**The Magnus Protocol**

**Episode 48**

**"Temporary Positions"**

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**Edited with additional materials by Alexander Newall**

**[Intro Theme]**

**Announcer**

**Rusty Quill Presents: The Magnus Protocol.
Episode Forty-Eight – Temporary Positions**

**[Music]**

1. **ext. the square mile, night, clear (Tape Recorder)**

**Click.**

**The square mile is near, full of things that should not be. SAM is lying in the mud, asleep near a military-grade electric fence.**

**He shivers, then after a particularly loud creature cries, he wakes with a gasp.**

**sam**

**(groggy)**

**What? Ah It’s cold! I- Where…**

**He looks around a realizes where he is. There is the distant rumble of an approaching engine.**

**sam**

**(cont.)**

**Oh. Oh no, How the hell did I get back here?**

**He gets unsteadily to his feet.**

**sam**

**(cont.)**

**Okay calm down, calm down.**

**An overambitious creepy tries to approach and… ZAP!**

**SAM**

**Argh! Oh okay, I’m guessing that’s the perimeter fence then so…**

**The rumble grows nearer.**

**sam**

**(cont.)**

**Oh thank christ.**

**(calling)**

**Hey! Hey over here! I need help!**

**The engine bears down on Sam as the zone recoils slightly.**

**sam**

**(cont. calling)**

**Oh wow am I glad to see you!**

**warden olivia**

**(tense)**

**Back up! Stand in the headlights, show me your hands!**

**Beat.**

**WARDEN OlIVIA**

**Hang on, you’re The Captain’s pet right? Sam… something?**

**sam**

**Uh yeah that’s me. I guess.**

**warden olivia**

**(climbing down)**

**She’s got half the wardens out looking for you. What the hell are you doing here in your PJs?**

**sam**

**I have absolutely no idea.**

**warden olivia**

**(dubious)**

**Sure. Well, get in, I’ll take you back to base.**

**SAM**

**(Hurrying over)**

**Thank you!**

**warden olivia**

**But you’re the one who explains this to the captain.**

**Click.**

1. **Int., GEORGIE’s office, night, clear (tape recorder)**

**Click.**

**SAM is sat sipping from a hot cup while GEORGIE paces.**

**Georgie**

**(brusque)**

**Seriously? No idea?**

**sam**

**I told you, I went to bed normally, fell asleep and then when I woke up-**

**Georgie**

**Yeah, fine.**

**Beat.**

**sam**

**Maybe I was sleepwalking?**

**Georgie**

**Through two locked doors and a monitored patrol circuit? With nobody seeing you? No. I don’t think you walked anywhere.**

**sam**

**So you think I just, what, magically teleported there?**

**Georgie**

**We don’t say “magic” on base. It softens it, makes people complacent**

**sam**

**Okay so you think I just… appeared there. Why?**

**Georgie**

**(sharp)**

**Why would you suddenly be teleported back to the hole in the world you crawled out of? Gee, I wonder…**

**sam**

**(not escalating)**

**So you think it’s trying to pull me back?**

**Georgie**

**Makes sense.**

**sam**

**I guess. So what? Now I could just ping into the middle of the zone at any time…**

**GEORGIE**

**I mean, better you going in than other stuff coming out.**

**SAM**

**Thanks.**

**GEORGIE**

**Just being honest.**

**sam**

**Well fine then. If my world wants me back so much and I’m such a burden why don’t I just go? The doctor said I’m basically recovered.**

**Georgie**

**Oh I’ll be more than happy to send you on your merry way… As soon as we’ve dealt with the potentially world-ending monster you brought here with you.**

**Beat.**

**sam**

**Fair. So do we think the Archivist is getting pulled back as well?**

**Georgie**

**Maybe. If it does get pulled back through, fantastic. We’ll pack you up and send you on your way. I’ll even give you a lift.**

**SAM**

**How generous.**

**GEORGIE**

**But I’m not counting on it. My luck isn’t that good. For now, the best we can do is call up some reserves and add more patrols, just in case it turns up as suddenly as you did.**

**sam**

**Good idea.**

**Georgie**

**Honestly though, I’d feel better dealing with it here on our terms.**

**I’d rather have a corpse I can burn than just making it your problem and hoping it all works out.**

**SAM**

**(diplomatic)**

**I understand.**

**GEORGIE**

 **Although, that does remind me…**

**GEORGIE picks up a phone handset and presses a few buttons.**

**Georgie**

**Hello? Yeah. Is Anya here yet?**

**She listens to the handset.**

**Georgie cont.**

**Good. Could you send her up? Thanks.**

**She replaces the handset.**

**sam**

**What’s going on?**

**Georgie**

**I was going to tell you before you pulled your little disappearing act, but no time like the present, I guess.**

**sam**

**(uncertain)**

**Uh Ok…**

**Georgie**

**I’ve got some friends over at the Oxford Exclusion Zone, and I had a hunch, so I asked them if they’d ever heard of anyone turning up from another world like you.**

**sam**

**And they had?**

**Georgie**

**More than once. Turns out it’s… well, not a regular thing, but it’s happened a few times over the years. People turn up in the zone, starved almost to death, and they generally help them recover and send them back.**

**sam**

**And no one thought to mention this to me?**

**Georgie**

**I mean, they told me when I asked. Remember, Wardens are community-formed, not centralized, and comms are still patchy. Also most people just want to move on and forget about the zones entirely so there’s a serious shortage of researchers.**

**sam**

**So why did I end up here and not in Oxford?**

**Georgie**

**That is a fantastic question that I am not qualified to answer.**

**sam**

**Right. But it was almost certainly because of The Archivist right?**

**Georgie**

**Oh yeah. Anyway, it’s happened enough times up there that the wardens have been looking into it a bit deeper. Turns out they managed to find someone who made the crossing pre-Incursion.**

**sam**

**Oh, cool.**

**Georgie**

**Her name’s Anya Villette, and I thought the two of you might have a few things to discuss. Maybe try and work out-**

**There’s a polite knock at the door of the room. GEORGIE opens it and ANYA steps inside.**

**Georgie**

**(cont)**

**Ms. Villette, thanks for coming.**

**anya**

**(to Georgie)**

**Glad to help.**

**(to Sam)**

**Are you other traveller?**

**sam**

**Yeah, Sam. Hey.**

**Anya?**

**anya**

**Good to meet you.**

**sam**

**You too.**

**Beat.**

**Georgie**

**Well, I’ve got to write up this whole… situation, so I’ll leave you to talk. Let me know if you have any reality-shattering insights.**

**sam**

**Will do.**

**Georgie exits.**

**Beat.**

**sam**

**So, Anya… What’s your story?**

**anya**

**Short version or the long version?**

**sam**

**It’s not like I’ve got anywhere I need to be.**

1. **Int., Warden office, night, clear (tape recorder)**

**anya**

**I was… nobody. Still am, really. Used to work as a cleaner, now I help with construction. Never cleaned anything special or built anything important and I’m happy with that. I’ve met important people and I’ve seen their work and let me tell you, being nobody is better.

The only thing that makes me different is that I’m not from here but it’s just a different type of immigration really.

I still don’t know why it happened to me. I was just cleaning a house. It was big, and a bit creepy but people had lived there for decades probably. I don’t know, maybe it had a reputation or something, but I never looked it up because, hey, it was just a cleaning job. But I went down into a basement that wasn’t supposed to be there, things went weird and when I woke up. I’d lost time, I’d lost weight, and I’d lost home.

I went back to that house a bunch of times over the years, trying to see if I could go back but it never worked. So eventually, I settled down and made do. My parents never met in this world so no need to worry about doubling up. It wasn’t easy, I didn’t exist on any government database, and I was constantly worried about being deported somewhere but it never came to that.**

**Gradually, I worked my way onto some official systems. Email address then a bank account, then a stable address… Any real investigation and it would have all fallen apart but I stayed out of trouble, avoided stuff like credit checks and it seemed fine.**

**I got myself a job in a little café, managed to get a small friend group together, I even started dating. I had quite a nice little life built up by the time the world ended.

Looks like you’ve been here awhile so I assume I don’t need to explain the incursion? Great. They’ve explained how it worked? Everyone trapped in their own custom fear pocket? Well, I didn’t have a domain of my own. I guess it’s because of what happened to me, but who knows? The point is, stuff worked differently for me.

I started trapped in a muddy ditch with maybe two others and if you tried to escape you couldn’t help but slide back down and there were long shards of broken glass hidden in the mud at the bottom so that they cut into you when you weren’t trying to get out.

I remember, when I first arrived, I was mostly just confused. Not just because the world had suddenly changed but more because everybody else seemed to know exactly what they were meant to do. They all immediately turned on one another with horrible violence or terrified flight but even now I still have no idea what they were thinking.

It still hurt, though. When the glass cut my legs or when someone tried to smother me in the muck, it all felt exactly as awful as you would think although… I never screamed as loudly as the others, my wounds were never so serious and I always climbed the highest. I guess it was just a bit easier for me?

I actually started to feel guilty, like an imposter. Soon the others noticed I was different, they stopped attacking me and then they ignored me altogether and I was just standing in the dirt watching them, alone in the crowd.

Then it all changed. Suddenly I wasn’t in the pit I was looking out the window of an old, badly furnished apartment as fire swept up the crooked tenement.

Now I know you aren’t meant to compare domains, they were specific, everyone felt as bad as they could, that was the point. But… feeling the fire burn through your flesh, that definitely hurts the most, no question. There are no words to describe it and even if there were I wouldn’t.

And yet, I handled it the best. I was the only one who seemed able to leave my own apartment, I was able to push through and keep moving, and I would fight my way inside other people’s apartments to help them.

Maybe that was my mistake? They would welcome my help at first but soon they became suspicious, then outright hostile. It wasn’t long before they were deliberately locking their doors and I was shut out. Then it all changed again.

I lost count of how many times I moved. Drowning in an endless ocean, pulled apart by a butcher’s machine, trapped as a lab rat incubating diseases… Every time suffering, but every time as an extra, as a tourist.

When the Incursion finally ended, at first I just assumed I’d been shifted into another domain, albeit one much more boring than the others. It was only once I found other people that I started to realise it was over.

Since then I’ve joined a commune out near Abingdon. It’s much easier for me now since basically no one has any official records and even if they did no one would care, everyone is just glad of the help. We’re doing alright, crops are doing well. I didn’t hear any of the rumours about the Oxford zone at first. We were all too busy but eventually I learned there was some hole in the world near Cowley Road.

It wasn’t far, so I went to have a look, got chatting to one of the wardens and well… here we are.**

1. **Int., Warden office, night, clear (tape recorder)**

**Anya leans back.**

**sam**

**How many times have you told that story?**

**anya**

**I’ve lost count. Does it sound anything like what happened to you?**

**sam**

**I mean, I haven’t lived through the sort of hells you have, but in terms of changing dimensions… maybe a bit? So how many other, uh, “travellers” have you talked to?**

**anya**

**Four, including you.**

**sam**

**Did they all come from my world?**

**anya**

**I’m pretty sure they didn’t all come from the same place. What’s something special about your world?**

**sam**

**Uh… You ever heard of the Magnus Institute?**

**anya**

**Everyone here knows the Institute since Towerfall.**

**sam**

**Right, of course. Well, in my world it burned down in 1999.**

**anya**

**Right. Well, I never heard of it back in my mine. Of the others I met, two of them came from somewhere where it was still active, although they didn’t know much about it, and the third said it was based in Edinburgh.**

**sam**

**But they all came through the same portal in Oxford?**

**anya**

**In the exclusion zone, yes. But I suspect thinking of it as a ‘portal’ is what’s confusing you.**

**sam**

**…because a portal’s like a door and only has two sides?**

**anya**

**Yeah these are more like holes leading to the space between places.**

**sam**

**… meaning you go in one and come out another randomly?**

**anya**

**Yes.**

**Beat.**

**sam**

**No. That doesn’t work. When I came through, I wasn’t alone. We both left together and arrived at similar places at similar times. And I’ve got a friend back home, I think she’s from here. Do you think I just got lucky with the swap, or…?**

**Beat.**

**anya**

**I don’t know. Maybe every time someone crosses it makes it easier for people to follow? Or maybe knowing her before hand was enough of a link to this world that it pulled you along?**

**sam**

**(unconvinced)**

**Maybe.**

**anya**

**I’m not an expert, Sam.**

**sam**

**You’re the closest we’ve got.**

**anya**

**Then I doubt we’ll ever really know how any of this works.**

**sam**

**(dissatisfied)**

**I’m hearing that a lot recently.**

**ANYA**

**Sorry.**

**SAM**

**Not your fault.**

**Beat.**

**sam**

**(cont.)**

**Listen, Anya… Do you ever find yourself getting pulled back towards the porta- the holes?**

**anya**

**The others asked me the same thing they all disappeared eventually so I’m guessing that’s where they went.**

**SAM**

**But you…?**

**ANYA**

**No, it’s never happened to me.**

**sam**

**Any idea why?**

**anya**

**My best guess? Bad timing. I might have been the first person ever to fall through, that means I slipped through a tiny crack in the universe before the Incursion had even started but now? That hole and a bunch of others are blown wide open.**

**SAM**

**But you’re still here.**

**ANYA**

**For now. Maybe the effect wears off and they were too weak when I first came here? Maybe the Incursion changed me, maybe my world’s gone and there’s nothing left to pull me back? I have no idea, and honestly, I don’t think there is even a way to find out.**

**sam**

**I get it. Thanks Anya.**

**anya**

**Sorry I couldn’t be more help.**

**sam**

**No, you were and I really appreciate it. Does Georgie know all this?**

**anya**

**I talked her through most of it on a call yesterday, but she’s asked I report to her before I head home.**

**sam**

**Right.**

**Beat.**

**ANYA**

**Good luck Sam. I hope we get a chance to talk again before… before you go.**

**SAM**

**Yeah, me too.**

**ANYA**

**Goodbye Sam.**

**SAM**

**Bye.**

**ANYA exits.**

**Pause. SAM gives a big dissatisfied sigh.**

**Click.**

1. **Int., Medical unit, night, clear (tape recorder)**

**Click.**

**ALICE [PL] sleeps quietly surrounded by various medical equipment. SAM enters and checks her chart.**

**Alice**

**(weakly)**

**Have they found the cure yet?**

**SAM**

**The… cure?**

**ALICE**

**Yeah, for being this goddam gorgeous.**

**She coughs weakly. Sam smiles.**

**sam**

**Sorry, didn’t mean to wake you.**

**Alice**

**It’s fine. My Sam had elephant feet too. You should’ve heard him trying to sneak into bed if he stayed up late.**

**Beat.**

**Alice**

**(cont.)**

**So, am I gonna make it, doc?**

**sam**

**I honestly don’t know what I expected. It’s not like I can read**

**read these charts.**

**Alice**

**Two days to live. Got it.**

**sam**

**Well you definitely sound better.**

**Alice**

**That’s why I’m in the hospital, babe. My jokes are sick.**

**sam**

**Alice…**

**Alice**

**Yeah, yeah, I know. I’ve not forgotten who you are.**

**sam**

**No it’s not that. I… I think I’m probably going home soon.**

**Alice**

**Home. You mean back to your world, your own Alice?**

**sam**

**I mean, assuming she hasn’t trashed the place while I was away.**

**Alice**

**Heh. Classic Alice.**

**Beat.**

**Alice CONT.**

**Is it safe? Going back, I mean.**

**sam**

**(lying)**

**Oh Yeah. It’ll be fine.**

**ALICE**

**You’ve always been a shit liar Sam.**

**GEORGIE abruptly.**

**Georgie**

**Sam, there you are.**

**sam**

**Hold on, Georgie I’m just-**

**Georgie**

**No time. We’ve had a confirmed sighting of the Archivist. Just crossed the edge of the zone, heading inwards. We’re pursuing.**

**sam**

**(changing gear)**

**Oh Ok, yeah let’s go.**

**They move to leave**

**Alice**

**Sam, wait!**

**sam**

**Alice-**

**Alice**

**Don’t! Don’t chase it. Leave it to the wardens, it’s their job.**

**Georgie**

**We’re leaving. Now, Sam.**

**GEORGIE exits.**

**Alice**

**You have to leave me, ok, I get it so go home Sam, go home and don’t get yourself killed chasing this thing.**

**SAM**

**I can’t just-**

**ALICE**

**You can! I won’t let you die again. I won’t!**

**She tries to grab Sam, but he pulls back as the medical instruments complain.**

**sam**

**I’m sorry.**

**ALICE**

**Don’t!**

**SAM**

**Goodbye Alice.**

**SAM exits.**

**Click.**

**[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 Shahan Hamza as Samama Khalid, Sasha Sienna as Georgie Barker, Billie Hindle as Alice Dyer. 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.**

**CATXXXX-XXXXXXXX-XXXXXXXX
ERROR (Unknown Source)**

**Incident Elements:
·    Loss of control
·    Temporal distortian
·    Mentions of: Graphic violence, immolation, drowning, illness
·    SFX: Buzzing Bee**

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Produced by April Sumner**

**Featuring (in order of appearance)
Shahan Hamza as Samama Khalid
Marta de Silva as Warden Olivia
Sasha Sienna as Georgie Barker
Vicki Glover as Anya Villette
Billie Hindle as Alice Dyer**

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Very Important Bee Soloist: Cecilia (**[**https://freesound.org/people/felix.blume/sounds/588514/)**](https://freesound.org/people/felix.blume/sounds/588514/%29)

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