

## MAG – 119 – Stranger and Stranger

[Calliope Music - Intro]

JONATHAN SIMS

Rusty Quill Presents The Magnus Archives Episode One Hundred And Nineteen  
Stranger And Stranger

[Calliope Music – Intro - Continues]

(Click)

(Faint, rolling sound of a calliope organ)

(Everything sounds distorted)

ARCHIVIST

H-hello? I, uh, anyone? Um, w-what's going on? What is this place? Where is...

H-help! Please!

(The dance continues around him)

ARCHIVIST

Anybody!

SARAH

I'm somebody.

**ARCHIVIST**

W-w-what, uh... Who are you?

**SARAH**

What an excellent question.

**ARCHIVIST**

Stay away from me!

**SARAH**

Sarah, Daniel... Sometimes I think I'm just not built for names. A hundred puppets, a hundred pointless names.

**ARCHIVIST**

I don't understand.

**SARAH**

Of course *you* don't. You can't. Not anymore.

**ARCHIVIST**

What? I don't... Who are you?

**SARAH**

(Small laugh) It's me, John. It's Tim.

**ARCHIVIST**

J-John... John?

**SARAH**

Yes. That's your name. And I'm Tim, your friend.

**ARCHIVIST**

**(Relieved)** Ah, Tim!

**SARAH**

**(Faux sweet)** Yes, John. You can relax. Everything is going to be okay.

**ARCHIVIST**

No. No, Tim, we've got to stop it.

**SARAH**

Stop what?

**ARCHIVIST**

I...

**SARAH**

And how are you going to stop it?

**ARCHIVIST**

I have, uh... I thought that I, uh... This!

This... I don't know.

**SARAH**

Well, don't you worry. I'm sure we can work it out together.

**ARCHIVIST**

Yes. Yes, Tim, I'm just... I need a second to, uh...

**SARAH**

Of course, John.

**ARCHIVIST**

John! Yes, that's, that's me.

**SARAH**

Give it to me.

**ARCHIVIST**

Yes, yes, if you could, um... I'd, I'd value your input on it, uh...

**SARAH**

Tim.

**ARCHIVIST**

Yes, Tim. Tim.

**SARAH**

Now let's take a look at this.

**ARCHIVIST**

Please.

**SARAH**

Right, now what we have here is a handheld remote detonator.

**ARCHIVIST**

A-a-a what?

**SARAH**

It talks to a bomb.

**ARCHIVIST**

Wait...

**SARAH**

I imagine if you'd used it, we'd all have come to quite a nasty end.

**ARCHIVIST**

No, that was... That was...

**SARAH**

(Laughing) Don't you worry, Archivist. It's all in good hands!

**ARCHIVIST**

I don't understand!

**SARAH**

And you never will again.

(Sarah dances away)

(Music swells, then fades)

**BREEKON**

Hello, Daisy.

**HOPE**

You all right?

**BREEKON & HOPE**

Daisy?

**DAISY**

No.

**BREEKON**

I'm sorry?

**HOPE**

Don't follow you.

**DAISY**

Leave. Now.

**BREEKON**

Come on, Daisy.

**HOPE**

Don't be like that.

**BREEKON**

It's me.

**HOPE**

Basira.

**DAISY**

(Calm) No, you're not, because nothing is anything. Leave.

**BREEKON**

And if I don't?

**HOPE**

What'll you do?

**DAISY**

I'll kill you.

**BREEKON**

Will you now?

**HOPE**

Ooh, pretty scary.

**BREEKON**

If you can, that is.

**HOPE**

You don't even know what a gun is.

**DAISY**

I don't care.

**(Daisy starts snarling)**

**(Daisy lunges at hope. In one motion, she reaches up and tears out his throat)**

**BREEKON**

No!

**(Hope gurgles pitifully as he falls to the floor)**

**(Daisy laughs, elated, as Breekon charges at her)**

**(The music swells)**

**(Musical swell fades)**

**TIM**

Get away from me!

**BASIRA**

It's alright. I'm not, I'm not one of them.

**TIM**

Everyone is, this isn't... Just get back!

**BASIRA**

Okay. Okay. Who, who are you?

**TIM**

I don't know, do I!

**BASIRA**

W-what can we do?

**TIM**

It's too late. There's nothing.

**BASIRA**

There must be. We just need to figure this out. I, I know I'm me.

**TIM**

So what's your name? Huh? Who exactly is 'Me'?

**BASIRA**

It doesn't matter... Names don't matter. I just... I know, I know I'm me, and I know I'm here.

**TIM**

Bullshit. 'Here' is...

**(Tim makes a frustrated noise)**

**BASIRA**

**(Trying desperately to reason)** There are things that are not me. They want to... to hurt me. But I... I don't want to hurt you.

**TIM**

I don't believe you.

**BASIRA**

I don't want to hurt anyone...

**TIM**

Get back!

**BASIRA**

No, we can do this. I, I can do this. I just need you to—

**TIM**

I said, get away!

**BASIRA**

No, don't—

**(Tim throws a wild punch, then turns and flees)**

**BASIRA**

**(Quiet)** No... wait... I don't, I don't understand.

**(The music swells)**

**(Musical swell fades)**

**ARCHIVIST**

It isn't... It isn't real.

**NIKOLA**

What isn't real, John?

**ARCHIVIST**

I don't... None of it. None of this is real.

**NIKOLA**

Oh, but it is! Just because you don't understand, doesn't mean it's a lie.

**ARCHIVIST**

Who are you?

**NIKOLA**

Why, I'm... Tim, of course! Who else would I be?

**ARCHIVIST**

You're not... you're not Tim.

**NIKOLA**

Oh! You caught me! I'm Sasha.

**ARCHIVIST**

Shut up!

**NIKOLA**

No, really, it's me, Sasha whatever-her-name-was, back from the dead, just like you wanted!

**ARCHIVIST**

Get away from me! Or, or I swear, I'll, I'll—

**NIKOLA**

You'll what? Hit me? (**Laughing**) Go on then, try it. Make a fist.

**ARCHIVIST**

I, I—

**NIKOLA**

Do you even know which of these hands is yours?

**ARCHIVIST**

Stop. Stop it! Stand still!

**NIKOLA**

Do you even know what a hand is?

(Archivist tries to steady his breathing)

**GERTRUDE (NIKOLA)**

Pathetic.

**ARCHIVIST**

Wait, I-I-I know you.

**GERTRUDE (NIKOLA)**

I would hope you do.

**ARCHIVIST**

How are you here?

**GERTRUDE (NIKOLA)**

Don't be obtuse, John. I'm here because you failed.

**ARCHIVIST**

I, I, I tried. I almost—

**GERTRUDE (NIKOLA)**

You almost what? You almost didn't doom the world? (**Laughs as Nikola**) No. You almost left reality to be the plaything of a lazy, foolish voyeur.

**ARCHIVIST**

No, no, no. I wouldn't— I could have stopped it.

**GERTRUDE (NIKOLA)**

How? You didn't even know what it was. Do you know how many people I killed to keep the world in one piece? The sacrifices I made? And you didn't even know what you were fighting.

**ARCHIVIST**

N-no, I-I d-didn't—

**GERTRUDE (NIKOLA)**

I suppose it's of no consequence now. It's far too late.

**ARCHIVIST**

What can I do?

**GERTRUDE (NIKOLA)**

You could scream, I suppose. Weep, maybe. (**Laughs as Nikola**) Have you considered curling into a ball?

**ARCHIVIST**

Why are you doing this?

**GERTRUDE (NIKOLA)**

I'm not. (**Pause**) You know, it's probably for the best I'm dead. Can you imagine how much I'd hate having to watch you fumble around as my replacement. I really cannot express how much of a disappointment you are.

**ARCHIVIST**

I, I'm sorry. I, I didn't even—

**GERTRUDE (NIKOLA)**

I fought for years to stop the Stranger in its tracks, and you didn't even notice when they desecrated my corpse. And now look at me. You've made me part of their ritual. This is your fault.

**ARCHIVIST**

It is not. I didn't know... It's not my fault you died.

**LEITNER (NIKOLA)**

No, I suppose not. Me, on the other hand... That one is very much your fault.

**ARCHIVIST**

No, not... Not you as well.

**LEITNER (NIKOLA)**

Oh yes.

**ARCHIVIST**

You told me... Why, why didn't you warn me it would be like this?

**LEITNER (NIKOLA)**

I hardly had the chance, did I, before you left me to get my head bashed in? I understand of course. You needed a cigarette. I suppose you should have remembered that smoking kills. [Laughs as Nicola]

**ARCHIVIST**

That's not... I don't know.

**LEITNER (NIKOLA)**

Come now, Archivist. Surely you still know what a cigarette is? Or a pipe?

**ARCHIVIST**

It's h-hard to think.

**LEITNER (NIKOLA)**

If our earlier conversation was anything to go by, I hardly think you can blame your thoughtlessness on the ritual. Your problems go far deeper than that.

**ARCHIVIST**

Just give me a moment, Jurgen, please...

**LEITNER (NIKOLA)**

You think that will help? Honestly, if I wasn't so dead, I'd be impressed. I always thought my own hubris to be quite exceptional, but you've somehow been able to fit more bad decisions into two years than I managed in a lifetime. But by all means, take your moment.

**ARCHIVIST**

What do you want?

**NIKOLA**

I already have what I want, little Archivist. Now I just want you to join me for a dance.

(The Archivist cries out)

(The music swells)

(Music swell fades)

(Daisy snarls)

**BREEKON**

You killed him!

(Breekon hits Daisy in the stomach)

Do you even know what you've done?

**(Breekon kicks Daisy, breaking some ribs)**

**(Daisy begins laughing, which builds to hysteria)**

**(Daisy leaps at Breekon, but he grabs her by the throat)**

**BREEKON**

You stupid animal!

**DAISY**

**(Snarling) Kill you!**

**BREEKON**

No.

**(Breekon opens the lid to the cramped casket; it creaks eagerly. Daisy continues snarling)**

Almost a shame you don't know your own coffin. But you will.

**(Breekon throws Daisy inside the coffin. Daisy continues laughing as the coffin lid slams shut)**

Oh, you will.

**(The music swells)**

(Musical swell fades)

**BASIRA**

Don't panic. Don't panic. Just close your, uh... Ignore it. Ignore the, uh... Don't listen. Focus. Think. This is a place. You are you and you are in a place now. If... if it's a place and it's a now then... then it... then it has an end. The other things, the... they are... too much, too much. There's too many and they want to hurt me, so... So you leave the place, leave the place and the now. No place is forever. You know how to move, so do it. Pick a where, then... then move. Good! Then... then keep moving. Keep moving until you find another place, a place you know. Just keep moving... keep moving.

(The music swells)

(Musical swell fades)

(The Archivist staggers from the dance, exhausted)

**NIKOLA**

Do you feel it, Archivist? It's almost there. A new day...

**GERTRUDE (NIKOLA)**

A terrible new world. And it's all your fault.

**LEITNER (NIKOLA)**

Though I suppose you never really had a chance.

**ARCHIVIST**

**(Quietly)** I see you.

**NIKOLA**

Do you now?

**ARCHIVIST**

Yes. Yes, I see the sad clown, bitter and hateful. I see him finding his way to a circus where nobody knew him. I see him torn apart, becoming the mask, remade by a cruel ringmaster. Sometimes a doll, sometimes a mannequin, always hiding in somebody else's skin, somebody else's name.

**NIKOLA**

Not always. And it's far too late for any of that. Nothing you see can help you.

**SARAH**

Not without the detonator.

**NIKOLA**

Really, Archivist? After all this preparation, all your research, all this magnificent grotesquery... and you were just going to, what, blow it up?

**SARAH**

Probably the Hunter's idea. She killed one of the Couriers.

**NIKOLA**

**(Not sad)** Oh dear, how sad.

**SARAH**

She was also the one that damaged this shell.

**NIKOLA**

You have hundreds of shells, “Sarah”, and soon you will have tens of thousands. You can have your little lures in every dark corner of the whole world.

**SARAH**

Not until you finish the dance.

**NIKOLA**

Oh, just let me enjoy myself for a moment! This is a once-in-eternity event, after all.

**SARAH**

This in-between is not as comfortable for all of us as it is for you.

**NIKOLA**

Oh fine. Archivist, it’s been a pleasure, but I really must be—

**(Tim runs in, screaming in rage)**

**TIM**

Arghh!

**(Tim tackles Sarah, knocking the detonator from her hand. It clatters to the floor, and he picks it up)**

**ARCHIVIST**

Wait, no!

**(Tim slaps the Archivist across the face)**

**TIM**

I'll kill you! All of you!

**SARAH**

Will you now?

**NIKOLA**

**(Laughing)** No, let them fight. It's adorable...

**(Tim kicks the Archivist in the ribs)**

**ARCHIVIST**

**(Desperate)** Tim! What do you see?

**TIM**

**(Immediately)** I see my asshole boss. Oh, wait, wait...

**NIKOLA**

Spoilsport. Tim—

**TIM**

Grimaldi...

**NIKOLA**

Once. A long time ago. Before Orsinov made me. And sometimes even now, for special occasions. Like your brother. [Distorted, deeper voice] Shall I?

**ARCHIVIST**

**(Desperate)** Tim, what's in your hand?

**TIM**

It's... I don't... The, the... the detonator.

**NIKOLA**

That's quite enough from you, I think.

**(There is a sudden spike in the music, The Archivist cries out and collapses)**

**NIKOLA**

And now you.

**TIM**

Go on. I'll race you. See if you can do it again before I can squeeze.

**SARAH**

It's too late.

**NIKOLA**

The world is ours. That toy won't help you now.

**TIM**

So come and take it.

...

That's what I thought.

**NIKOLA**

I am losing my patience!

**TIM**

Back! Get back! That's right... (**Pause**) John, I don't know if you can hear me, but if you can—

**ARCHIVIST**

Tim...

**TIM**

—I don't forgive you, but thank you for this.

**SARAH**

You idiot. Do you really think the world will fare any better under the Watcher?  
You think you're saving anyone?

**TIM**

I don't care.

**NIKOLA**

You can't even save him—

**TIM**

But I can hurt you.

**NIKOLA**

It will not end like this!

**TIM**

**(Bitterly)** You sound stressed. You know, I hear the great clown Grimaldi is in town. You should go see him. Cheer yourself up.

**NIKOLA**

That's. Not. Funny.

**TIM**

I know.

**(Tim squeezes the detonator and there's a loud boom)**

**(The tape recorder cuts out, instantly destroyed)**

**(Click)**

**[The Magnus Archives Theme - Outro]**

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Today's episode was written by Jonathan Sims and directed by Alexander J Newall.

It featured: Jonathan Sims as the Archivist, Mike LeBeau as Tim Stoker, Frank Voss as Basira Hussain, Fay Roberts as Alice 'Daisy' Tonner, Alice Adzowa as Sarah Baldwin, Martin Corcoran & Steven Violich as Breekon & Hope and Jessica Law as Nikola Orsinov, with additional voices from Sue Sims and Paul Sims as the Illusions of Gertrude Robinson and Jurgen Leitner.