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The Magnus Protocol

Episode 51 "Legacy Issues"

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[Intro Theme]

ANNOUNCER
Rusty Quill Presents: The Magnus
Protocol.
Episode Fifty-One – Legacy Issues

[Music]

**1. A FIELD NEAR OXFORD (CELIA'S MOBILE), EXT. NIGHT,
CLEAR**

The phone is ringing.

It keeps ringing.

CELIA makes a noise of impatience.

GEORGIE answers.

GEORGIE
(phone)
Hi Celia. Let me guess, work
emergency?

CELIA
I... Yeah.

Beat.

CELIA
(cont.)
Sorry.

GEORGIE
(phone)
Yeah, I had a feeling we'd have one
this evening.

CELIA

What? How?

GEORGIE

(phone)

**Not sure. Either I've got a touch of
ESP, or you're getting predictable.
Maybe both. Probably both.**

CELIA

**Well warn me next time so I can at
least dress for it.**

GEORGIE

(phone, getting ready)

**Dress for what? No, forget I asked.
Has Jack been fed?**

CELIA

**Yeah, he was sleeping when I... had
to leave. He just needs someone to
keep an eye on him.**

GEORGIE

(phone)

**Got it. He'll have both of mine in
about fifteen minutes.**

**A curious cow approaches Celia, nudging her
slightly. Cow breath intensifies.**

CELIA

**Perfect, thanks G-
(to cow)
Oy, get off!**

GEORGIE

(phone)

**Celia? What's happening? Are you
ok?**

CELIA

Yeah, I'm fine, Just... give me a second...

(muttered to cow, pushing it away)

Bugger off!

The cow moos reproachfully.

GEORGIE

(phone)

Was that... Do I hear mooing?

CELIA

Uhhh...

GEORGIE

(phone)

Like a cow?

CELIA

Yeah....

Beat.

CELIA

(cont)

Georgie, I'm sorry I can't really-

GEORGIE

(phone)

Can't really explain because it's super secret work stuff. Uh-huh. Seriously, Celia, I don't care if it gets me on another watchlist, one of these days you have got to tell me what the hell these "work emergencies" actually are.

CELIA

**And you'd just sit quietly on that info
and not immediately podcast it out to
the world?**

GEORGIE

(phone)

**Not the whole world... just fifty or so
dedicated listeners...**

CELIA

(small laugh)

I'll think about it.

GEORGIE

(phone)

**Fine. Anyway, I'd better be going.
Have fun with your cows I guess?**

CELIA

Eurgh. Thanks again Georgie.

GEORGIE

(phone)

**I know, I'm wonderful. I'll text you
when he wakes up.**

GEORGIE hangs up.

Beat. Celia puts her phone in a pocket.

The cow returns, nudging Celia and mooing softly.

Celia sighs.

CELIA

(to cow)

**Don't suppose you could give me a
lift to London?**

**2. MANAGER'S OFFICE (GWEN'S LANDLINE), INT. NIGHT,
CLEAR**

The phone is ringing.

It keeps ringing.

GWEN makes a noise of impatience.

Someone answers.

GWEN

Hi, yes, please tell me I'm through to
the Cabinet Office because I've been
bounced around the entire civil
service by this point...

They respond.

GWEN

(cont.)

Right, okay. This is Gwendolyn
Bouchard from the Office of Incident
Assessment and Response-

They greet.

GWEN

(cont.)

Yeah hi, now I'm looking for some
documentation but no one seems to
have any idea where it is.

They sympathise.

GWEN

(cont.)

Great, I'm looking for everything you
have on the O.I.A.R., personnel
records, operations reports,
budgets, software notation...,
whatever you have.

They clarify.

**No I realise that but I've recently
been appointed as head of the
department-**

They congratulate.

GWEN

(cont.)

**Yeah thanks, but the problem is my
predecessor neglected her records
and I've been trying to get things in
order for the minister but-**

They interrupt

GWEN

(cont.)

**Yeah, Trevor Herbert, anyway the
problem is there's no records from
before 2021 here. Nothing. Now I
don't know if it's a system issue or a
management problem or whatever,
but I need help finding copies of
those records and apparently
nobody has any idea where they're
kept.**

They question.

GWEN

(cont.)

**No, Mr. Herbert is not... uh... has
been unable to assist in this
particular matter. But he's given my
enquiries his full blessing!**

They deflect. GWEN is losing it.

GWEN

(cont. slightly crazed)

**Okay. So if you're not responsible
for maintaining those archives then
who is?**

They explain.

GWEN

(cont. crazed calm)

**Yes but I can't put in a formal
request to the department head
because I am the department head
and I am telling me-you that those
records aren't here.**

They patronize.

GWEN

**(cont. through gritted
teeth)**

**I know they should be here. That's
why I'm trying to FIND THEM!**

They admonish.

GWEN

(cont.)

Yes, fine whatever-

They keep admonishing.

GWEN

(cont.)

-Goodbye!

She slams the phone down.

After a moment she picks it up then slams it down again.

And again.

And again.

Beat. GWEN sits alone panting slightly. Her hand hurts.

There's a beep as a case comes through. GWEN takes a deep breath then clicks through to it.

**GWEN
(cont. snapping)
Go on then. I'm listening.**

She clicks to start the case.

3. CASE (CYBERSPACE), N/A. N/A.

AUGUSTUS

**From the work diary of Robert Boyle,
November 29th 1652.**

**W_ is dead. An inquisitive gentleman
and a friend, not deserving of the
judgement laid upon him. I must act
and not succumb to the faintness
that may overtake me should I
remember his face when I found him.**

**Too much enamored with the
alchemy, he would give no heed to
my growing proofs of its
insufficiency to know the works of
God and continue his own
experiments beyond what any might
countenance. Yet in this he found
some matter that goes beyond what
might be believed.**

**He summoned me to his laboratory,
knowing that while no true skeptic, I
had little patience remaining for
alchemy as a method to understand
our Lord's design. Thus would I
make, as he said, the finest eyes to
behold his achievement. He told me
once it was his calling. That he was
drawn to alchemical discovery as a
priest were drawn to the church. I did
not believe him. I did not understand
him. I still do not, although I have
seen it.**

**W_'s goal, he said, was beyond mere
Chrysopoeia. The mutation of base
metals was nothing to him, he was to**

transform the very substance of his self, of his spirit. I believed he was speaking of prayer and devotion, perhaps inviting me to nothing more rare than a strange session of worship. I was a fool.

He greeted me most cordially, and we ate together most happily. He tore into his meat with a violence that spoke of such hunger that I found my own venison hard to stomach. This should perhaps have spoken to me of the profound imbalance of his spirit. The dreadful need that he wished to fill with something dark and ungodly. It inspired in me a small, wordless fear, and upon seeing this there came a grim satisfaction upon his face.

W_ explained his previous experiments. He told me every particular of what he was about to attempt. He pointed, one after another, at every alteration he had made to the chair in which he was to sit. He spent much time on the designs he had burned into the leather straps and the methods by which he had measured, placed and sharpened the points that jutted out from its back and into his. He laughed when I expressed alarm at the blood that was pooling around his feet. He spoke to me in words of ridicule and blasphemy.

Should I have stopped him? Yes, although I do not know how such a

thing might have been done. Before it was clear that I should undertake to arrest his experiment, the means to do so were beyond my reach and his awful change had begun.

I will not commit to ink the particulars of what I saw. To write them is to give them form they should not have for form is what they desire most of all.

Yet I cannot write nothing. In years to come I will read these words and if they do not contain W_'s end then I shall not believe my memories.

I say then this:
The experiment was most physical in its nature. It did not mutate the inanimate, but it did mutate his flesh. It was in all things alchemical, flawed and thus impossible, yet it was successful. And I may give assurance to the memory: the piercing cry of agony you hear in your dreams is true to the sound he produced as he changed.

It is impossible. For years I have labored beside the alchemists and found many of their methods astray in their understanding of the world. Oft I have showed their experiments as failures or misapprehensions of natural laws. Yet what I saw was no illusion, no mummery, no deceit. I have even, after some trepidation, attempted it myself with some success, though I ceased long

before the transmutation that took my friend's life in so unholy a manner.

There has been a great change. Where once I had found these alchemies were mostly adornments on the chemical process, ambitions without formative merit, something now comes to fill the absence. It is not, cannot be of God's light or His creation, but is instead some dark quintessence. Not Prima Materia as the alchemists would have it, but Mutare Materia, that fouls what it touches in manners too terrible to set down in detail.

It makes me so very afraid. Afraid of what has been created and what I saw become of my misguided friend, yes. But afraid more of a world in which such experiments abound, where it is known the force of dark quintessence may move to give you what you wish in its awful transmutations. There remain but few ardent alchemists and my Invisible College has been working to bring them into our more noble work of new philosophy. It is my hope that we may yet restrain this mutare materia from doing true injury to our Lord's creation.

I must write to H-. His work as an intelligencer may prove vital to our cause. If we are to have any hope of arresting this quintessence of dread and darkness then we must be quick,

secret and clear of purpose. Perhaps H-'s work within the court might give us the sanction we require.

The key, I believe, is balance. It is in the imbalance of alchemy and it's absence of truths that the mutare materia enters. Then it twists the weft and warp of goodly creation to produce the impossible and thereby distort the spirit to leave only lingering things of terror and despair. Balance is essential in all things. Balance and ignorance.

The worst of it is that for all the evil he took into his body, W_ did not die. Is not dead. I hear his voice still. I smell the putrescence of the substance he became as it wafts through my window on the Winter wind. It makes me so very afraid, and I know that is why he calls to me so. Should my entreaties to H_ prove successful, our first and holiest duty will be to find and destroy whatever horror is left of my friend before he may spread his corruption unchecked.

May God help us all and guide our hands.

**4. MANAGER'S OFFICE (GWEN'S LANDLINE), INT. NIGHT,
CLEAR**

GWEN exhales, considering what she's just heard.

GWEN

All right. Uh, thank you, I guess?
Maybe something a bit more recent
next time?

Beat.

GWEN sighs then turns and opens the blinds looking out over
the empty office.

She sighs then picks up the phone and dials **CELIA's** number.

The phone rings.

It keeps ringing.

Celia's voicemail cuts in.

CELIA

(phone, recorded)

Hey, this is **Celia's** phone. Leave a
message and-

Gwen hangs up and dials **ALICE's** number.

The phone rings.

It keeps ringing.

GWEN

Don't you dare. Don't you dare send
me to voicemail, you-

ALICE

(phone)

What do you want, **Gwen**?

GWEN

What do I want? Some respect from my subordinates for a start but right now I'll settle for you explaining why it's half an hour into the workday and I'm looking at an empty office!

ALICE

(phone)

Celia late again?

GWEN

We're not talking about Celia right now. We're talking about you. Unless you happen to know where she keeps disappearing to?

ALICE

(phone)

I dunno. You should ask that tiny fragile human that needs constant care and attention that she hangs out with, maybe he knows?

GWEN

(exasperated)

And what's your excuse?

ALICE

(phone)

I've been going through a list of names I found on Sam's computer, people he and Celia talked to about Magnus stuff. Thought it might be worth trying to have a chat with them myself but I've been trying to get an appointment to see this deputy head and they're not having any of it-

GWEN

**Alice, I need you to come into work.
Now.**

ALICE

**And I need one single, solitary lead
on what's going on that isn't another
complete waste of time. So I guess
we're both shit out of luck. Unless
you found out anything more about
Schweitzer?**

Beat.

ALICE

(cont.)

**Of course you didn't. I swear to god
the only thing stopping me jumping
in after Sam or taking an axe to the
servers like Colin is because both
options are equally better than
having to deal with you right now
and I just can't choose.**

GWEN

**Look, are you coming into work or
not Alice? Because we're really
behind on the caseload and-.**

ALICE

**Of course we're behind! We're
always behind, because there's only
two of us!**

GWEN

(thoughtful)

You're right...

ALICE

**I know! I've been saying it for weeks!
So if you want to catch up so badly
then maybe you should get off your**

**managerial arse and actually help for
a change!**

GWEN
(phone)
Hmmmm...

Beat.

ALICE
Gwen? Hello?

GWEN
(rallying)
**Look Alice, do I need to mark you
absent for tonight, or- ?**

ALICE
**For Christ's sake, I'm literally
outside!**

GWEN
(phone, snapping)
What? Then why didn't you-

Beat.

(recentering)
Right. Good. Hurry up.

She hangs up.

5. LONDON STREET (ALICE'S PHONE), EXT. NIGHT - CLEAR

ALICE

(imitating Gwen)

“Oh Alice, we’re so behind on all the cases that matter so much to everyone after I completely screwed us” Jesus Christ.

She takes a deep breath and collects herself.

She makes a new call.

The phone rings.

It keeps ringing.

LUKE’s voicemail cuts in.

LUKE

(voicemail)

**Hey, leave me a message. Or don’t.
Whatever.
Beep.**

ALICE

Hey dickhead. You know who. Found a review of your last gig and, I mean, I’ve sure you’ve already seen it, but it said you weren’t nearly as shit as they expected so yeah, kudos. Anyway, call me back when you’re not busy mortgaging your future for fame and fortune and reassure your sister you haven’t been murdered by grumpy sound techs or something. I, uh... I miss... you. Sort of. Ya dickhead.

She spots TEDDY.

ALICE

(cont.)

Oh, gotta go. Call me back! Ciao.

She hangs up.

ALICE

(cont.)

Teddy!

He pretends not to hear her as she jogs over.

ALICE

(cont.)

Oi Teddy you dozy prick!

TEDDY

Oh, er... hi Alice. Sorry, I didn't see you.

ALICE

Where've you been, man? Have you been getting my messages?

TEDDY

Yeah, sorry, I'm just a bit behind at the moment. New job and all that.

Beat. Teddy doesn't want to be here.

ALICE

(gentler)

Teddy, are you alright?

TEDDY

Hm? Of course, yeah. I'm good. How're you?

ALICE

Yeah I'm fine. Listen, Teddy mate don't take this the wrong way or anything-

TEDDY

Here we go...

ALICE

-but you look like shit.

TEDDY

Charming, as ever.

ALICE

No, I'm serious, is everything okay?

TEDDY

(short)

I'm fine.

ALICE

Try again.

TEDDY

I'm just not sleeping well, all right?
New job. Stress. Don't worry about it.

ALICE

I'm allowed to worry about my
friends, Teddy.

TEDDY

Mm. Sure.

Beat.

ALICE

(stepping forward)

So... What's in the bag? Hang on, is
that a *minidisc* player?

TEDDY

(snapping and yanking the
bag away)

Don't touch that!

ALICE
Jesus, Teddy, Ok....

TEDDY
(slightly fearful)
I-It's for work. They're very
particular. They don't like- I'll text
you later Alice.

Teddy hurries off, his bags rattling with millennial treasures.

Beat.

ALICE
What the hell was that?

Beat.

ALICE
(cont.)
Christ I need to talk to someone
normal.

GWEN opens the O.I.A.R. door.

GWEN
Alice, what does the phrase “literally
outside” mean to you? Because I
heard it ten minutes ago and yet
you're still not at your desk.

ALICE
(sighing)
Not exactly what I had in mind...

ALICE trudges off towards the inevitable.

[Music]

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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 Nico Vettese, soundscaping by Meg McKellar, and mastering by Catherine Rinella with music by Sam Jones.

It featured Billie Hindle as Alice Dyer, Lowri Ann Davies as Celia Ripley, Anusia Battersby as Gwendolyn Bouchard, Sasha Sienna as Georgie Barker, Kazeem Tosin Amore as Teddy Vaughn 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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The Magnus Protocol 51 – Legacy Issues

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transmutation (human) -/- catalyst (alchemical)

Incident Elements:

- **misophonia (breath)**
- **body horror**

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Script Edited with additional material by Jonathan Sims

**Executive Producers April Sumner, [Alexander J Newall](#),
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Hamilton**

**Associate Producers Jordan L. Hawk, Taylor Michaels, Nicole
Perlman, Cetius d’Raven, and Megan Nice**

Produced by April Sumner

Featuring (in order of appearance)

Sasha Sienna as Georgie Barker

Lowri Ann Davies as Celia Ripley

Anusia Battersby as Gwen Bouchard

Billie Hindle as Alice Dyer

Kazeem Tosin Amore as Teddy Vaughn

Tim Fearon as Augustus

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