac I fear this latest excess is beyond what can be called

conscionable. His work must be curtailed for the safety of all. I remain opposed however, to any notion of violence against his person. He is a prominent figure and his work, though misguided, is not wantonly evil.

I propose that we enact the Protocol but limit it only to his laboratory, destroying his research and correspondence for, if we can end this digression from Good Science and divert him with more virtuous work, we might yet take possession of a newly ardent ally in our vigils. This is of course on condition that he never discovers our intervention nor is left to work in such solitude again.

Robert, my dear compatriot, I implore you to consider my plea despite our recent disagreements, for if you fail to act I will instead be forced to intervene alone and by god's grace I know not if I hold the fortitude to do what would need to be done.

Pray reply with all celerity for I fear that time is short in this matter.

Yours with the utmost respect and gratitude, for the sake of London, England, and for all of Christendom,

Robert

3. INT. OIAR OFFICE INT. – NIGHT, RAINING (COMPUTER).

SAM approaches Alice's desk slightly harried.

SAM
Alice?

ALICE
Yeah?

SAM
Do you have a moment?

There is an obnoxious error noise from the computer.

ALICE
(Irritated)
Apparently. What's up?

SAM
Can we talk in the break room?

ALICE
Look, Sam, I really don't have time to mess around tonight.

SAM
It'll only take a sec.

ALICE
What's wrong? You're doing your twitchy eye, you only do that when something's up?

Beat. SAM fidgets awkwardly.

SAM
(quietly)
Are the computers listening to us?

ALICE
(Amused despite herself)
What?

SAM

(quietly)

As in, are they monitoring our conversations or something?

ALICE

Freddie can barely boot up without throwing an error, so I seriously doubt it's monitoring your loo breaks. Typical Colin to have a complete breakdown just to get out of fixing the damn thing.

SAM

Alice.

ALICE

I know, I'm just frustrated. Look, what's brought this on all of a sudden Sam?

SAM

I- I know it sounds crazy but well, it's starting to feel like I'm deliberately being given cases that point to The Magnus Institute.

ALICE

You're right.

SAM

I am?

ALICE

Yeah, that does sound crazy.

SAM

I'm not making this up! These days it's like every other case links back to it in some way.

ALICE

Sam enough! Can you even hear yourself? Look... This place can really get to you if you're not careful. And I really don't want you to go the same way as Colin.

Pause.

SAM

Have you heard anything from him?

ALICE

No.

Beat.

ALICE

(cont.)

Was that all? Because like I said, I'm up to my eyes over here.

SAM

Yeah. Forget I said anything.

ALICE

Great.

Sam walks back to his desk.

Alice tries to work again.

There is another obnoxious error sound.

ALICE

(cont.)

For gods' sake!

4. INT. MANAGER'S OFFICE - NIGHT, RAINING (MANAGERS LANDLINE).

GWEN is in the middle of a heated argument with Lena. Or she would be, if Lena wasn't so ice cold.

GWEN

(raised voice.)

So just to be crystal clear, you want me to go out, alone, to an isolated location, to meet a dangerous external you wouldn't allow in this building, and you won't even consider the possibility of giving me some kind of security?

LENA

Correct. I regret that there aren't more resources available to support you, but that is the reality of the situation.

GWEN

This is ridiculous! You're the one who was laying into me for bringing Lady Mowbray here! What happened to "unacceptable risks to personnel"!?

Beat.

LENA

I'd like to remind you that you are the one resorted to blackmail to secure this position. I have completed such assignments myself on many occasions, and this is an essential part of the role. If, however, on reflection, you have come to realize you are unfit for the job, you are, as always, welcome to resign. I'm sure your family will be able to find you an easier position elsewhere.

Beat.

GWEN

(restrained)

I know that the O.I.A.R. has used Starkwall to provide security in the past. I don't think it's unreasonable to ask for some basic support.

LENA

Starkwall, as with any security force, have an unfortunate habit of escalating situations they become involved in. It's my professional opinion that you will be safer without their presence.

GWEN

So, I'm on my own.

LENA

Correct.

Beat.

LENA

(cont.)

Good luck.

5. INT. COLIN'S FLAT - MORNING, RAINING (ALICE'S PHONE).

We are in the corridor outside Colin's flat. ALICE is stood dripping on the doorstep, banging on the door. There is the sound of a fishtank beside the door on the other side.

ALICE

Come on Colin. We both know you're in there.

COLIN

(behind the door)

Alice? What are you doing here?

ALICE

I'm trying to check up on you, you idiot. You know, like a friend.

COLIN

(behind the door)

I'm fine.

ALICE

Just open the door Colin. I'm not talking to you through an inch of ex-council chipboard.

COLIN opens the door. ALICE reacts to his appearance.

ALICE

(cont.)

Hey mate. You're looking... here.

COLIN

Give me your phone.

ALICE

What?

COLIN

You want inside? Then give me your phone.

ALICE

Why?

Beat.

ALICE

(cont.)

You're going to throw it in the fishtank aren't you?

COLIN

I have to. It's the only way to be sure. We can't let him know how much we know.

ALICE

Right. Listen Colin we're all worried about you.

COLIN

You should be worried for yourselves.

ALICE

I know Lena told you to get some counselling, and I just thought I'd check... Are you? Seeing anyone? Professionally, I mean.

COLIN

No, what I need is to not be seen. He sees too much already. Doing mummy and daddy Stasi proud, I'm sure. Not that anyone cares as long as it all balances, right? Not too much mercury or the world ends, not too much sulfur or we all go mad...

ALICE

Colin calm down mate your starting to sound-

COLIN

Give me your phone.

ALICE

I'm not giving you my-

COLIN slams the door in her face.

ALICE CONT.

Colin? Colin!

She bangs on the door a couple of times. There is no response.

ALICE

Idiots. Idiots all the way down.

ALICE marches off down the corridor.

[Music]

ANNOUNCER

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The series is created by Jonathan Sims and Alexander J Newall, and directed by Alexander J Newall.

This episode was written by Jonathan Sims and edited with additional materials by Alexander J Newall, with vocal edits by Lowri Ann Davies, soundscaping by Tessa Vroom, and mastering by Catherine Rinella with music by Sam Jones. It featured Billie Hindle as Alice Dyer, Shahan Hamza as Samama Khalid, Anusia Battersby as Gwen Bouchard, Lowri Ann Davies as Celia Ripley, Kazeem Tosin Amore as Teddy Vaughn, Sarah Lambie as Lena Kelley, with additional voices from Tim Fearon.

The Magnus Protocol is produced by April Sumner, with executive producers Alexander J Newall, Dani McDonough, Linn Ci, and Samantha F.G. Hamilton, and Associate Producers Jordan L. Hawk, Taylor Michaels, Nicole Perlman, Cetius d'Raven, and Megan Nice.

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Thanks for listening.**

The Magnus Protocol 19 – Hard Reset

CAT13RBC1137-21031684-11042024

Transformation (canine) -/- growth (Crystalline)

Incident Elements:

- Animal Peril/Threat
- Metallophobia
- Body Horror
- Mentions of: Therapy, Implied Mental Breakdown

Transcripts: <https://shorturl.at/gzF15>

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Featuring (in order of appearance)

Shahan Hamza as Samama Khalid

Lowri Ann Davies as Celia Ripley

Billie Hindle as Alice Dyer

Anusia Battersby as Gwendolyn Bouchard

Sarah Lambie as Lena Kelley

Ryan Hopevere-Anderson as Colin Becher

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