

The Magnus Protocol

**Episode 45
"Transferral"**

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[Intro Theme]

ANNOUNCER
Rusty Quill Presents: The Magnus
Protocol.
Episode Forty-Five – Transferral

[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)
I- 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.

2. 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...

3. 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... eugh... 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.

**4. 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.

It featured Shahan Hamza as Samama Khalid, Sasha Sienna as Georgie Barker, and Lydia Nicholas as Melanie King. 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.

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ERROR (Unknown Source)

Incident Elements:

- Night terrors
- body horror
- claustrophobia
- SFX: clanging, eating

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Produced by April Sumner

Featuring (in order of appearance)

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Lydia Nicholas as Melanie King

Frank Voss as Basira Hussain

Sasha Sienna as Georgie Barker

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