

The Magnus Protocol

**Episode 55
"Blind Spots"**

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[Intro Theme]

ANNOUNCER

**Rusty Quill Presents: The Magnus
Protocol.
Episode Fifty-Five – Blind Spots**

[Music]

**1. GEORGIE'S KITCHEN (TAPE DECK), INT. EVENING,
CLEAR**

Click.

GEORGIE and MELANIE are sat at the table, mid-discussion.

MELANIE

-So we're just leaving him in there?

GEORGIE

**We've got the new expanded
perimeter covered, so we should be
able to help him as soon he gets to
the edge, but given how active the
zone is getting and how many
dreamers we're having to keep
back... we can't keep sending people
in after him.**

MELANIE

Right, right, but...He's in there alone.

GEORGIE

**We've tried locking him up, moving
him away, posting guards, it doesn't
help. When he displaces, he's just
gone.**

MELANIE

**I know, I get it. Just makes me feel a
bit useless.**

GEORGIE

Yeah. There's a lot of that going
around at the moment-

SAM enters. He is slightly breathless and unsettled.

GEORGIE

There you are! Welcome back.

MELANIE

Sam, you're ok!

SAM

(wearily)

Hey.

MELANIE

Are you okay?

SAM

(not fine)

I'll be fine.

GEORGIE

Did one of the wardens pick you up
at the perimeter? They were
supposed to call it in.

SAM

Not quite... I saw them but they
looked pretty busy and I don't think
they even noticed me so I just
walked out and came here.

MELANIE

Ah.

GEORGIE

(frustrated)

You just walked out.

SAM

Yeah.

GEORGIE

I see. Melanie, could you just-?

MELANIE

I'll call it in.

MELANIE EXITS.

SAM starts taking his boots off.

GEORGIE

Sleeping in your boots now?

SAM

I've got to be prepared.

GEORGIE

Smart. At this rate you're going to have clocked more hours in the zone than some of my squad.

SAM

Lucky me.

Beat.

Eventually:

GEORGIE

You know I plotted the new perimeter cordon myself Sam.

SAM

Okay.

GEORGIE

And with the reinforcements from the other posts, it's pretty comprehensive.

SAM

What's your point?

GEORGIE

My point is that there's no way you could have gotten out the Zone unnoticed unless you went deeper first then circled back.

SAM

I must've gotten turned around.

GEORGIE

You can't keep snooping around in there on your own.

SAM

It's not like I'm choosing to go in there!

GEORGIE

No but once you are you're *choosing* to try and scout alone and untrained!

SAM

Basira's training me.

GEORGIE

To defend yourself, not to hunt avatars! Besides, she's hardly an expert on the Zone herself.

SAM

But you still let her back you up in there.

GEORGIE

(spotting the trap)

That's different.

SAM

Yeah. You trust her.

Beat.

GEORGIE

What do you want me to say, Sam? I like you fine-

SAM reacts.

GEORGIE

(cont.)

I do! and you've convinced me you're on our side, but how can I trust you to have my back when you're constantly running off on your own?

SAM

Everything is waking up in there. The Archivist is loose and you're barely keeping it all contained! If I can just find it-

GEORGIE

You're going to get yourself killed.

SAM

(genuine)

Better me than someone else.

GEORGIE

(snapping)

For god's sake Sam-

MELANIE enters.

MELANIE

Sorry but you're gonna want to join us.

GEORGIE

What now?

MELANIE

There's been a... development.

Click.

2. WARDEN OFFICE (TAPE DECK), INT. EVENING, CLEAR

Click.

SAM, BASIRA, GEORGIE and MELANIE are stood around a table.

GEORGIE

-and what I'm hearing, Basira, is that you broke basic protocol. Again.

BASIRA

Don't give me that Warden shit. It was right after everything came back - there weren't any "protocols" except keeping everyone alive.

GEORGIE

It was reckless and it put us all in danger.

BASIRA

No it didn't. They were completely normal, unlike most of the stuff your lot have recovered.

GEORGIE

That's different-

BASIRA

Oh yeah? You think I don't recognize that box you've got locked up in your vault?

GEORGIE

That's a dangerous artefact we're guarding for security purposes not... sentimentality.

BASIRA

I'm not going to apologise for missing our friends and wanting to hear their voices.

MELANIE

(intervening)

I thought all the old tapes disappeared when the Web bailed?

BASIRA

Not all of them. As far as I can tell it only took the ones where John or someone else had recorded a proper genuine statement. I found a bunch of other ones in the ruins.

SAM

Can someone *please* explain to me what's going on?

GEORGIE

Basira thought it would be a good idea to keep some souvenirs of the old archivist's voice.

MELANIE

And it looks like the new archivist used one of them to get in touch.

SAM

What?

Basira throws a twisted and mutated cassette tape onto the table.

SAM

(cont.)

Oh. I see.

GEORGIE

Would it even work in a normal tape player? It looks too... Organic?

BASIRA

I tried it for a few seconds earlier and it seems like it works.

GEORGIE

Christ Basira! You tried it without- Fine. At least we know it won't immediately kill us all now.

SAM

But how did it know you had tapes at all?

MELANIE

Our Archivist had a thing about cassette tapes, like a kind of connection. Maybe yours is similar? Or maybe it's just picking up on how archive monsters work in this reality.

BASIRA

The "how" doesn't really matter, though, does it?

GEORGIE

No. Play it, Basira.

BASIRA

You sure you don't want to get a committee together first? Maybe-

GEORGIE

Oh for fuck's sake.

GEORGIE snatches the tape, squashes it into a player and hits play.

3. STATEMENT (TAPE DECK), INT. TUNNELS, CLEAR

Click.

The tape has been recorded in a cavernous room with distant falling water and a susurrations of whispers.

ARCHIVIST

(on tape)

**Samama... . Are you listening? Yes...
I can taste your attention just as I
tasted your mind when you brought
me to this place...**

SAM

I didn't-

MELANIE

Shhhhh!

ARCHIVIST

(on tape)

**You brought me to this place and I
have gorged myself on its stories
and for that I thank you. But the
flavors... they are wrong... they do
things to me, clear things... cloud
things...**

**Here I may think beyond the hunger
of abandoned decades and speak
with words that are almost my own.
But there is music here, faint and
beautiful, shivering through me like a
distant piping... A fiddle strung with
bloodied tendons...**

**The echoes of that lingering tune, it
begs me to take up the dance. but
would I be myself, or just another
puppet?**

And beneath the music there is a clarity, a story of my own memory. There was a time before this unchosen blessing and had you shown this fate to the woman who once walked into that shadowed Institute on a rainy November evening she would, I'm sure, have screamed and ran. But she did not know and now she is so much more.

She was an idealist who did not belong in a world of cynics. A beating heart that glowed and ached and bled for every ounce of suffering she saw within the world. She truly believed it was her duty to bear witness and so would scour the newspapers, listen to the radio and read book after book on atrocities both ancient and modern. She believed to look away would be to betray a world already bleeding, and so she suffered for it instead, again and again.

The Magnus Institute couldn't believe their luck. I cannot seem to know if she found them or they found her or if some tenuous thread of fate made such a meeting inevitable. Regardless, it happened and the Institute was pleased.

She was perfect, they told her. She was going to save the world. She would be their great work, their magnum opus. All she had to do was

bear witness with absolute sympathy.

They took her to a small room, paneled in dark wood and her pathetic, aged eyes could not pick out the fingernail scratches and bloodstains which diligent cleaning had failed to reach. Her weak, failing ears could not hear the echoes of her screaming predecessors and her drying, mortal tongue could not taste the desperation that rolled off her so-called colleagues as they worked.

She did not know these things and so she smiled as they brought her a pair of broken antique spectacles, the “catalyst”, as they called them. The thin metal frames were far too warped to wear and the lenses too clouded and cracked to see through but still they laid them upon her eyes as they strapped her to the chair.

I wonder if she realized her error as the restraints tightened and the mask was slipped over her mouth. Certainly there was apprehension and fear as the strange smelling gases began to seep into her lungs and the current started flowing through her limbs.

Looking back, I can see these details with a clarity far beyond any she could possibly have possessed but even now, to peer within the mind of that woman who served as my foundation... Such a thing feels

impossible.

What did she feel when the procedure truly started and the stories began to be told. Tales to appall your mind and churn your stomach, images to linger behind your eyelids when you try to sleep; voices that send paralyzing chills from skin to heart to brain and back again. Some bizarre, others uncanny but most simply awful, dour testaments to mundane human evil.

And in response to every single one the woman felt a surge of pity and warmth and deep, aching sympathy, tinged with the promise that there must be a way to redeem it.

And as the minutes of this onslaught turned to hours turned to days and nights, she began to feel the horrors, smell them, taste them. There was no sleep, no food, no pause in the torrent of nightmarish sensations they fed into her and so the stories became her own.

The relentless feelings grew and the other changes quickly followed. After a day she was numb to the agony. After two they delighted her, as the shattered spectacles disappeared beneath an eruption of bright new eyes. After three she was ravenous for more.

Then the flesh began to strain and the eyes began to spread, and once

those paltry crumbs of horror could no longer sustain this new-created thing, I stood, snapping my bonds with ease.

The Observers' shock and fear was so nourishing that I could not have stopped myself even if I had wanted to. The heavy, delicious lumps of shuddering terror that I pulled out with their stories were like nothing I had ever tasted, and taking them left nothing but hollowed out husks behind the reinforced glass.

They had left a tape recorder in the room to capture the nuances of the transformation and as I looked down upon it and breathed deeply of the noxious fumes, I felt the spooling tape inhale with me, dragging in the world around us and holding it neatly within its turning wheels.

They did not understand me of course. They labeled me a failure and threw me into a hole with the other rejected things. They still tried to study me, bringing witnesses of strange and terrible things. Witnesses who would not be missed after I took them and their "statements".

All too soon though, the only lesson they wished to learn was how long I would take to die, starving beneath the Institute. And starve I did, but I would not die. Even as my captors abandoned me, even as the building

**burned down above my head and
even as the years passed, trapped in
undiscovered darkness, I endured. I
endured and I rotted as a failure, a
discarded redeemer of the
undeserving, who could not save the
world.**

**And then you came, Samama. You
came and you threw me the key to a
surface I had forgotten and then you
led me to this strange and wonderful
place.**

**Twice over you have saved me and
for that I thank you and tell you to
leave me now. Head back to the grey
obscurity that sheltered you and I
will not follow. I will stay. I will eat
this new world. I will binge upon its
stories and in their place I will weave
new ones where I finally belong.**

It is time to finish the tale...

The ARCHIVIST fades leaving the tape recording it's absence.

After a moment, BASIRA stops the tape.

[click]

**4. WARDEN OFFICE CONT. (TAPE DECK), INT. EVENING,
CLEAR**

SAM, BASIRA, GEORGIE and MELANIE consider what they have heard.

MELANIE

Well that was helpful.

GEORGIE

Answers the identity question at least.

SAM

Does it? We don't even know it's name!

GEORGIE

We don't need a name. We know who it is.

MELANIE

And who it isn't.

BASIRA

And we know what it wants.

MELANIE

...Plus, I've got a pretty good idea where it is.

GEORGIE

Oh?

MELANIE

Basira, could you rewind and play the last few seconds again?

BASIRA

All right.

Basira rewinds the tape, then hits "PLAY".

ARCHIVIST

(on tape)

-It is time to finish the tale...

MELANIE

There.

The tape keeps playing again after the ARCHIVIST fades.

MELANIE

(cont.)

You hear the echo?

GEORGIE

Yeah...

MELANIE

And the water?

GEORGIE

Interesting.

SAM

(impatient)

So it's still underground. How does this help us?

BASRIA

(realizing)

The Panopticon.

SAM

I thought you said that was a tower?

MELANIE

Only after the incursion. Originally it was buried underground and there were tunnels running all around it.

SAM

Like the one we fell into when Alice...

MELANIE

Not quite. That was one of the normal tunnels that used to run under London.

SAM

Didn't look very normal to me...

BASIRA

Fair point.

MELANIE

The tunnels near the Panopticon were different. They sort of balanced between The Fears before everything went wrong.

SAM

Okay...

MELANIE

And when everything went to hell, they offered some protection.

GEORGIE

Like the eye of a storm.

SAM

And you think you can recognize those specific tunnels just from the background of that recording?

MELANIE

I will never forget what it sounded like in those tunnels.

GEORGIE

It makes sense it would choose there...

SAM

**And what, when the Archivist
magically changed this tape-**

MELANIE

(automatic)

-not magic-

SAM

(ignoring her)

**-it just conveniently decided to
include background noise?**

Beat.

BASIRA

(matter of fact)

It's a trap.

GEORGIE

Could be a trap.

MELANIE

Probably a trap.

Beat.

MELANIE

(cont.)

We're going anyway though, right?

BASIRA

**I am. All this tunnel talk has given
me an idea.**

SAM

Count me in.

GEORGIE

(frustrated)

Now hang on, you can't just decide-

The still running tape audio changes from Panopticon to Archives cupboard.

MARTIN

(on tape)

*-and so, ye arrows of despair
That pitch and roll toward my breast-*

BASIRA

Sorry, this is what was on the tape before. Hang on...

MARTIN

-as were a barb-ed spearhead-

The door opens on tape.

MARTIN

(cont. on tape)

Occupied! Occupied!

SAM

Wait...

JOHN

(on tape)

*Martin? What are you talking about?
You can't "occupy" the storage
room. Now get out the way, I need a
pen.*

SAM

I know those voices...

MARTIN

(on tape)

*I just meant I was doing something a
little... private.*

SAM

Who are they?

JOHN

(on tape)

If it's that private I suggest you do it at home. Now can I please get to the pens.

MARTIN

(on tape)

Fine, fine, sorry.

Martin stops the recording and the tape ends.

SAM

Who are they?

MELANIE

Jonathan Sims. *Our* archivist, and Martin Blackwood his... partner.

BASIRA

(intense)

You said you know them.

SAM

Their voices. Back at work. They're, uh, they're voices in my computer.

Long pause.

BASIRA

I don't know what to say to that.

GEORGIE

Yeah. What do you mean?

SAM

I don't know how else to say it. Sometimes the computer reads out one of the weird cases we get as text-to-speech and when it does it uses preset voices. These two or Augustus.

MELANIE
Augustus?

SAM
Yeah. We call Jonathan “Chester”
and... Martin is it? He’s Norris-

MELANIE
I can see him as a Norris.

SAM
-and Augustus is the third one.

GEORGIE
Wait. So who’s Augustus?

SAM
No idea. I didn’t even know Chester
and Norris were actual *real* people
until just now.

MELANIE
(realizing)
Oh shit, you don’t think-

BASIRA
(ducking out)
Hang on, let me find another tape.

Click.

5. WARDEN OFFICE (TAPE DECK), INT. EVENING, CLEAR
Click.

SAM, BASIRA and MELANIE are back around the tape player.

BASIRA is loading it with another normal tape.

MELANIE
Found one?

BASIRA
Yeah, it's not much but should be
enough for an ID.

SAM
So do we wait for Georgie?

MELANIE
No, she said she'll join once she's
through with the briefing.

BASIRA
Right. Now Sam, I want you to listen
to the man talking to John here and
let me know if it's Augustus, ok?

SAM
Ok.

BASIRA presses play on a recording of a small party at the
Institute.

JOHN [ARCHIVIST]
(on tape)
-I can't tell you.

ELIAS
(on tape)
He wished for a little bit of peace and
quiet.

BASIRA
That one. That voice.

JOHN [ARCHIVIST]
(on tape)
Was it that obvious?

ELIAS
(on tape)
Oh, I wouldn't worry, John. It's an Archive. Quiet is very much the course du jour.

BASIRA presses stop.

MELANIE
Well?

SAM
No. It's not him.

MELANIE
You're sure?

SAM
Positive. That's not Augustus.
Although...

BASIRA
Although?

SAM
I don't know... something in his tone,
or rhythm, maybe? It's similar, but
the voice is definitely different.

BASIRA
Interesting...

GEORGIE enters.

GEORGIE
Any luck?

SAM

It's not him.

GEORGIE

Well, it was a long shot anyway, and it's not like it'd be any help.

MELANIE

How was the briefing?

GEORGIE

They seem to be a decent bunch. I'm not a fan of deputizing like this though.

BASIRA

Even with the reinforcements, you don't have enough wardens to keep the dreamers at bay and sweep the tunnels. You need more people and I can vouch for every one of the guys that came here with me. They won't let you down.

GEORGIE

Just as long as we're clear, none of them are going in the zone. Crowd control on the perimeter, that's it. We're the ones who carry it in.

BASIRA

Clear as day. Wardens go in, my lot keep people out.

SAM

(firm)

I'm going too.

MELANIE

Here we go again...

GEORGIE

Sam, we've been over this.

SAM

(prepared)

**Basira's given me basic training and
you said yourself I've already
clocked in more zone hours than half
your wardens.**

GEORGIE

That's not-

SAM

(firm)

**No-one else dies on my behalf. You
heard the tape, I brought The
Archivist here, this is my
responsibility and I'm going to fix it.**

Beat.

GEORGIE

**You know I could just have you
detained?**

SAM

**You know I could just take a nap and
teleport there.**

MELANIE

(amused)

He's got you there...

Pause as Georgie considers.

BASIRA

**He's had more training than we did
back in the day.**

GEORGIE

Fine! But you obey any orders you receive *without* question.

SAM

Sure.

GEORGIE

(to Basira)

And if anything goes wrong he's your responsibility.

BASIRA

Great.

GEORGIE

Right, grab your gear. We start in the hour.

[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 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 with additional voices from Beth Eyre. 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 55 – Blind Spots

**CATXXX-XXXXXXXX-XXXXXXX
ERROR (Unknown Source)**

Incident Elements:

- human experimentation
- depersonalisation
- loss of identity
- imprisonment

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Created by Jonathan Sims and [Alexander J Newall](#)

Directed by [Alexander J Newall](#)

Written by Jonathan Sims

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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)

Lydia Nicholas as Melanie King

Sasha Sienna as Georgie Barker

Shahan Hamza as Samama Khalid

Frank Voss as Basira Hussain

Beth Eyre as the Archivist

Alexander J Newall as Martin Blackwood

Jonathan Sims as Jonathan Sims

Ben Meredith as Elias Bouchard

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