

MAG 158 — Panopticon

Content Warnings

- Loud noises (including rock grinding) / static
- Violence (gun / monstrous)
- Extended gunfire
- Isolation
- Murder / Death / Loss

[The Magnus Archives Theme – Intro]

JONATHAN SIMS

Rusty Quill presents... *The Magnus Archives*. Episode one hundred and fifty-eight: "Panopticon."

[Theme finishes]

[Tape click on]

[Footsteps as Peter and Martin walk in an echoing tunnel]

[Faint sound of the Lonely (Peter's) static]

[They stop walking]

(Martin makes an agitated sound)

PETER

Is everything alright, Martin?

MARTIN

It's fine. Don't particularly like it down here.

PETER

Ah, yes, of course. Hard to trust the doors, I imagine.

MARTIN

(Wry chuckle) Yeah, well, everyone else seems to these days, so...

PETER

But she's still the same corridors, I suppose. I'm sure... what was his name...

Tim! Tim w—

MARTIN

(Interrupting) I would *really*. Rather not talk about it, Peter.

PETER

Very well. This way.

[They start walking again]

(Beat)

MARTIN

Look, are you *sure* about that map? I'm pretty certain the tunnels change.

PETER

Oh, don't worry about that. Ink's practically still wet. Not to mention, if they do change, well... I happen to have something that will change them back.

[Rustling]

MARTIN

That's a Leitner.

PETER

It is!

MARTIN

And the, um... the blood on it?

PETER

(Cheerfully) That's Leitner too!

MARTIN

(Apprehensively) ...Riiight.

PETER

Do you want to see how it works?

MARTIN

No, no, I'd really rather you didn't—

PETER

No, I insist! Watch.

[They stop walking]

(Long beat with no additional sounds)

MARTIN

(Wryly sarcastic) Very impressive.

PETER

I'm reading. Shush.

(Beat)

[Faint stone sliding and brick movement that gets louder]

MARTIN

P-Peter. Peter, there's a... Peter, I think there's something in there.

PETER

Mm-hmm. I'd stay quiet if I were you.

[The stone and bricks movement crescendos with rubble going everywhere as Not-Sasha is released]

(Not-Sasha enters with a distorted scream then some ragged gasps; its voice is distorted through the rest of the episode)

NOT-SASHA

So you finally decided to let me out, John? **(Calling)** Joouooohn?

(Beat)

Who's there?

(Martin's terrified breathing can be heard)

Who let me out?

Don't be shy... I just want to say thank you.

(Beat)

...alright, have it your way. Now if you'll excuse me... I have some unfinished business.

(Not-Sasha lets out a cackling laugh)

[Not-Sasha leaves with a scuttling sound]

(Beat)

(Martin lets out a shaky breath)

MARTIN

That — that — that — that was. Um—

PETER

Yes!

MARTIN

And it's, it's going to—

PETER

Make sure everyone is too busy to follow us. They'll be fine. Probably.

You could still go help them. If you insist.

(Beat)

(Martin lets out a resigned breath)

(Satisfied) Very good. Come on.

[Tape clicks off]

[Tape clicks on]

[A quiet room]

ARCHIVIST

Gone *how*?

DAISY

Just walked out, as far as we can tell.

BASIRA

A couple of guards on duty vanished too.

ARCHIVIST

(Agitated) Vanished. *How?!*

BASIRA

Just left. Best we can tell, he had some dirt on them.

DAISY

Old friend at the prison let us know.

ARCHIVIST

What, and no one thought of that?

BASIRA

Asshole could have left at any time, but he just sat there laughing at us.

ARCHIVIST

No, no, this— this can't be a coincidence.

BASIRA

Coincidence with what?

ARCHIVIST

(Sputters) Martin, or someone, left me a tape. Him and Peter Lukas are looking for something d-down in the tunnels.

BASIRA

Do you know what?

ARCHIVIST

No, he called it a device.

DAISY

When?

ARCHIVIST

I-I mean, I don't— I mean... n-now? I guess? They could— it can't be a coincidence that this is when Elias chooses to make a break for it.

BASIRA

You think he's coming here?

ARCHIVIST

You don't?

DAISY

Let's go.

ARCHIVIST

(Sighs) I'll get the key.

[Tape clicks off]

[Tape clicks on]

[Faint sound of the Lonely static]

**[Martin and Peter's footsteps clang as they walk in a large
echoing space]**

MARTIN

What is this place?

PETER

The panopticon of Millbank prison. Not quite as Smirke originally conceived it, of course; Jonah Magnus made certain... adjustments.

MARTIN

And it's been down here the whole time?

PETER

Why'd you think this was chosen as the Institute's location when the prison closed? It's a significant site of power for the Beholding. From the tower in the centre of this room, you can see everything.

MARTIN

But there's nothing in the cells.

PETER

I don't mean the cells, Martin! I mean *everything*. Come on. Mind your step, this comes from an era before safety rails.

MARTIN

B... But I don't understand. Why are we here?

PETER

It's quite simple, really. I want to use the powers of this place to learn about the Extinction— what it's doing, where it's manifesting. Then we can stop it.

MARTIN

And you need *me* for this?

PETER

Correct! Without a connection to The Eye, any attempt to use it would likely end very messily indeed. But thankfully it just so happens that you hold such a connection.

MARTIN

So that's it. Both Lonely and Watching.

PETER

You must admit you're the perfect candidate.

MARTIN

I suppose I am.

PETER

There is, of course, just one other complication?

You'll have to dispose of the current occupant.

MARTIN

Current...

[Martin sees; and they stop walking]

(Tense) Who is that?

PETER

Jonah Magnus! His body at least. Sitting here, watching. Binding it all together, growing ever older. If you want to take his place, well...

MARTIN

I'll need to kill him.

PETER

Yes. Don't worry, though, I brought a knife.

[The sound of a rolling, metal gate being opened and sliding back]

[Martin steps forward]

(Martin takes a trembling breath)

MARTIN

Where are his eyes?

[A footstep]

ELIAS

Exactly where they've always been, Martin.

(Martin gasps)

Watching over *my* Institute.

[Tape clicks off]

[Tape clicks on]

[A quiet room]

BASIRA

And you're sure?

ARCHIVIST

Yes, I'm sure it wasn't here before!

BASIRA

It's just that there's a lot of tapes around.

ARCHIVIST

And I don't keep any of them with the *key to the tunnels*. It's been left for me.

DAISY

And it says 'play me'. Kind of suspicious.

BASIRA

So Elias left it.

ARCHIVIST

Or Martin. Or Peter, or Annabelle!

BASIRA

Fine. Whatever. Could be a distraction.

ARCHIVIST

Only one way to find out.

BASIRA

We don't have time for this.

DAISY

We don't know that. We've no idea what sort of time frame we're on. I say play it.

ARCHIVIST

Thank you.

[Tape clicks off]

[Tape clicks on]

**[The sound of liquid being sloshed around; the Archivist's office
door swings open]**

ELIAS

(Further back) Gertrude.

GERTRUDE

(Close) (Under her breath) Damn.

ELIAS

(Further back) Did you really think I wouldn't notice?

GERTRUDE

I'd rather hoped you'd still be hampered with all the Dark's business.

[A slosh as Gertrude puts a container down; Elias enters the room]

GERTRUDE (CONT'D)

It's their 'Grand Eclipse' at the moment, isn't it?

ELIAS

(Affected sigh) But I think we've both come to the same conclusion about *that*.
That's why you're here.

GERTRUDE

Yes. Shame, really. I used to be able to torch a building in half the time. **(weary breath)** Age catches us all. **(contemptuously)** Well, almost all of us, *Elias*.

ELIAS

You were the one so... *insistent* on staying human.

GERTRUDE

And no doubt that makes my death a lot less complicated.

ELIAS

What exactly were you hoping to achieve here? Why not come at me directly instead of burning everything first?

GERTRUDE

I was rather hoping the fire would occupy you while I did just that.

ELIAS

I see.

How long have you known?

GERTRUDE

About your body? Not long after you took your new host and we had that little... chat. Wasn't exactly a huge leap to the panopticon after that. The hard part was figuring out how to actually reach it. Took me the better part of a decade.

ELIAS

So you burn the place down, use it as cover to reach my body, and then we die together. How *poetic*. Doesn't seem like your style at all.

GERTRUDE

I wasn't actually planning on dying.

ELIAS

And how exactly were you planning on achieving that while you're still bound to the... ha. Oh, I see. Very clever. **(smirk)** I thought Eric was the only one to figure that little morsel out.

GERTRUDE

Knowledge has a way of surviving. *You* of all people should know that.

ELIAS

Quite. It was a good plan, actually. If you hadn't been so complacent about me keeping an eye out down here, probably would have worked. **(sarcastic)** Gertrude's grand retirement.

GERTRUDE

It still might.

Just needs a little spark, and—

[Metal clink of a lighter, meanwhile a gun cocks]

GERTRUDE (CONT'D)

I see. So you're finally getting your hands dirty? I must really have caught you off guard.

ELIAS

I suppose we both got a little complacent. Fifty years is a long time. End of an era.

GERTRUDE

(Disparagingly) I'm not really in the mood for nostalgia, Elias. You might have noticed I'm rather busy so either shoot me or—

[A gunshot rings out; Gertrude gasps and collapses]

GERTRUDE

Well... **(gasp)** there it is. **(gasp)** Thought it would hurt more.

(Elias sighs)

ELIAS

Pity.

[Tape clicks off]

[Tape clicks on]

[A quiet room]

BASIRA

Right, so what does that tell us?

John? John?

ARCHIVIST

Y-yes, sorry, right. Just, uh... uh, the panopticon. It's the, um...

BASIRA

Design of Millbank prison, based on an all-seeing watchtower. I know. I *did* the reading.

ARCHIVIST

R-right.

BASIRA

You think that's the device?

ARCHIVIST

Ah yes. And I'd wager that Elias' body—

BASIRA

Gotta be Jonah Magnus, right?

ARCHIVIST

I'd say so.

BASIRA

(Sigh) And he's been body hopping like whatever was in Reynor.

ARCHIVIST

So is he going to help Peter or-or stop him?

BASIRA

Lukas is planning to take over the panopticon. Can't imagine he wants that to happen.

ARCHIVIST

But Elias put him in charge. That doesn't make any— what... Daisy are you—?

[Muffled sounds of violence]

DAISY

Shh!

[Muffled gun shots ring out; distant female screams can be heard]

ARCHIVIST

Oh, no.

BASIRA

Stay here, both of you. I'll check it out.

[Tape clicks off]

[Tape clicks on]

[Faint sound of the Lonely static]

[A large echoing space; the panopticon]

PETER

What are you doing here, Elias?

ELIAS

Oh, you needn't worry. Two against one? I couldn't stop you if I wanted to. I just wanted to be here at the end. Can a man not watch his own death?

MARTIN

What, wh-wh- *what*? What? How are you even *here*?

ELIAS

Well—

PETER

Don't let him distract you.

ELIAS

(Faux-hurt) Peter.

PETER

(Cold) Elias.

MARTIN

Both of you just, just shut up. Just give me a second to think.

PETER

Of course. You can take all the time in the world.

ELIAS

Come now, Martin. I would have thought you'd *jump* at the chance to kill me.

MARTIN

That's not... why wouldn't you help against the Extinction?

ELIAS

Because I'm a busy man. It has never been my top priority.

MARTIN

I don't believe you.

ELIAS

That really doesn't matter, I'm afraid. It's the only answer you're going to get.

MARTIN

If I...

If I do kill you, will the others survive?

PETER

(Warning) Elias...

ELIAS

Come now, Peter, it's a valid question. And *you* should have addressed it yourself, really.

The short answer, is *I don't know*, Martin. I guarantee it won't be pleasant for them, but I honestly don't know if their ties to the Institute are quite as strong as I may have implied. You, at least should be insulated from the fallout by your new allegiance. John... *might* be powerful enough to weather it. Melanie's well out of it, so that just leaves Basira and Daisy. And the rest of the Institute, of course, and you can't tell me you care about them.

MARTIN

(Indignant) Wh— of course I do!

ELIAS

Do you though? Do you *really care* about any of them? Or is that worrying just simply an old reflex?

(Beat)

Goodness. Peter has done his work well, hasn't he? Hm! No, the only choice I think that matters is whether *you* want to kill me or not.

MARTIN

I do. **(With humourless laugh)** I really, really do.

PETER

Then do it, Martin.

[Peter hands Martin the knife]

PETER (CONT'D)

We're the same, you and I. We don't need anyone else. Watching from a distance, that's always who you've been. Haven't you enjoyed it these last few months, drifting through the Archives unseen, unjudged? You'll like it in there. I promise.

MARTIN

Yeah.

Yeah, I think I would.

PETER

Then do it. Kill him and help me **(dramatically)** *save the world*.

(Long beat)

MARTIN

No.

[Tape clicks off]

[Tape clicks on]

[The quiet room; with muffled violence in the background]

DAISY

(Sighing) Well?

BASIRA

Looks like two people. An old guy and—

DAISY

A woman with a scar.

ARCHIVIST

Oh, god, now? Why now?!

BASIRA

It's probably not a coincidence. From what I saw they've been toying with the rest of the Institute, but it won't be long until they're all dead or escaped.

DAISY

And then they're coming here.

ARCHIVIST

(Under his breath) Right. Okay.

BASIRA

Set up by the door. Try and take them when they break through.

DAISY

Right.

[Movement as they take up positions]

ARCHIVIST

Do ah... do I get a gun?

BASIRA

You ever fired one?

ARCHIVIST

(Indignant) You never *taught* me!

BASIRA

You never asked. Besides, we've got problems enough without—

[A loud bang of wood as a trapdoor bursts open]

[Hissing static starts]

NOT-SASHA

Hello, John.

DAISY

Oh, shit.

ARCHIVIST

You gotta be *fucking* kidding—

**[Loud crash of a door being kicked open; Daisy and Basira fire off
two shots]**

BASIRA

Go!

**[The team moves; not too far away is gunfire from Trevor and Julia;
nearer is the clattering of Not-Sasha moving]**

[Hissing static ends]

TREVOR

(Calling, distant) Joooooonny boy! **(cackles)**

JULIA

(Calling, distant) (Laughing) We want to make a statement!

NOT-SASHA

(Distant) Oh, hello! What's happening here? New friends?

TREVOR

(Distant) What the—

[Gunshots from Trevor and Julia]

(Not-Sasha laughs)

NOT-SASHA

(Distant) *Not* new friends? Even better.

DAISY

What the hell is that thing?

JULIA

(Distant) Ha! You see that, old man?

TREVOR

(Distant) Told ya. They're all monsters here.

[Gunfire and muffled destruction continues]

ARCHIVIST

You remember what happened to Sasha?

BASIRA

That's the thing that took her.

ARCHIVIST

It was trapped in the tunnels. It— Martin. Something's happening down there.

BASIRA

If he's down there with Peter, or Elias... dammit, we need to get down there.

TREVOR

(Distant) Come out, come out, wherever you are! **(sniffs)** You smell 'im?

JULIA

(Distant) Ugh. Hard to tell over the stink of *that* thing!

[Gunfire and muffled destruction continues]

DAISY

They'll follow us...

BASIRA

God dammit. John, go, we'll keep them busy.

ARCHIVIST

What? No! I—

BASIRA

Don't argue. Just go!

NOT-SASHA

(Distant) Jooooohn?

ARCHIVIST

Fine. Just don't die.

DAISY

Go.

[Sound of the Archivist running, fading out]

BASIRA

This might be it.

DAISY

Basira...

BASIRA

Didn't think it would end like this.

(Wry chuckling) You know what, actually, I think I did.

(Not-Sasha laughs maniacally in the background)

[Gunfire and muffled destruction continues]

DAISY

Basira, promise me something.

(Daisy begins to breath rapidly and aggressively)

BASIRA

What? No — Daisy, no.

DAISY

Basira, when this is over, you need to find me. And kill me. Promise me.

BASIRA

No. No, Daisy, we'll figure something out.

NOT-SASHA

(Closer) You can't hide forever, John...

DAISY

These last months I... it was always borrowed time. Can't outrun it forever.

BASIRA

Daisy—

DAISY

Promise me!

BASIRA

I promise.

DAISY

Thanks. Now run.

BASIRA

Daisy—

DAISY

(Voice growling, distorted by the Hunt) *Run...*

[Quick footsteps as Basira leaves]

(Daisy snarls out each breath)

[Nearby, Julia cocks a gun]

JULIA

A-haha! There you are.

[Trevor cocks a gun]

TREVOR

All alone, little pup!

(Daisy's snarls grow into a full-throated, attacking grow-bark)

JULIA

Shit!

[A gunshot rings out]

[Tape clicks off]

[Tape clicks on]

[Faint sound of the Lonely static]

[A large echoing space; the panopticon]

PETER

Martin. What are you doing?

MARTIN

I'm... saying no. I refuse. Game over.

[The knife clatters to the ground]

PETER

Martin, this is not the time for petulance. There are bigger things at stake here.

MARTIN

(Laugh) You know, I think that was actually the problem. You made the stakes too high. All the little details that didn't add up... it made them *more* obvious. Exaggerated.

PETER

The Extinction *is* coming.

MARTIN

Oh, I'm sure it is! But that's not what this is about, is it? This isn't about saving the world, it's all just some power play against *him*. I might not know exactly what's going on, but I don't think I want any part of this. However much I want to kill him... I'm out.

PETER

But you said—

MARTIN

Honestly, I mostly just said what I *thought* you wanted to hear.

PETER

I see.

This is your doing, is it?

ELIAS

(Amused) Hardly.

MARTIN

It's not him! It's not anybody. It's just me. Always has been. I...

When I first came to you, I thought I had lost everything. John was dead, my mother was dead, the job I had put everything into had trapped me into spreading evil and I... I really didn't care what happened to me. I told myself I

was trying to protect the others, but honestly we didn't even *like* each other. Maybe I just thought joining up with you would be a good way to get killed. And then... John came back, and... and suddenly I had a reason. I had to keep your attention on me. Make you feel in control so you didn't take it out on him. And if that meant drifting further away, so what? I'd already grieved for him and if it meant now saving him, it was worth it.

When you started talking about the Extinction, though... you had me actually, for a while. But then, **(laughs sardonically)** then you tried to make me the hero. Tried to sell me on the idea that I was the only one who could stop it. And that... that never sat right with me. I mean, I mean, look-look at me, I'm not exactly a, a-a chosen one. But, by then I was in too deep. So I played along. Waited to see what your end game was, and here we are.

Funny. Looks like I was right the first time. It's probably still a good way to get killed.

ELIAS

(Smugly) I warned you, Peter.

PETER

But you do serve the Lonely.

MARTIN

Oh, I'm getting there, but, if this is the final test or something? Then bad luck. The answer's still no.

PETER

(Petulantly) No. No! This isn't fair— do you have any idea what you've done?
You knew, he must realize—

MARTIN

Elias— *Jonah* had nothing to do with it.

PETER

No, that's not— you can't—

ELIAS

(Extremely pleased) You've lost, Peter, admit it. **(small chuckle)** He played you
like a... like a... **(pleased)** cheap whistle.

PETER

No! Shut up.

ELIAS

Peter. It's time.

PETER

Fine!

**[The Lonely static suddenly crescendos as Martin speaks; when it
fades back to a faint level Martin is gone]**

MARTIN

(Fading out) Great. Now perhaps one of you, then, can tell me what's...

ELIAS

It won't be that bad, Peter. **(small chuckle)** You'll see. Now, he'll be here soon, so you can leave or—

PETER

Oh, no. No. I'm not gonna make it easy on him. You haven't won yet.

ELIAS

Your choice. Just make sure to leave the door open.

[The Lonely static rises again, before becoming faint]

(Elias lets out a long, triumphant laugh, then sighs, contented)

[Tape clicks off]

[Tape clicks on]

[Faint sound of the Lonely static]

[A large echoing space; the panopticon; footsteps]

(A few seconds of John's laboured breathing)

ELIAS

Ah, John. I was almost worried. You found your way all right?

ARCHIVIST

(Out of breath) Yes. Y-yes, I did.

...How?

ELIAS

Suffice it to say I called you.

ARCHIVIST

What is this place?

ELIAS

Hmm. A complicated question. And time is—

[Hissing static starts]

ARCHIVIST

It's the panopticon.

[Hissing static ends]

ELIAS

(Pleased) ...My you *have* grown. Yes. A masterpiece, isn't it?

ARCHIVIST

Yeah. It is. And that's you then? Your... body?

ELIAS

Not anymore — n-not really, although if you harmed it, it wouldn't go well for me. Or any of your friends, for that matter.

ARCHIVIST

Maybe it's worth it.

ELIAS

Maybe. And I'm sure in another circumstance, you would be more than happy to take your chances for a shot at revenge.

ARCHIVIST

But...

ELIAS

But, for Martin, time is very much of the essence.

ARCHIVIST

Where is he?

ELIAS

Peter Lukas has him. Cast him into the Lonely, and with every passing moment he gets further away from you.

ARCHIVIST

How do I bring him back?

ELIAS

From out here? Impossible.

ARCHIVIST

You want me to follow him?

ELIAS

No, John. *You* want you to follow him. *I* simply want you to know that if you do so, you are almost certainly not coming back. To go into the Lonely willingly is as good as death.

ARCHIVIST

How do I do it?

ELIAS

Wasn't too long ago. And I'm sure traces of their passage still remain. Just open your mind. Drink it *all* in. *Know* their route, and simply... follow it.

[The Lonely static starts rising in volume]

ELIAS (CONT'D)

Very good.

Are you scared, John?

ARCHIVIST

(Quietly) Yes.

[The Lonely static crescendos]

ELIAS

Perfect.

[Tape clicks off]

[The Magnus Archives Theme — Outro]

JONATHAN SIMS

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