**The Magnus Protocol**

**Episode 45**

**"Transferal"**

**Written by Alexander J Newall**

**Edited with additional materials by Jonathan Sims**

**[Intro Theme]**

**Announcer**

**Rusty Quill Presents: The Magnus Protocol.
Episode Forty-Five – Transferal**

**[Music]**

1. **SPARE room at Melanie’S HOUSE (Tape Deck), int. night, windy**

**SAM is building to an absolutely brutal night terror.

It slowly builds as we listen, his murmurs growing into thrashing cries until finally he awakes with a violent start.**

**SAM**

**(terrified and confused)**

**Alice? Alice! Oh god! Where-**

**Melanie bursts into the room carrying an iron poker.**

**Melanie**

**(urgent)**

**Nightmare or monster?**

**SAM**

**(breathless)**

1. **I don’t-**

**Melanie**

**(swinging the poker and hitting a bedside table)**

**Nightmare or monster Sam!**

**SAM**

**Christ! Uh nightmare! Nightmare! I- I just- would you put the poker down Melanie!**

**Melanie**

**Hmmm? Oh right, yeah.**

**She puts the iron poker down. It sounds satisfyingly heavy and sharp.**

**Melanie**

**(cont.)**

**Sorry, can’t be too careful.**

**SAM**

**Yeah, no it’s fine.**

**He exhales.**

**sam**

**(cont’d)**

**That was… It felt so real.**

**Melanie**

**I’m guessing it was a domain nightmare?**

**SAM**

**What?**

**Melanie**

**(realizing)**

**Oh wait yeah, you never *had* a domain did you?**

**SAM**

**(still rattled)**

**I don’t know… That was not a normal dream, that was…**

**He shudders.**

**Melanie**

**Interesting...**

**(approaching)**

**Felt real did it?**

**SAM**

**Yeah…**

**Melanie**

**And impossibly awful?**

**SAM**

**Yeah!**

**Melanie**

**But also weirdly sort of familiar?**

**SAM**

**Melanie, what’s going on?**

**Melanie**

**Just a theory but I think you might be getting our Sam’s dream.**

**sam**

**I thought he was dead?**

**melanie**

**Pretty sure he is.**

**SAM**

**So how is that possible?**

**Melanie**

**No idea.**

**MELANIE sits on SAM’s bed as he slowly settles himself.**

**Melanie**

**(cont.)**

**Wanna talk about it?**

**SAM**

**Not really.**

**Melanie**

**(standing)**

**Suit yourself. Some people say it helps. But well, if you change your mind, you know where I am.**

**She heads to the exit, opens the door and unceremoniously leaves.**

**Beat.**

**SAM**

**(lying back disturbed)**

**What the actual fuck?**

**Melanie suddenly opens the door without knocking.**

**SAM**

**(pulling up the covers)**

**Jesus!**

**Melanie**

**Relax, not like I’ll see anything I shouldn’t. Forgot my poker.**

**She reaches down and picks it up after a moment’s searching.**

**Melanie**

**Right, last chance or I’m going back to bed. Georgie and Basira will need breakfast when they get back from night shift and I’ll need to be up early to get the aga going, so-**

**SAM**

**(small)**

**You really think it will help?**

**Melanie**

**It normally does. But then again you are an alien from another dimension so who the hell knows?**

**SAM**

**Fine, all right.**

**Melanie**

**(cooly)**

**Oh, doing me a favour are you?**

**SAM**

**Sorry. I don’t mean to be ungrateful just still a bit rattled. Melanie, I would like to talk about it, if you’ll listen?**

**She puts the poker back down, goes over to his bed then sits.**

**Melanie**

**(cont.)**

**Go on then. When you’re ready.**

**Beat.**

**SAM**

**So um, I’m not sure where to start…**

**Melanie**

**It normally doesn’t matter. I’m told it’s more about the journey than making sense of it.**

**SAM**

**Uh right. I guess that makes sense.**

**As SAM speaks he slowly slips into a narrative mode and the small noises of the empty house ease off.**

1. **Sam's room Cont.-MONOLOGUE (Tape Deck), int. night, windy**

**SAM**

**I was back at Akman Blane, my old Law Firm, and I was getting something from the stationary cupboard, paper I think, from the top shelf.

Then the door slammed shut behind me and it was dark. Completely dark. I tried to turn, to reach for the handle and throw the door open but… I couldn’t move. At first, I thought I was afraid but… I wasn’t, not yet. I was just stuck. Pinned on all sides. There was no pressure, but it was as though the entire cupboard had closed around me like a casket, or an iron maiden.**

**I tried to at least shift my weight, but I couldn’t, I couldn’t even wriggle my toes. I wasn’t paralysed, though, I was just held in place by something.

I tried to struggle but there wasn’t room to tense a single muscle. I couldn’t breathe but that didn’t seem to matter. No light, no noise, no air, no idea of up or down or anything. Just perfect stillness and the feeling of something pressing against my skin, not crushing but utterly immovable and familiar…**

**Bone. Living bone: smooth, and warm and damp. A perfect shell of bone pressed against me.

I should have been terrified, I should have been panicking and screaming but… I wasn’t. I was just confused. It felt… wrong. Unpleasant yes, strange and painful even but not frightening. Mostly I was just confused, as though it wasn’t meant for me.

Then it began to shrink. It was slow, awfully slow, but I felt it instantly across my entire body. Not that deep ache of building pressure, but bright and sharp as though I was being cut all over except, there were no points of focus, no bright lines of pain that drowned out the surrounding feelings with their loudness it was more like the same single knife, bright and sharp, cutting into your skin everywhere all at once, almost like a burn.

But again, even through all that pain I could still tell something was off. It felt real yes but more like someone was trying to demonstrate the feeling to me, like I was eavesdropping on someone else’s suffering instead of really feeling it.

The bone pushed inwards, slicing through my skin, through my muscle, deeper and deeper until finally the bones outside met the bones inside and I couldn’t tell one from the other.

I don’t know how long I was held there, frozen in sharp bone. The whole process had been utterly silent and dark and I was too distracted by the pain and confusion to care.

But eventually, after what seemed like forever, I heard a single distant voice.**

**Alice.

She was so quiet, at first I couldn’t be sure I heard her at all, a tiny breath of sound at the very edge of my hearing as though she were screaming in agony on the distant horizon of a still and silent ocean.

I strained to hear her though the overwhelming silence and finally I could make it out. She was screaming my name over and over and over, begging me with joy and grief but it wasn’t meant for me. I was just a pretender, a shadow on the wall of *his* life.

We were there together, trapped in a distant, intimate awfulness and there was nothing I could do but listen to her scream for the person I’m meant to be, instead of who I am…**

1. **Sam's room Cont. (Tape Deck), int. night, windy**

**The room has returned and with it MELANIE. They both sit in silence for a long time before finally:**

**Melanie**

**Well that sounds crap. Sorry it happened to you.**

**SAM**

**But that’s the thing, it didn’t did it? It happened to them, to him, I’m just… stealing it.**

**Melanie**

**Borrowing maybe but if he was still around, I doubt he’d be eager to keep it.**

**SAM**

**I’m not so sure. Alice, this Alice, I think she’d fight to keep it...**

**Melanie**

**Yeah, Georgie did mention she was a dreamer. Sounds like it’s probably a good thing you didn’t feel at home.**

**SAM**

**Is it different for you?**

**Melanie**

**How so?**

**SAM**

**Like if you dream about your… thing, does it seem more real or…**

**Melanie**

**Uh…**

**SAM**

**(backtracking)**

**Sorry, sorry that’s private, I wasn’t thinking-**

**Melanie**

**Huh? No, it’s nothing like that, it’s just… Georgie and I, we don’t Dream. Well, I mean we do dream but we don’t Dream dream, y’know? Never have.**

**SAM**

**(confused)**

**Oh. I thought everyone…**

**Melanie**

**Yeah, well Georgie and I … we’re different.**

**SAm**

**Right.**

**Beat.**

**Melanie**

**Eurgh fine. I’m not going to be able to get back to sleep anyway.**

**MELANIE awkwardly and settles herself more comfortably beside SAM on his bed**

**SAM**

**Comfy?**

**Melanie**

**I’ll manage. Right, where was I?**

**SAM**

**You’re different.**

**Melanie**

**(cont.)**

**Yes, so, back before everything went to hell I was a ghost hunter for a while. You have those back home?**

**SAM**

**What, like reality TV?**

**Melanie**

**I mean I was more YouTube but, yeah, same thing. So one day I’m making my show and I see something weird.**

**SAM**

**Wasn’t that the goal?**

**Melanie**

**Different kind of weird. I mean, it wasn’t much, you wouldn’t even call it in these days but back then… Anyway, I end up going to have a talk with the Magnus Institute and run into Jonathan bloody Sims.**

**SAM**

**Wait, wasn’t he-**

**Melanie**

**Our Archivist yep. Only he wasn’t THE Archivist back then he was just a pain in the ass. Long story short, after a bunch of bullshit and bad decisions I end up working there for a while with Basira and a few other folks. We dodge the end of the world a couple of times, figure out we’re actually working for the bad guys, and I decide to call it quits.**

**SAM**

**Why stick it out that long?**

**Melanie**

**(pointedly) The severance was rough.**

**Anyway point being that job was how I got together with Georgie.**

**SAM**

**But I thought she didn’t work there?**

**Melanie**

**(uncharacteristically awkward)**

**Uh no. She… had an ex who did. It’s complicated. Point is, she had seen her own weirdness back in the day and had ended up with all her fear cut out of her.**

**SAM**

**Her- I’m sorry what?**

**Melanie**

**Dunno how else to explain it. Some monster took all her fear.**

**SAM**

**So, what? She just doesn’t get afraid?**

**Melanie**

**Pretty much. It actually ended up making her more cautious in some ways, since she can’t trust her instincts any more.**

**SAM**

**That… explains a lot. Hang on, would she be ok with you telling me this?**

**Melanie**

**Oh yeah. She prefers people know if it might be important. Anyway, jump ahead and the world ends when I’m not there to stop it. Only things are different for me and Georgie compared to everyone else. We’re sort of on the outside looking in.**

**SAM**

**Because Georgie can’t get scared?**

**Melanie**

**You can’t trap someone with something that doesn’t exist right?**

**SAM**

**I guess. And you?**

**Melanie**

**Let’s just say that having “former Magnus Institute patsy” on your CV started to carry some special perks.**

**SAM**

**What like “immune to the apocalypse”?**

**Melanie**

**More like “gets to go backstage.” Because we didn’t have our own domains we could pop in and out of other people’s if we wanted. We could even pull people out if we were careful but it was dangerous and well, they- they didn’t always make it.**

**Beat.**

**Melanie**

**(pressing on)**

**Anyway all this meant that we got to see- or, y’know, hear, feel, smell… eurgh… a bunch of domains without having one of our own, so once everything got back to what counts for normal now, we were lucky enough not to get Dreams with a capital “D”, just your standard, bog-basic PTSD.**

**SAM**

**I mean that’s hardly great.**

**Melanie**

**Sure, but its still the lesser evil.**

**SAM**

**Fair point. Not sure where that leaves me though.**

**Melanie**

**Somewhere between the two I’d guess.**

**Beat.**

**SAM**

**Georgie said I should tell her if anything weird happens. Do you think this counts?**

**MELANIE blows through her cheeks.**

**Melanie**

**Tough call. On the one hand, I’m pretty sure she’d want to know about it…**

**SAM**

**But?**

**Melanie**

**But on the other, she’s only just starting to trust you. A bit. This is the sort of thing that would set her off again.**

**SAM**

**So what, *don’t* mention it?**

**Melanie**

**(thinking) No, I think you should. They’ll need all the info they can get if they’re going to bring your archivist thing down. And if she overreacts…**

**SAM**

**You’ll stick up for me?**

**Melanie**

**I’ll definitely try to make her feel a bit guilty after she ties you to a chair.**

**SAM**

**Gee thanks.**

1. **Melanie’s KITCHEN (Tape Deck), int. morning, clear**

**MELANIE is preparing a hot breakfast with SAM’s help. GEORGIE and BASIRA are sat around the table.**

**BASIRA**

**I don’t like it.**

**Melanie**

**Yeah but what do you like really?**

**BASIRA**

**Books. And knowing that people aren’t getting turned into Avatars while my back is turned.**

**SAM**

**I mean, I did tell you as soon as you got back.**

**Melanie**

**He did.**

**BASIRA**

**(to MELANIE)**

**And when did you two suddenly become best friends?**

**GEORGIE**

**(weary)**

**She acts tough, but she’s got a soft spot for strays.**

**BASIRA**

**You can talk.**

**Melanie**

**Speaking of the Admiral seems to like him. So that’s a good sign.**

**GEORGIE**

**And we’re certain his Archivist wasn’t involved in the nightmare?**

**SAM**

**(exasperated)**

**I keep telling you it’s not my-**

**Melanie**

**I don’t think so. No obvious connections. It wasn’t even a particularly bad one, as domain nightmares go.**

**SAM**

**(slightly petulant)**

**I mean it didn’t feel great but whatever, I’ll take your word for it. I guess it was fine then.**

**BASIRA**

**(dubious)**

**Uhuh.**

**Beat.**

**GEORGIE**

**I’m too tired for this. He seems fine and it’s not like we can do anything differently right now.**

**Your call Basira. I’m okay with it but if you’re seeing something I’m not let me know.**

**Beat. BASIRA considers SAM.**

**BASIRA**

**Fine. But if he starts sprouting eyes or whatever I’ll put him down myself.**

**SAM**

**Uh…**

**Melanie**

**It’s fine. We lanced them and they’ve basically healed by this point.**

**BASIRA**

**(shaking her head)**

**Christ…**

**MELANIE dishes up some food and they begin to serve themselves. It’s simple but hearty fare.**

**Melanie**

**So how are things looking with the wardens?**

**GEORGIE**

**Not great. No more victims-**

**SAM**

**Sounds good to me.**

**GEORGIE**

**-but no other signs either. It’s laying low again, and we still don’t have a way to track it.**

**BASIRA**

**I’m telling you, it’ll be in the square mile. It’s the only place that makes any sense.**

**GEORGIE**

**You’re probably right.**

**BASIRA**

**You give me three good teams and that APC you’ve got and I reckon we can have this done in a day. Maybe two.**

**SAM**

**Again, sounds good to me, sign me up.**

**GEORGIE**

**I don’t have three good teams. There aren’t many first-wave wardens left on duty and you couldn’t take rookies. especially when everything is riled up like this.**

**BASIRA**

**It’s worth the risk.**

**GEORGIE**

**We don’t even know it’s in there. That’s a lot to risk on a maybe.**

**BASIRA**

**Hmm.**

**Beat. MELANIE sits and begins helping herself to some food while everyone else eats in silence.**

**Melanie**

**(to Sam)**

**I’m curious. How would your “Oh-eye-argh” handle this?**

**SAM**

**Okay firstly, it’s “O.I.A.R.”-**

**Melanie**

**That’s what I said-**

**SAM**

**-secondly, we already tried and mucked it up remember? That’s why it’s here.**

**Melanie**

**Well yeah but based on what Georgie said I sort of assumed you were like the B team or something y’know?**

**SAM**

**Wow thanks but no, we were it. Unless you count Starkwall.**

**GEORGIE**

**Starkwall?**

**sam**

**Psycho PMC mercenary types. I never met them but I got the impression they were bad news.**

**BASIRA**

**Hmm. Pass.**

**GEORGIE**

**Agreed.**

**SAM**

**So yeah, once Celia and I made it to the Hilltop Centre we were basically on our own.**

**Beat. MELANIE stops eating.**

**BASIRA**

**(oblivious)**

**Who?**

**SAM**

**Celia? Georgie didn’t mention her? We work together at the O.I.A.R and we were sort of dating. At least we were until… well… I came here.**

**Melanie**

**(to Georgie)**

**You never said she was called Celia.**

**GEORGIE**

**(realizing)**

**He mentioned her in interrogation and with everything else going on… I never got round to checking up on it.**

**SAM**

**What’s wrong?**

**Melanie**

**Your Celia, what does she look like?**

**SAM**

**Err. Well she’s really pretty-**

**Melanie**

**We need actual details Sam, not a dating profile.**

**SAM**

**(irritated)**

**Tall. Dark hair.**

**Melanie**

**Welsh accent?**

**SAM**

**Yeah but she doesn’t-**

**(realizing)**

**I didn’t tell you that.**

**Melanie**

**No. You didn’t.**

**BASIRA**

**What am I missing here?**

**GEORGIE**

**Your Celia, did she ever talk about where she came from?**

**SAM**

**Oh, well she’s always been a pretty private person and I respect that, but at the end before I fell through to here she told me -**

**Beat.**

**SAM**

**(cont.)**

**Oh shit.**

**BASRIA**

**Okay someone needs to actually say what you’re all realizing otherwise I’m just going to go back to the commune. I don’t have time for all this Pinter bullshit-**

**Melanie**

**She came from here, didn’t she?**

**SAM**

**Of course…**

**GEORGIE**

**She got away. She made it.**

**sam**

**You knew her?**

**Melanie**

**She was one of the ones we pulled out of their domain. We looked after her for a while then lost track of her around Towerfall. We thought she’d been killed….**

**BASIRA**

**I didn’t really know your little cult that well. She was the one without any memories, right?**

**Georgie**

**That’s her.**

**SAM**

**So, all this time, she didn’t just know about the Hilltop portal, she knew it lead here…**

**georgie**

**And what, she was trying to get home?**

**sam**

**I don’t think so. She must have had plenty of chances before taking me there.**

**Melanie**

**Maybe she doesn’t know Towerfall happened?**

**basira**

**Meaning she took Sam there and didn’t even warn him?**

**Melanie**

**I mean…**

**Pause.**

**Georgie**

**You all right there Sam?**

**Beat.**

**SAM**

**(dark)**

**Yeah. I’m fine.**

**Melanie**

**You don’t sound fine…**

**SAM**

**(short)**

**Let’s just focus on dealing with The Archivist. Once we get rid of it, then I can go home and then… then I’ll have a little talk with Celia and we’ll see if we can straighten some things out.**

**[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 Alexander J Newall and edited with additional materials by Jonathan Sims, with vocal edits by Nico Vettese, soundscaping by Meg McKellar, and mastering by Catherine Rinella with music by Sam Jones.
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**Thanks for listening.**

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**Incident Elements:
·     Night terrors
·     body horror
·     claustrophobia
·     SFX: clanging, eating**

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Lydia Nicholas as Melanie King
Frank Voss as Basira Hussain
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