

= Helen Magnus =

Dr. Helen Magnus is the series protagonist and central character of the Canadian fantasy @-@ science fiction television series Sanctuary . She is portrayed by Amanda Tapping . In the series , Magnus is a life scientist from Victorian era England , who currently runs the global Sanctuary Network , an organization tasked with finding a series of creatures called " abnormals " , and later bring them to a Sanctuary base for refuge to protect them from the human population . The character is over two and a half centuries old , having been given her advanced longevity by injecting herself with vampire blood , as well as reliving the 20th century from time travel . After traveling back in time , Magnus had to avoid people so she isolated herself . In the season 4 finale " Sanctuary For None : Part 2 " It was revealed that Magnus spent the 113 years creating a new Sanctuary .

Tapping was offered a part in the original web series by series creator Damian Kindler and director Martin Wood . It became the actress ' first regular role since playing Samantha Carter on Stargate SG @-@ 1 and Stargate Atlantis for eleven years . She initially had difficulty playing Magnus as her personality greatly differed from Carter . She also dyed her hair darker and spoke with an English accent throughout the run , as she herself was born in England . In addition , Tapping serves as the series executive producer and on some occasions , director .

Magnus and Tapping 's portrayal of the character received generally mixed reactions from critics , with the negative comments pointing toward 's Tapping 's accent . However , Tapping was nominated for four awards , one Gemini Award and three Leo Awards , for her role as Helen Magnus , winning a Leo Award for " Best Lead Performance by a Female in a Dramatic Series " in 2009 for the episode " Requiem " .

= = Character arc = =

= = = Background = = =

Helen Magnus was born on August 27 , 1850 to Gregory Magnus (Jim Byrnes) and Patricia Heathering . Her father was regarded as a controversial medical researcher of his time , and exposed his daughter to his profession when she was a child . Years later , she helped form a secret group known as " the Five " , along with John Druitt (Christopher Heyerdahl) , Nikola Tesla (Jonathon Young) , James Watson (Peter Wingfield) and Nigel Griffin (Vincent Gale) at Oxford University . Each member voluntarily injected themselves with pure vampire blood , a species that had become extinct centuries before . This granted each member unique abilities . Magnus ' ability was longevity , allowing her to live several times longer than any normal human . At this point she entered a relationship with Druitt , whose ability is personal teleportation . However , he became insane and murdered several prostitutes , thereby becoming Jack the Ripper . They did conceive a child , Magnus later took the embryo and froze it .

By the turn of the 20th century , her research with the abnormal population went into full swing , and she founded the Sanctuary Network . To get the funding she needed , the Prime Minister reunited the Five to stop and kill Adam Worth (Ian Tracey) , who was turned down as a sixth member and blamed the Five for the death of his daughter , from releasing a toxin in London . In the season two episode " Next Tuesday " , Magnus states she was a passenger on the RMS Titanic in 1912 . In July 1944 , she worked with the French Resistance in Normandy to prevent the Nazis from controlling a fire elemental before D @-@ Day . She then charged the head Sanctuary in Old City , a fictional city in the Pacific Northwest , during which she decided to use the embryo to bear her daughter , Ashley (Emilie Ullerup) . On one of her expeditions , she saved a young Will Zimmerman from a dangerous abnormal , but failed to capture it before it killed his mother .

= = = Season one = = =

In the first season of the show , Magnus appoints an adult Will (Robin Dunne) , a forensic psychiatrist who worked for the Old City Police Department , to become her new protégé , which he eventually accepts . Druitt returns to the Sanctuary to ask Magnus to cure him from an unknown affliction ; Magnus tricks him into injecting poison , though Druitt escapes . Later , in " The Five " , it would be revealed Druitt survived , and Tesla was able to suppress his insanity . In " Fata Morgana " , she becomes aware of an underground organization known as the Cabal , who plot to control all abnormals for their own gain , and in several episodes throughout the first season , will become her and her organization 's primary focus . In " Requiem " , Magnus becomes exposed to an aggressive parasite in the Bermuda Triangle when going with Will to see a group of mermaids who massacred each other because of the same parasite . To stop Magnus from killing Will and herself , Will locks her in a cabin in the submarine , and drains all the oxygen , killing her . She is later revived after Will captures the escaping parasite . In the two @-@ part season finale " Revelations " , the Cabal launch a bioweapon called " Lazarus " , which causes any exposed abnormal to attack humans . To combat this , Magnus regroups the Five to Bhalasaam , a lost city , to recover the source blood (vampire blood) . However , by the end Magnus is distressed to learn that the Cabal have turned Ashley against her and the team and steals the blood sample .

= = = Season two = = =

The second season begins six weeks after the end of the first , where Magnus works hard to defeat the Cabal and save Ashley , whom the Cabal transformed to a vampire @-@ hybrid superabnormal , one of six tasked to destroy the Sanctuary Network . When the superabnormals arrive at the Old City Sanctuary , Magnus is able to get through to Ashley , who recognises her in time to save her from another superabnormal , and then teleports . Because an electromagnetic field is active , it would mean whoever teleports inside would be vaporized . Despite this , Magnus believes Ashley 's life energy may be in the electromagnetic field 's buffer . When it does not , she is forced to accept that Ashley has died . Because of her death , and other loved ones because of her longevity , she tried to find a way to age at a normal rate again . She finds an elixir used by the Mayans in Honduras , but it has the side effect of turning humans into zombie @-@ like creatures . After being shown the potential consequences of the elixir 's release by an incorporeal guardian , she decides to leave it behind .

Later on in the season , her leadership of the Sanctuary Network would be called into question by the other heads of house . In " Veritas " , she sets up an elaborate scheme to apprehend a telepath named Emma (Erica Cerra) , whom she suspects of working against the Network . In the scheme , Magnus forges a mental illness and fakes the murder of her butler , Bigfoot (Heyerdahl) , and makes Emma believe she kept alive Big Bertha , the most dangerous abnormal on Earth , which Magnus was thought to have killed . However , it is revealed in the season finale " Kali " , Magnus did indeed keep her alive in secrecy , but sedated , as she believes that killing Bertha would jeopardize the planet . When Big Bertha is being controlled by Edward Forsythe , Magnus attempts to sedate Big Bertha again , but by then , Terrence Wexford (Paul McGillion) overrides her authority and assumes control of the network . His attempt to kill Bertha only succeeds in angering her , and she launches a tsunami .

= = = Season three = = =

The third season begins with Magnus forcing Wexford to step down as head of the Sanctuary Network , thereby putting herself back in command , while the rest of the team deal with the tsunami . Though they are not happy that Big Bertha is still alive , the other Sanctuary house heads decide to keep Magnus in charge , while also firing Wexford for breaking several protocols . She learns from Will that when he talked to Kali , the avatar manifestation of Big Bertha , into stopping the tsunami , he saw her father , who left her clues leading to a map leading to Hollow Earth , thought to be the home of every abnormal species on the planet . In " Breach " Magnus learns Adam Worth is still alive , and he also intends to find Hollow Earth , having been there before and resurrected . After

finding an entrance to Hollow Earth in Tibet , she and the team venture to the underground city of Praxis , where leader Ranna (Polly Walker) executes her and her team for trespassing . However , they are later resurrected as she wants their help in saving the city , which is facing destruction because a hyperspecies abnormal is not controlling the city 's geothermal energy . After saving it , Magnus and her team and Ranna part in good terms . It is also revealed Worth also came to the city to steal a power source with unlimited capabilities . Though it was assumed Druitt killed him before he could leave with it , it is later revealed in the season finale that Druitt kept him alive and that he is using the power source to create a time machine and cure his daughter 's leukemia , which could cause untold consequences on the planet . His first failed attempt causes the destruction of Praxis , and a time dilation bubble in Carentan , France . Magnus fails to stop him from succeeding , but does follow him through a time portal to London in 1898 .

= = = Season four = = =

Magnus pursues Worth throughout London to stop him from curing his daughter Imogene , who is meant to die in the timeline . During the pursuit she tries to avoid her past self , but fails to stop encountering Watson , who quickly discovers she is from his future , but he promises to keep quiet for the sake of preserving the timeline . When Worth chases Magnus later he accidentally kills Imogene , restoring the timeline . After killing Worth , Magnus ends up in hiding for the next 113 years before she can resurface to help Will dealing with a mass of Abnormals invading the surface . In the season finale , it is revealed that Helen had been secretly working with several important figures of the 20th Century , including Albert Einstein and Buckminster Fuller amongst others , and had built a new underground Sanctuary .

= = Characterization = =

The Syfy website describes Magnus as " beautiful and enigmatic " who has " devoted her life to the practical research of cutting edge medicine and science " . Her work is to explore the world of abnormals . While the rest of the world dismiss them as monstrous figments of their imaginations and elements of childhood nightmares , Magnus realizes that they are the world 's triumphs and mistakes . Magnus hence becomes their protector , but in some cases , their captor . She is also described as " bold and straightforward , brave and no @-@ nonsense , yet she remains proudly true to her formal Victorian English sensibilities " . Portraying actress Amanda Tapping described Magnus as a " crazy character " who is " very eccentric and very sexy and very unapologetic " .

Magnus " adores her daughter Ashley , respecting her independence and self @-@ reliance ? but that doesn 't preclude some occasional mother @-@ daughter friction " . Tapping has said that there is a " huge amount of respect " between the two characters , adding " Ashley knows that when her mother says she needs to do something then she says it for a reason . And Magnus has a huge amount of respect for Ashley because Ashley can do things that she can 't . " Magnus made a hard choice of having Ashley even though she does not have her mother 's longevity , and Magnus would outlive her daughter . In the first season Magnus recruits Will as her protégé . When asked what Magnus thinks of Will , Tapping stated " I think Helen finds him fascinating . He 's so idealistic , she sees in him all the qualities that she admires , but all the qualities that she knows will probably get beaten out of him over the course of time . His idealism and purity of thought and the way he analyses things ... she absolutely respects that , but I think she also realises that there 's going to come a time when he 's going to become a bit jaded ... There are a couple of episodes where there 's been this bizarre sexual tension between the two of them ... but generally there 's just a huge healthy respect . " During a Blastr interview in 2011 , Tapping further explains Magnus ' relationship with Will ; " I love how this relationship has developed . [...] " It 's been a really organic transformation of Will 's character and Magnus . To actually bring somebody on board who , initially , it 's all about teaching him the ropes . And then as the seasons have gone on he 's come into his own . He 's come into his own as a scientist . He 's come into his own in terms of his relationship with the people in the Sanctuary . " Dunne meanwhile stated " there 's a nice synchronicity that has

formed between the two characters . And really , they 're two people that depend on each other for survival . And therefore , that 's where the respect comes out of . "

= = Conceptual history = =

Series creator Damian Kindler conceived the idea of Sanctuary in 2001 , many of his ideas were included in the final product , one of them being the English scientist Helen Magnus . A few years later , Kindler asked Martin Wood if there was a potential for a series . When Wood believed it would be , they both decided to approach Amanda Tapping to participate in the project , and she accepted . Kindler believed that casting Tapping was a " nice fit " to the character because the actress was born in England . Tapping , who played the regular character Samantha Carter in Stargate SG @-@ 1 and sister show Stargate Atlantis , did not know the future of her role in the show when she was approached to appear on Sanctuary in 2006 . When the webseries started shooting in January 2007 , it did not conflict with her commitments on Stargate . After the fourth season of Atlantis , Tapping was offered to return to the fifth season and she accepted . When Sanctuary was picked up to a television series , Tapping decided to turn down the Atlantis contract , having been encouraged by her husband to move on after playing Carter for eleven years . She went through a " weird disconnect " playing Magnus since " Sam Carter was so much a part of me " . However , she was able to embrace playing a new character " pretty quickly " .

Nevertheless , Tapping found it a challenge to play a different character , as Carter and Magnus have differing personalities and points of view ; " after playing a character like Sam Carter for so long where her physicality is so comfortable ? Sam is so comfortable in her own skin and Helen is this very sexual , more mysterious being . She has a much darker edge to her and it was sort of finding that because Carter always looks on the bright side and Helen has been around so long , and has seen so much of the evil in human society if you will . " Whilst filming the webisodes , Tapping wore a dark @-@ haired wig , but when the television series was being shot , she dyed her hair to match the hair colour of the wig . Tapping spoke with an English accent throughout the run of the series . Although many of her relatives are from the United Kingdom and speak with British accents Tapping found the accent a challenge , as her character came from the Victorian era , which is a " very specific way of speaking . She clings to that eccentricity a bit , to that Britishness . " The actress listened to several different voices , as she had to factor in the fact that Magnus lived all around the world .

Sanctuary was mostly filmed on virtual green screen sets . Initially Tapping went through what she called " chroma key green headaches " because she had to stare at nothing but bright green walls for the first few days . When she got used to it , she likened filming on green screen to working in theatre . In the second season her daughter , Ashley was killed off . The producers , as well as the American and Canadian networks to give the character , including Magnus , a deep and most dramatic impact . They also wanted Magnus to feel more angry and vulnerable throughout the season , especially in the first three episodes . After playing Magnus in the series ' third season , Tapping admitted that she still does not get Magnus because " there 's so many things about the decisions that she makes that I still can 't wrap my head around , and to me that 's fascinating as an actor , to try to get inside somebody so complex and so kind of confusing . " In the episode " Normandy " , Tapping wore a red @-@ haired wig for Magnus during her time in the Second World War , as an homage to her late grandmother . For the fourth season , Tapping requested that Magnus would be given a new love interest . The request was granted in the form of a female virologist appearing early in the season (thus establishing Magnus 's bisexuality) .

In addition to being an actor , Tapping was also an executive producer on the series . However , she did not get paid extra as that salary would go towards financing the show , which was not backed up by a studio . She also served as a director on certain days if other directors were unavailable , or called in sick . In the second season , she was allowed to direct " Veritas " , the seventh episode .

= = Reception = =

= = = Critical reaction = = =

According to Mark Wilson of About.com , Amanda Tapping was enthusiastic about creating a radically different character after eleven years playing Samantha Carter in Stargate SG @-@ 1 and Stargate Atlantis , and expended tremendous effort to separate Helen from Carter as successfully as possible . Tapping was able to successfully portray a woman who 's experienced a century and a half of isolation , strangeness , and relentless compassion . Rick Bentley from McClatchy Newspapers commented Tapping 's role as Dr. Magnus was a way for the actor to make a name of herself outside the Stargate universe as Carter . Magnus is also described as a " non @-@ glib , female Jack Harkness ; " Jack Harkness being the main character from the British science fiction show Torchwood . Hilary Rothing of UGO said that " Dr. Helen Magnus is intelligent , alluring and has one of those tasty British accents ? Victorian era to be exact . That 's because she 's a 157 years old . But seriously , she doesn 't look a day over 35 . " She also added that Tapping is " right at home " taking the lead for the show . Alex Walker of Den of Geek believed Magnus was " typical for an English character in an American TV show , with a liking for tea and a cut @-@ glass elocution betraying no hint of a regional accent " . Helen Magnus has been listed number ten in TV Squad 's " Ten Most mysterious characters on television " .

Magnus 's English accent was not well received by some critics . She was listed ninth in io9 's " Worst Fake Accents From The Yanks (And Canucks) Of Science Fiction " , with Meredith Woerner stating " I really want to like this new Sci Fi Channel show , especially since the monsters look amazing ? but I 'm worried Tapping 's dreadful accent will get in the way . It sounds completely forced in all the clips I 've seen so far , but I 'll guess I 'll have to wait until October 3 to make my full assessment . " Maureen Ryan of the Chicago Tribune wondered why Tapping decided to speak with an " iffy accent , " but added she would be of interest by fans of Tapping 's previous works , notably Stargate . Rob Owen of the Pittsburgh Post @-@ Gazette called Tapping 's English accent " unremarkable " , whilst calling the show an " unremarkable series . "

= = = Accolades = = =

Over the course of the series , Tapping 's portrayal of Magnus resulted in several award nominations . Tapping was nominated for a 2009 Gemini Award for " Best Performance by an Actress in a Continuing Leading Dramatic Role , " for her role in " Requiem " , but lost out to Being Erica 's Erin Karpluk In the same year , Tapping won the similar " Best Lead Performance by a Female in a Dramatic Series " Leo Award for the same episode . She was nominated for the same category again in 2010 for " Pavor Nocturnus " , and in 2011 for " Breach " , but lost out to Erin Karpluk and Blackstone 's Carmen Moore , respectively .