

MAG 192 — An Appointment

Content Warnings

- Compulsions (supernatural)
- Emotional manipulation & gaslighting
- Mental disorientation
- Paranoia & self-doubt
- Mentions of: scopophobia, insects/worms (including SFX), blackmail, gun violence, isolation, mild explicit language, mass suffering, self-recrimination
- SFX: screams, discordant static

[The Magnus Archives Theme – Intro]

JONATHAN SIMS

Rusty Quill presents... *The Magnus Archives*. Episode one hundred and ninety-two: "An Appointment."

[Theme finishes]

[Tape clicks on]

[Water drips and drains in a damp, echoing tunnel location]

[Martin, Georgie, and the Archivist stand]

MARTIN

So this is it?

Just up those stairs?

GEORGIE

Just? You've seen how tall that tower is, right?

ARCHIVIST

We don't have much of a choice.

MARTIN

Yeah, but still, it's just walking, though, isn't it? And god knows we've had enough practice. How come you haven't had a look yourselves?

GEORGIE

Keep watching.

[Grit, stone, and movement noises as Georgie stoops to grab a pebble]

You see those?

MARTIN

What— Oh. Oh... ah. Are those... corpses?

GEORGIE

I wish. Watch.

[Georgie throws the pebble; as it rattles into a larger space there are many breathy moans and much excited movement]

MARTIN

(Alarmed) Ah! Aaah.

GEORGIE

Shh!

[The excited noises calm, but some shuffling and breathy moans
still continue]

MARTIN

Right. So these are the, uh... ‘former archivists’ you were talking about, John?

ARCHIVIST

Yes.

MARTIN

I don’t like them.

ARCHIVIST

No.

MARTIN

So what do we do? How do we get past them?

GEORGIE

Dunno. It was never worth risking it.

MARTIN

Wait, seriously? I thought you had this whole ‘invisibility cloak’ thing going on?

GEORGIE

Sure, but I'm not exactly *keen* to test it against the eyeball tower guardians. I don't know the limits of our 'invisibility', and it seems pretty dumb to saunter up and hope it works on them.

(Martin makes a puffing exhale)

MARTIN

Right.

GEORGIE

Look. I've taken you this far. Beyond this point you're on your own, alright?

MARTIN

No advice at all?

GEORGIE

I... I dunno. Believe in yourself?

MARTIN

Wow. Thanks.

ARCHIVIST

It's alright, Martin. They'll let us through.

MARTIN

You're sure?

ARCHIVIST

Yes.

MARTIN

I thought you weren't so good at *knowing* down here? What if, what if you're wrong and then we're absolu—

ARCHIVIST

I'm not.

Trust me.

Thank you Georgie.

GEORGIE

Sure.

Good luck.

ARCHIVIST

Thank you.

And tell Melanie... Tell her I'm sorry.

GEORGIE

That's... not what she wants to hear from you.

ARCHIVIST

Well then... what does she want?

GEORGIE

I don't know. But... it's not going to be *another* apology.

ARCHIVIST

Fine. Tell her I—

GEORGIE

(Hiding concern) Look. Tell her yourself when you get back down, okay? I'm not your bloody P.A. Anything you've got to say to me, that can wait too.

ARCHIVIST

Okay.

Let's go Martin.

MARTIN

Bye Georgie.

[Footsteps as they start walking]

GEORGIE

Good luck.

[Hissing static starts]

ARCHIVIST

Ceaseless Watcher, see your servants approach. Herald their arrival and bid them welcome into your sanctum.

**[As the Archivist speaks the former archivists react with moans
then become still]**

[Hissing static ends]

MARTIN

Er... yeah... excuse us.

[Tape clicks off]

[Tape clicks on]

[Martin and the Archivist are climbing stairs; their feet and voices echo in way that suggests a tall, marbled space; cameras iris movements and faint whispers are audible; a faint pulsing tone permeates the background; and distant muffled helicopter and drone sounds]

(Laboured breathing from Martin)

MARTIN

Okay, okay, hold... hold up. H-Hold on. Hold on, hold on.

[The Archivist's quick footsteps continue]

Oi, John!

ARCHIVIST

(Softly) Oh, right.

[Martin stops; the Archivist returns to him]

MARTIN

Just wait a sec— Christ, I just need a moment to... catch my breath.

ARCHIVIST

Of course. Sorry, I uh...

MARTIN

It's fine, I just... this is a lot of steps.

ARCHIVIST

(Chuckles) It's a very tall tower.

MARTIN

Is it? Oh, thank god I have you 'All-Seeing One', otherwise I might have completely missed that fact.

ARCHIVIST

Yes, alright.

[Martin gathers his breath, as the Archivist shifts around]

MARTIN

Not keeping you am I?

ARCHIVIST

S— No, I— it's just, I, uh...

MARTIN

What, you're not tired?

ARCHIVIST

(Slight chuckle) Oh no, believe me, I am. It's just, uh... It's kind of *difficult* not to keep climbing.

MARTIN

What, like... you're being called?

ARCHIVIST

More like *pulled*. Gently, but very definitely upwards, towards the top.

MARTIN

That could be a bad sign.

ARCHIVIST

Probably. Too late to bail now, though.

MARTIN

True.

You seem less nervous at least?

ARCHIVIST

(Breezily) Oh god, no. I-I'm far more scared than I was down there, but, I-I don't know, I feel... giddy. Powerful. Coming up from the tunnels into the tower, I-I can See again and... It's just a bit of a rush, you know?

MARTIN

Sure. Just... just try to keep it together, okay? The last thing we need is you... wiggling out.

ARCHIVIST

I will do my best.

You ready?

MARTIN

(Wearily) Ah, sure. Lead on, Macduff.

ARCHIVIST

It's, uh, "Lay on—

MARTIN

(Frustrated) Sh— I know, I know! I know. Just go. Just go.

ARCHIVIST

yes... okay.

[The Archivist heads off at a quick pace; Martin following a slower pace]

(Martin makes a frustrated sigh)

[Tape clicks off]

[Tape clicks on]

[A large wooden door creaks open; Martin and the Archivist's footsteps echo in a large space as they enter; the faint pulsing tone continues]

MARTIN

So.

This is it. The big boss. One last set of unnecessarily ominous doors and then—

ROSIE

Good morning! Do you have an appointment?

[Faint hissing static starts]

[Backpack zipper jangles as Martin is startled]

(Startled noise from Martin)

MARTIN

(Shocked) R-Rosie? What, what are you *doing* here?

[Rose walks closer, she is in heels]

ROSIE

(Unrecognising and slightly stilted) Hello, I'm Rosie. Assistant for Mr Magnus.

Do you have an appointment?

MARTIN

(Quietly) W—

ARCHIVIST

No.

MARTIN

(Quietly) Wh— what?

ARCHIVIST

We don't.

ROSIE

Oh, I see. Uh... well I'm-I'm very sorry, but I'm afraid he's booked up for quite some time.

You may need to try again another day.

MARTIN

Rosie, are you alright? It's, it's us. It's, it's okay, we're here to help.

[A couple of steps as Rosie backs away]

ROSIE

Sir, please calm down.

MARTIN

I'm not—

ROSIE

There's no need to get worked up, I'm only doing my job.

MARTIN

Rosie, I'm not *going* to do—

[Hissing static gets louder]

ARCHIVIST

Jonah Magnus **will** see us. Please inform him we're here.

ROSIE

I really don't think that that's a—

ARCHIVIST

I insist.

(Rosie sighs)

ROSIE

(Softly) Your funeral...

[Hissing static fades a little as she takes a couple of steps]

[She clicks an intercom switch, and a swirling static starts]

ROSIE

Excuse me, sir. Two gentlemen here to see you.

ARCHIVIST

The Archivist. And Martin Blackwood.

ROSIE

The Archivist. And, uh... an 'associate'.

MARTIN

Ouch.

[Strange electronic sounds and growls come from the intercom]

ROSIE

Yes I—

Yes, I-I understand, I, I jus—

I— Sorry to interrupt.

[Intercom clicks off, swirling static stops]

(Firm, but with a slight tremor) Like I said, unless you have an appointment there's nothing I can do.

ARCHIVIST

I understand.

ROSIE

(Tremor) Now, I'm sorry, but if there's nothing else, I'm going to have to ask you to leave. I'm very busy.

ARCHIVIST

Of course.

[Footsteps as they walk away, to speak aside]

[Hissing static becomes very faint]

MARTIN

What's she doing here?

ARCHIVIST

She's his assistant. So The Eye put her here.

MARTIN

Did she... choose it?

ARCHIVIST

Did any of us?

MARTIN

So, what? She's just gone? She doesn't remember us at all?

ARCHIVIST

To a degree but—

(Discomfited noise from the Archivist)

MARTIN

Are you alri— Oh.

ARCHIVIST

I-I'm sorry.

MARTIN

Oh Christ, go on...

[Hissing static gets louder]

[The Panopticon noises fade away; replaced by the ticking clock of
Elias' office, paper turning and rustles, and chair squeaks; the
Archivist's voice no longer reverberates]

[Hissing static ends]

ARCHIVIST

“Nosy Rosie”, he had said. The words had been soft, hidden behind the CV he was examining, but she heard them clear as day.

“What did you say?” She tried to hide the hurt and disbelief, the sudden impact of a childhood nickname she thought she had long since left behind.

“Sorry?” His voice was light. “I don’t think I said anything.”

There was a long moment as Rosie stared at her interviewer. His expression was a pure, friendly, confusion, a light sort of innocence that gave nothing away. But she had definitely heard it. Was he just going to pretend it hadn’t happened? Apparently so.

She studied the face of ‘Elias Bouchard’. He seemed far too young for the role he had apparently found himself in, with an old-fashioned haircut that seemed to accentuate the image rather than lessen it. How was he already the head of an academic institution? No doubt mummy and daddy had something to do with it... The thought leapt across Rosie’s mind before she could stop it, and with no small amount of bitterness.

His eyes, though, were different. There was something in them that unsettled her. They didn’t match the rest of his face. They were cold and grey, and somehow so much older.

[Paper sliding and pen click]

ARCHIVIST (CONT'D)

"So why do you want this job, Ms Zampano?"

'Because I need money to live, you pompous ass,' she didn't answer. 'Because I let my imagination and paranoia wreck my marriage, and now I've got nothing. And if I don't get a job, I'm just sitting around an empty flat staring into space.' Instead she smiled.

"I guess I'm just curious to know what goes on in a place like this."

[Intercom switch clicks with Panopticon reverb]

[Office sounds cease; replaced by the distant, muffled sounds of current-day London: helicopters and a crowd screaming]

ARCHIVIST (CONT'D)

From up here she can see all of it at such a distance. She can hear the distant screams, spot the occasional gout of blood, smell the burning flesh wafting from far below when the wind is right. Should she be doing something? Her hand hovers over the intercom. Mr Bouchard isn't to be disturbed; Rosie is certain of that, but what else could she do? She chokes down her unease and smiles again, just in case anyone might be watching.

[Intercom switch clicks with office reverb]

[Current-day London sounds stop; replaced by office sounds such as a photocopier running and people typing]

[Faint Hissing static starts]

[Heavy feet on shift nearby]

ARCHIVIST (CONT'D)

They weren't actually Cockney, she knew that for certain. They might as well have been asking to take that table up the 'apples and pears'. Some kind of practical joke being played on her? She said nothing, though she glanced around in case anyone was watching from a distance, snickering. The pair of them loomed over her with identical expressions on their identical faces. Expressions of gruff impatience.

Rosie looked over the delivery form.

[Paper rustles]

ARCHIVIST (CONT'D)

'Jonathan Sims', the name read. She knew him. Well, knew *of* him, the things they said about him in the break room, the sort of things that passed across Mr Bouchard's desk about him. She hadn't been snooping, exactly, but maybe a little bit curious. Rosie had liked Gertrude, Sims' predecessor. The old woman had always talked to her as though she was in on something, even though Rosie had never understood half the things she had told her. Sims was different. He was insecure, aggressive, desperate to be taken seriously. Of course, having seen his file, Rosie kind of understood. Why on earth Mr Bouchard had given him the job at all was a mystery to her, but it didn't make it any easier to talk to him.

He *was* in the building, and she really should have called down, gotten him to come up and sign off on the delivery. But if he dragged his feet, that would have left *her* here with these two weird impressionists. And no doubt when he finally did arrive there'd be some drama or other. No, she'd just sign for it, and pass it on to Martin. He'd get it sorted out.

[Writing sounds]

ARCHIVIST (CONT'D)

Besides, she was kind of curious to see what was in the package.

[Faint hissing static stops]

[Intercom switch clicks with Panopticon reverb]

[Office sounds cease; replaced by distant and muffled current-day

London: helicopters and crowd screaming]

ARCHIVIST (CONT'D)

It is him behind it all. She's certain. The words and noises that sometimes leak out of Mr Bouchard's office are enough to convince her of that. Should she still call him Mr Bouchard, knowing what she knows now about what it is that lives inside him, through him? She doesn't really need to call him anything, of course. He hasn't spoken to her since she clocked into the building. And there haven't been any visitors. She still smiles, though. Just in case.

[Intercom switch clicks with office reverb]

[Current-day London sounds stop; replaced by a fire alarm sound,

people excitedly talking, doors slamming]

[Rosie takes several hurried footsteps in heels; Elias rustles some

paper]

ARCHIVIST (CONT'D)

He didn't even look up from his desk.

“Everyone else is evacuating,” she yelled over the din of the fire alarm. Mr Bouchard just smiled.

“I wouldn’t worry about it, Rosie.” He shuffled his papers. “Just a little incident down in the Archives. It’ll be dealt with soon enough.”

Something was wrong. He hadn’t had any calls. No-one had come by. There was no way for him to know what was going on. But he said it with such confidence. She turned and slowly walked back to her desk.

[Rosie walks and sits on an office chair]

ARCHIVIST (CONT’D)

Something was going on, and Rosie wasn’t going anywhere until she knew what it was.

[Running footsteps]

ARCHIVIST (CONT’D)

When Sasha James barrelled past her without even glancing in her direction, Rosie knew she’d been right to wait.

[Muffled sound of Elias and Sasha arguing]

ARCHIVIST (CONT’D)

She moved quickly to the door, listening, looking around the edge. What were they talking about? Worms? Like that weird infestation they had down there? How is that an emergency?

Behind his desk, without missing a beat of his conversation, Elias caught her eye, and suddenly she was a child again—

[Alarm and argument sounds stop]

[Floorboard creaks]

ARCHIVIST (CONT'D)

—creeping towards the rotten board in her parents' attic, burning to know what lurked behind it, unsuspecting of the squirming nest of half-dead insect bodies she was about to reveal.

[Rotten wood breaking, then insectile squelching, writhing, crawling sounds]

[Sudden stop of insectile sounds; replaced by fire alarm and Elias vs Sasha argument]

ARCHIVIST (CONT'D)

Then she was back in the office. Mr Bouchard was still smiling. And Rosie turned to run.

[Running footsteps heading away]

[Intercom switch clicks with Panopticon reverb]

[Office sounds cease; replaced by distant and muffled current-day London: helicopters and crowd screaming]

ARCHIVIST (CONT'D)

Maybe she *could* help, stuck here at the top of the impossible tower. She could just buzz him, ask him what was going on, tell him to stop.

Her finger hovered over the button. Her hand was shaking. What if he got angry? She couldn't afford to lose this job. She couldn't. Rosie put her hand down and started smiling again. She was getting very good at it by now.

[Intercom switch clicks with office reverb]

[Current-day London sounds stop; replaced by office ambience and
the muffled sound of an argument]

ARCHIVIST (CONT'D)

She had waited for the gunshot. Her whole body felt like it was made of glass, locked in place but ready to shatter at any moment. Mr Bouchard had told her explicitly, 'Do not phone the police.' But that woman, she'd been *dressed* as police. And she had a gun. A-and Sims, she'd been practically dragging him. What was Rosie supposed to do, except wait for a gunshot that never came. Then the others arrived; Tim and that new girl.

[Footsteps as Tim et al pass and enter the office; argument
continues]

ARCHIVIST (CONT'D)

She wanted to warn them, to tell them something was wrong, but... what if it made Mr Bouchard angry? Why did the thought of that terrify her so? He was just a man, and he'd never been anything but cordial to her. Did she need this job that badly?

At the back of her mind, her curiosity urged her to get closer, to try and hear what was being said. But this time fear locked her into her seat. When the other police *did* come, and Mr Bouchard's voice came through the intercom, so

light, so in control, she sent them away, and watched as the others filed out of his office so slowly, so defeated...

[Faint voices stop; footsteps file out]

ARCHIVIST (CONT'D)

That was when she no longer suspected. She *knew*. Finally her paranoia had not been for nothing. She **was** working for evil. Not someone misguided, not selfish, but truly evil. And she knew she was going to sit there and ignore that fact. She knew the sort of information he had on everyone, and now she knew what he was capable of, what he might do if he thought Rosie might be a threat. She was just going to sit there, watch, and hope to go unnoticed. And a small part of her, almost wanted to see what was going to happen.

[Intercom switch clicks with Panopticon reverb]

[Office sounds cease; replaced by distant and muffled current-day London: helicopters and crowd screaming]

ARCHIVIST (CONT'D)

Why doesn't she do it? She knows he's in there, she can hear him occasionally. And he likes her, Rosie's pretty sure of that. She is perhaps the only person on Earth in a position to help, to at least *ask* what is happening, to ask why. But now all she can do is sit there and smile, waiting for the intercom.

[Intercom switch clicks with office reverb]

[Current-day London sounds stop; replaced by office ambience and the sounds of a police radio; footsteps and metal clicks as they walk past her]

ARCHIVIST (CONT'D)

There should have been relief, when they led him out in handcuffs. A weight removed, a tightness loosed from her chest. But there wasn't. Mr Bouchard had smiled at her as the inspector marched him out. He wasn't even surprised. She hadn't smiled back. She hadn't smiled in a long time, except for that painful customer service grin she had forced onto her face when Mr Bouchard had visitors. Visitors like...

[Lonely static rises then falls to a faint level]

[A few boot steps; Rosie's chair creaks]

ARCHIVIST (CONT'D)

Of course. The floating unease settled into shape as soon as she saw Mr Lukas. Rosie knew what he was going to say before he even opened his mouth.

“Rosie, right? I’m Peter Lukas. Elias asked me to look after the Institute while he was away. So, I guess that makes you my assistant. Right?”

She knew all about Peter Lukas, of course. Bouchard had always been very careful to leave his files in conspicuous enough locations for her. She knew he'd been preparing her. She didn't want to let him down. Or did she? Rosie didn't even know any more. At the very least, *he'd* never lied to her, never failed to validate her suspicions or indulge her snooping. As afraid as she was, he seemed to understand her. And as much as she disliked this temporary replacement, she knew she was going to stay.

[Lonely static stops]

[Intercom switch clicks with Panopticon reverb]

[Office sounds cease; replaced by distant and muffled current-day London: helicopters and crowd screaming]

ARCHIVIST (CONT'D)

People have come to see Elias. No. Not people. Not anymore. They stare through her, and she knows that she was never going to help. She smiles at them, and politely informs them that Mr Bouchard isn't seeing anyone without an appointment. Her face aches, and her teeth buzz in her gums.

[Intercom switch clicks with office reverb]

[Current-day London sounds stop; replaced by office ambience that is devoid of additional people]

[A few uncertain steps from Rosie, before she sits down at her desk]

ARCHIVIST (CONT'D)

Where else could she have gone? Mr Lukas was dead. Mr Bouchard was missing. So many friends and colleagues dead. The violence, the gunshots. The old man and his... daughter? Their murderous joy. She couldn't stop thinking about their faces. How they had looked right past her as they ran through the building.

Over now, of course. Weeks ago. Too early to forget but too late to act. Wasn't that always the way? Her flat was empty and silent. All her friends and family now so distant as to be almost strangers. What else could she have done except come in to work? She didn't know who for or why. She had simply sat at her desk and waited for the phone to ring. She waited and she waited.

[Long building creak]

ARCHIVIST (CONT'D)

And it got dark. And it got light. Over and over, and still she waited. All she knew was that something still needed to happen. And she couldn't bring herself to leave until she knew what it was.

[Building creaks grow, metal starts to warp; until it sounds like the building is part of an earthquake]

[The sounds of people screaming]

ARCHIVIST (CONT'D)

Not until the sky began to change, and the screaming began. And Mr Bouchard returned to his office. By then it was too late. In many ways it felt like it had always been too late.

[Hissing static starts]

[The building transformation sounds are replaced by the echoes of the large space they had entered; the faint pulsing tone continues; the Archivist's voice has reverb when he speaks]

ARCHIVIST

S-sorry.

[Hissing static becomes fainter]

[Footsteps as Rosie approaches]

MARTIN

(Softly) Oh Rosie...

ROSIE

Mr Sims, was it?

ARCHIVIST

Uh, yes?

ROSIE

I believe you have an appointment. Mr Magnus is waiting just inside.

ARCHIVIST

Oh. Right.

[The three walk]

MARTIN

Is there anything we can do to help her?

ARCHIVIST

If there is, it's on the other side of these doors.

ROSIE

Head right on in, he's ready for you.

MARTIN

Okay.

[Martin and the Archivist walk forward; smooth sliding door sounds as the door responds; as it opens, the sound of Jonah's distorted voice fills the room]

[In the background, swirling air and paper can be heard; an unpleasant shifting tone; and the pulse is stronger]

[Hissing static ends]

[Jonah's speech underscores the rest of the conversation, an unbreaking narrative of fear as he floats and writhes in perpetual perception]

[Every noise here reverberates similar to a vast domed church]

JONAH (BACKGROUND)

—he screams his pitch is low and black as night that flows and chokes his withered throat and hacking cough that sounds like death is here for him who always knew and feared that this indecent end would carve its bitter name full deep inside his soul and burn within without a ceasing seeing moment more than screaming ones who howl and hide from fates that crawl towards on nails that scratch and creak like rotten boards might warn you of your severed pains approach to pull your skin like sodden cloth and drag it tearing from the now that is no longer even close to what the when just might have been if there was time enough to run and hide from rancid deaths—

[Martin and the Archivist walk further into the room; the doors slide closed]

ARCHIVIST

(Aghast) No...

MARTIN

C-can he hear us?

ARCHIVIST

I...

MARTIN

Does he even know we're here?

ARCHIVIST

I don't...

MARTIN

(Calling) Elias!

Jonah, Jonah Magnus!

Oi! Dickhead! Come down here so we can kick your arse!

ARCHIVIST

(Sadly) He can't hear you, Martin.

MARTIN

Yeah I got that. What's wrong with him?

ARCHIVIST

Nothing. Nothing's wrong with him.

He's the pupil of The Eye.

MARTIN

Meaning?

ARCHIVIST

He won.

[Tape clicks off]

[The Magnus Archives Theme – Outro]

JONATHAN SIMS

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