

INTRO

ALEX

Hi everyone. Alex here. I'd just like to take a moment to thank some of our Patrons. Fast or Write, Capricious Cacti, C. Xu, Stick in Hand, Margaery Clare, Cora, aritchie, Brian Greenwald, Elita Grunde, majesticrhyhorn, Jon Williams, Sigma Bunny, Jack, Rainny Q, Charlotte Ballantyne, Kerry Cobey, Roseann White, Bennett Burns: Thank you.

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The Magnus Archives' theme plays.

JONNY

Rusty Quill presents... *The Magnus Archives*. Episode one hundred and sixty: "The Eye Opens."

INT. SCOTLAND, A DAISY TONNER SAFEHOUSE

TAPE CLICKS ON.

Knocking sound- seems like it's Martin on the doorframe, or something being unpacked.

MARTIN

Everything alright?

ARCHIVIST

Just- Making sure it works.

MARTIN

I still don't think we should have brought it.

ARCHIVIST

Oh, it's better than no warning at all.

(small sigh)

Especially if I'm trying not to, uh.. See things, you know?

MARTIN

I guess.

More sounds of either unpacking, or rifling through objects at a leisurely pace.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

You're unpacked then?

More unpacking sounds.

ARCHIVIST

(familiar, warm)

Hm? *Oh*, yes; much as I can be
without any wardrobes to speak of,
at least.

MARTIN

(half a laugh in his words)

Yeah, it's- it's not exactly the
Ritz.

ARCHIVIST

Yeah, well, it technically still
belongs to Daisy, so-

(small exhale)

I'm just glad it's not some sort of
kill room.

MARTIN

Or-

(pause for a huffed laugh)

Or it is, and she just cleaned it
up *really* well.

He chuckles again. The Archivist joins him.

ARCHIVIST

(small exhale)

Yes.

He makes a small noise.

MARTIN

Are we?-

Sound of shuffling papers.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Are we.. safe here?

ARCHIVIST

(sigh)

Safe as anywhere. If Elias wanted to find us, I imagine he could, but- I doubt the police will be able to. If nothing else, I'm hoping there'd be some-jurisdiction complications, in Scotland?

As he speaks, Martin sucks in a breath, as if about to speak, then cuts himself off.

MARTIN

(that familiar sort of
chuckle-scoff)

Some- Somehow I don't think *Daisy* will be worried about

jurisdictions.

ARCHIVIST

I-

(falters)

I don't think she'd come here.

We hear him open a drawer as he continues.

ARCHIVIST (CONT'D)

Doesn't look like this place has
been used for *years*.

MARTIN

And if she does?

ARCHIVIST

(exhale)

Well. At least we'll know where she
is.

MARTIN

Wh-

He cuts himself off with a frustrated sound.

ARCHIVIST

Besides, I'm more worried about the
other Hunters. Or the- Sasha thing.

Last I heard, they still hadn't
found any bodies.

(long inhale)

A lot of destruction, a lot of
blood.

(he sighs)

But that's it.

More object sounds.

MARTIN

You think they're still out there?

Pause.

ARCHIVIST

Hopefully a *long way* out there.

(soft)

But I think we're okay.

Long pause.

ARCHIVIST

(changing-the-subject-voice,
inhale)

Not much in the way of food, is
there?

MARTIN

Oh- Oh, no, not yet. I was actually
going to go head down into the

village to pick something up?

ARCHIVIST

Hm.

MARTIN

Maybe give Basira a call to check in, because Daisy apparently couldn't pick a safehouse with a signal.

ARCHIVIST

(overlapping)

I think that's rather the point.

MARTIN

Mm.

ARCHIVIST

(teasing)

Anyways, don't tell me the phonebox
down there doesn't appeal to your
retro aesthetic.

MARTIN

It- might. Maybe.

He zips up a bag.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

You'll be okay here?

ARCHIVIST

I'll be fine.

TAPE CLICKS OFF.

INT. SCOTLAND, A DAISY TONNER SAFEHOUSE,
SOME WEEKS LATER

TAPE CLICKS ON.

The air seems hollower here, and Martin's footsteps
sound like they're coming upstairs.

ARCHIVIST

How was she?

MARTIN

Oh, same as last week.

ARCHIVIST

Institute still crawling with
police?

MARTIN

I mean, they've finished all the

interviews? Apparently they're
calling it a "terror attack."

ARCHIVIST

Doesn't surprise me.

(heh)

Appropriate, in a way.

MARTIN

Mm.

ARCHIVIST

(carefully)

Does she know who they're looking
to blame?

MARTIN

They're not really talking to
her about it? Sectioned or not, I
guess ex-police only gets you so

far.

ARCHIVIST

Mm.

Does she know if they've found the
old prison yet- the Panopticon,
Eli-

(he catches himself, returns
to the phrase with a harder
edge to his voice)

Magnus's body.

MARTIN

I don't know how hard they're
looking, to be honest?

A thumping sound, like he's setting his bag down on
wood.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Basira said a few of them got lost
in the tunnels for over a day-

The Archivist snickers in the background.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

-and- it's not like the promise of
an old man's corpse is much of a
motivator.

ARCHIVIST

Mm.

MARTIN

Still, she did manage to talk them
out of burning the whole place to
the ground?- and, ooh, actually,
that reminds me, um-

He starts pulling something out of his bag, something that crinkles like paper.

ARCHIVIST

Ah, these, these are the statements.

MARTIN

Yes. Basira said last week she'd send some up as soon as the Archives weren't a crime scene.

ARCHIVIST

Yes.

MARTIN

And she wasn't sure which ones you've read already, so she, she just said she'd send a bunch.

ARCHIVIST

There- There are tapes in here, as well. D- Did she say anything about tapes?

MARTIN

She didn't mention it?- But I didn't check it until after the call.

ARCHIVIST

Mm.

MARTIN

I assume it's her attempt at a- a, a varied diet? Eating your greens, you know?

ARCHIVIST

(amused)

Probably.

(inhale, reassuring)

I'm sure it'll work fine.

MARTIN

Cool.

Well, as *fun* as listening to you
monologue is-

ARCHIVIST

Hm.

MARTIN

-I will give you some privacy. Go
for a walk.

ARCHIVIST

(exhale)

Let me know if you see any good
cows.

MARTIN

Obviously I'm going to tell you if
I see any good cows.

As he walks away, presumably back down the stairs, the
Archivist chuckles quietly and fondly to himself.

Then he exhales, and as the door closes, he scrabbles at
the statement on the table, getting everything in order.

ARCHIVIST

Right. Statement of Hazel Rutter
regarding a fire in her childhood
home. Original statement given
August 9th, 1992. Audio recording

by Jonathan Sims, The Archivist.
Statement begins.

We hear what's either the crackling of paper, or a fire.

ARCHIVIST (STATEMENT)

Hello, Jon.

As soon as he begins speaking, a whizzing static kicks in from the background.

ARCHIVIST (STATEMENT) (CONT'D)

Apologies for the deception, but I wanted to make sure you started reading, so I thought it best not to announce myself.

I'm assuming you're alone; you always did prefer to read your statements in private.

(slightly strained)

I wouldn't try too hard to stop reading; there's every likelihood you'll just hurt yourself. So just listen.

Now, shall we turn the page and try again?

The Archivist makes a pained couple of sounds out-of-statement-character, as if he's trying to tear himself away from the statement and physically cannot.

When he picks the statement back up, the words sound like they're being torn from his lips.

ARCHIVIST (STATEMENT) (CONT'D)

Statement of Jonah Magnus regarding Jonathan Sims, The Archivist.

Statement begins.

A slap on the table- or a crack? Spooky.

I hope you'll forgive me the self-indulgence, but I have worked so very hard for this moment, a culmination of *two centuries* of work. It's rare that you get the chance to monologue through another, and you can't tell me you're not curious.

Why *does* a man seek to destroy the world?

It's a simple enough answer: for immortality and power.

Uninspired, perhaps, but- my god.

The discovery, not simply of the dark and horrible reality of the

world in which you live, but that you would quite willingly doom that world and confine the billions in it to an eternity of terror and suffering, all to ensure your own happiness, to place yourself beyond pain and death and fear.

It is an awful thing to know about yourself, but the *freedom*, Jon, the freedom of it all. I have dedicated my life to handing the world to these Dread Powers all for my own gain, and I feel.. nothing but satisfaction in that choice.

I am to be a *king* of a ruined world, and I shall never die.

I believe there are far more people

in this world that would take that
bargain than you would ever guess.
And I have beaten all of them.

Of course, this desire did not
manifest overnight. When Smirke
first gathered our little band-
Lukas, Scott, and the rest- to
discuss and hypothesize on the
nature of the things he had learned
from Rayner, I felt what I believe
we all felt: curiosity, and fear.

But as he compiled his taxonomy and
codified his theories on the grand
rituals, I began to develop a very
specific concern. Smirke was so
obsessed with his ideas on balance,
even as our fellows began to
experiment and fall to the service

of our patrons.

I began to worry that if one of them successfully attempted their ritual, then I would be as much a victim as any, trapped in the nightmare landscape of a twisted world.

At first, I attempted prevention, but the cause seemed hopeless. The only way to ensure I did not suffer the tribulations of what I believed to be an inevitable transformation was to bring it about myself. So what began as an experiment soon became a race.

Beyond that, I was getting older, and mortality began to weigh more

heavily on my mind. How much in this world is done because we fear death, the last and greatest terror?

I convinced Smirke to work on Millbank, leading him to design it as a temple to all the Fears in equilibrium, such that my own modifications to the design of the Panopticon went.. unremarked.

It. Took. Years, for the dread of the prisoners to fully suffuse the place, and I was an old man before I made my first attempt at the Watcher's Crown, sat in the center of that colossal eye, the great ring of cells encircling me like a coronet.

It was... flawed, of course, as all Smirke's rituals were, and none of the inmates survived as the power I attempted to harness shook the building almost to pieces, and the murky swamp upon which the prison was built consumed it.

But it left me a gift: For sat in that watchtower, I could see *everything* I turned my mind to.

It was a dizzying power, and one I discovered I maintained even as I found vessels to extend my life. Of course, I had to make sure the location was kept under my control while I worked on revising my plans, and so I moved the

organization I had founded to assist in my research down to London, and the Institute as you know it was born.

I'll not bore you with details of my bodies and failures through those intervening years. Suffice to say I kept busy, both planning my own next attempt, and doing my best to stymie those others who tried versions of their own.

Surely my interpretation of the Watcher's Crown had been incomplete; there had been some element of the ritual I had overlooked.

It was not until I met Gertrude

Robinson that things began to really come into focus.

You see, the role of Archivist has been part of the Beholding for as far back as my research can go. This isn't uncommon for the Powers; most of the beliefs around them are guesswork and fallible human interpretation, but there are certain throughlines and consistencies that can be spotted, regardless of the trappings.

But Gertrude was unlike any other Archivist. She simply did not care about compiling experiences or collecting the fears of others. She was driven to stop those who served the Powers.

More than once I thought she must secretly be of the Hunt- but there was never that sick joy in her, that thrill of predator and prey. She had simply decided that this was her position in life, and went about it with a practicality that even I found disconcerting at times.

I once asked her what drove her, what had started her down that path. She told me the Desolation had killed her cat.

I don't know if she was joking, and, to be honest, I could never bring myself to look into her mind and find out for sure.

In any case, Gertrude's ruthless efficiency in derailing and collapsing rituals threw into stark relief a question that had been bothering me for almost a hundred and fifty years: In the whole span of humanity, why had nobody ever succeeded?

Perhaps there were a long line of Gertrude Robinsons throughout history, but I found that hard to credit. Could it be, then, that there was something in the very concept of the rituals that meant they *couldn't* succeed?

She was clearly having similar thoughts in that last year, all of

which culminated with the People's Church.

When I saw that she was making no preparations whatsoever to stop it, I realized she was putting into practice a theory, and one she couldn't afford to be wrong. She was going to wait, and see if the unopposed ritual succeeded, or if it collapsed under its own strain as mine had all those years ago.

Knowing Gertrude, I'm sure she had a backup plan if she had miscalculated- but she had not. The ritual failed. And all at once, I realized what had to be done.

You see, the thing about the Fears

is that they can never be truly separated from each other. When does the fear of sudden violence transition into the fear of hunted prey? When does the mask of the Stranger become the deception of the Spiral?

Even those that seem to exist in direct opposition rely on each other for their definition as much as up relies on down.

To try and create a world with only the Buried makes as much sense as trying to conceive a world with only down.

Every ritual tied itself so closely to a single power as to render itself impossible. They could bring

their patron close, but never sever it from the others, and eventually it would be violently pulled back into the place next to reality where they dwell.

The solution, then, is simple: A new ritual must be devised which will bring through *all* the Powers at once. All fourteen, as I had hoped I could complete it before any new powers such as Extinction were able to fully emerge. All under the Eye's auspices, of course. We mustn't forget our roots.

And there was only one being that could possibly serve as a lynchpin for this new ritual: The Archivist.

A position that had so recently become vacant, thanks to Gertrude's ill-timed retirement plans.

Because the thing about the Archivist is that- well, it's a bit of a misnomer.

It might, perhaps, be better named: The Archive.

Because you do *not* administer and preserve the records of fear, Jon. You *are* a record of fear, both in mind as you walk the shuddering record of each statement, and in body as the Powers each leave their mark upon you.

You are a living chronicle of

terror.

Perhaps, then, if I could find an Archivist and have each Power mark them, have them confront each one and each in turn instill in them a powerful and acute fear for their life, they could be turned into a conduit for the coming of this-nightmare kingdom.

Do you see where I'm going, Jon?

It does tickle me, that in this world of would-be occult dynasties and ageless monsters, the Chosen One is simply that- someone I chose. It's not in your blood, or your soul, or your *destiny*. It's just in your own, rotten luck.

Thunderclaps.

ARCHIVIST (STATEMENT) (CONT'D)

I'll admit, my options were somewhat limited, but My God, when you came to me already marked by the Web, I knew it had to be you. I even held out some small hope you had been sent by the Spider as some sort of implicit blessing on the whole project, and, do you know what, I think it was.

Of course, I had to bide my time, get a measure of you before I began to push, learn how you worked- So I decided I would wait until something came for you, and see how you reacted. Attacks upon the

Archives were not uncommon during Gertrude's tenure, and, while she was always prepared, I made sure you would not be.

I reasoned if you couldn't survive a single encounter, you were unlikely to make it through all fourteen. So, when Jane Prentiss attacked, I watched eagerly, one hand on the gas release from the start.

You acquitted yourself well enough, so I decided to see how far you would get, though I waited until the worms were in you before I pulled the lever. I needed to make sure you felt that fear *all the way to your bones*.

The discovery that one of the Stranger's minions had infiltrated the Institute in the aftermath was certainly a pleasant bonus. Even if that sliver of paranoia, that vague wrongness you couldn't quite place wouldn't count as a mark, it was only a matter of time before it confronted you in a far more direct and affecting matter.

Admittedly, given the advent of the Unknowing, I needn't have bothered. But what's the old saying about hindsight?

More important to me was Sasha's encounter with the Distortion. If *it* had taken an interest, then I

very much wanted it to cross your path.

Thunder continues as he goes on.

ARCHIVIST (STATEMENT) (CONT'D)

So I found one of its current victims and convinced her to make a statement.

Poor Helen. I actually had to put her in a taxi myself, she was getting so lost in those narrow London side streets.

It worked, though.

Something creaks. Another loud snap/crackle.

ARCHIVIST (STATEMENT) (CONT'D)

Between the stabbing and at least two desperate flights into its doors- you're marked very deeply by the Spiral.

Jurgen Leitner was a surprise, of course, and I was forced to improvise. I had no idea how much

Gertrude would have told him, and he could very easily have derailed everything if you learned too much too fast.

I.. justified it to myself saying I was going to have to send you out into the world anyway, if you were to encounter more of the Powers, but I can't honestly pretend it wasn't a.. rather rash move.

Still. I'd requested Detective Tonner be assigned to the case when they found Gertrude's body in the hope that having a Hunter in the mix would eventually lead to a confrontation, and setting you up as a killer certainly hastened that.

Then it was just a matter of feeding you statements to lead you to a few Avatars I thought were likely to harm you- but probably would stop short of actually killing you.

Jude served her purpose exactly as I had hoped, as did our dearly departed Mr Crew, marking you for

the Desolation and the Vast.

Honestly, I had- nothing to do with Melanie and her *Slaughter* adventure, but when I saw the situation, I made sure to trap her here, so when her rage bubbled over you would be right there, a ready target.

I didn't foresee the mark coming from surgery gone wrong, but it was a very pleasant surprise.

The Unknowing was a distraction, but not an unwelcome one. For this to work, you needed more than just the marks; you needed *power*. And that was something the Unknowing served to test, though it posed no

actual danger in the grand scheme of things.

And it did serve another purpose, of course. It inadvertently pushed you to confront death, a mark I had been *very* worried about trying to orchestrate. If I tried too early, you'd just *die*. Too late, and you might be powerful enough to see the attempt coming, and maybe even understand *why*.

As it was, it was *just right*, and once again, you came through with *flying colors*.

By this point, your abilities were coming along in leaps and bounds, and I was concerned that meeting

face-to-face might end up with you-
(sigh)

-Knowing something you shouldn't.

I had initially planned to go into
hiding, but when your colleagues
surprised me with the police, well.
It was simple enough to cut a deal.

All that remained, then, were the
Dark, the Flesh, the Buried, and
the Lonely.

I was a little put out when that
idiot Jared Hopworth misinterpreted
my letters and attacked the
Institute too soon, before you were
even out of the hospital, but then-
Ho, you should have see my face
when you voluntarily went to him.

I couldn't see what happened in there, of course, but given how you came out, I'm *very* sure it counts as a mark.

I suspected the coffin might turn up again, and once it did, it was simply a matter of getting any, uh.. *restraining factors* you might have had flying off on a wild goose chase, and waiting.

Honestly, Detective Tonner has been proving *invaluable* through this process. I'd been racking my brains for months about what I could use to lure you in.

And, of course, I knew the Dark Sun

was just sitting there waiting. So
when it came time, I just whipped
up another apocalypse and sent you
on your merry way.

Then all that remained was the
Lonely.

Poor Peter. He really should have
left well enough alone.

(cruel laugh)

Or just done what I'd asked in the
first place.

Ah well. He knew what I was
attempting, and was very unwilling
to cooperate until I made him a
little wager about Martin.

Of course, he had no way of knowing

that, in addition to setting you up for the final mark, he was giving you all the tools you needed to escape from it.

How *is* Martin, by the way? He looks well. You will keep an eye on him when all this is over, won't you? He's earned *that*.

And there, I think, we are brought just about up to date. I have enjoyed our little trip down memory lane, but past here lies only impatience.

You are prepared. You are ready. You are *marked*. The power of the Ceaseless Watcher flows through you, and the time of our victory is

here.

Don't worry, Jon. You'll get used
to it here, in the world that we
have made.

Now.

(cruel, cruel laugh)

Repeat after me.

When The Archivist begins to read the incantation, a
heavy, dense static returns and begins to build, adding in
higher pitches as it does so.

ARCHIVIST (STATEMENT) (CONT'D)

*You who watch and know and
understand none. You who listen and
hear and will not comprehend. You
who wait and wait and drink in all
that is not yours by right.*

Come to us in your wholeness.

Come to us in your perfection.

*Bring all that is fear and all that
is terror and all that is the awful
dread that crawls and chokes and
blinds and falls and twists and
leaves and hides and weaves and
burns and hunts and rips and bleeds
and **dies!***

Come to us.

I- OPEN- THE DOOR!

An explosive sound of breaking glass; the static stays
high and heavy and **oppressive**.

TAPE GARBLES AND MAKES A SOUND AKIN TO
REWINDING.

TAPE CLICKS OFF.

INT. SCOTLAND, A DAISY TONNER SAFEHOUSE,
SOME TIME LATER

TAPE CLICKS ON.

MARTIN

(frantic)

Wake up. Wake up. Wait, Jon, Jon,

Jon, WAKE UP!

He slaps the Archivist; the Archivist immediately shudders
awake with a disoriented yell.

ARCHIVIST

(dazed)

Uh- Wh- *Martin*?

MARTIN

Jon!

ARCHIVIST

Wha- Wh-

(more lucid)

Oh god. What- What happened?

MARTIN

I, I don't, I don't know;

everything-

(close to tears)

It's all gone wrong!

ARCHIVIST

Help me up!

He grunts as Martin does exactly that, breathing heavy.

MARTIN

No, no, no- don't, don't go
outside. It's- It's *real* bad.

Silence as the Archivist presumably goes to the window.

ARCHIVIST

Oh god.

MARTIN

I don't know if it's just *here*, or-

ARCHIVIST

No. *No*, it's everywhere. They're
all here now.

(voice shaking- but in awe?)

I can feel *all* of it.

MARTIN

Jon. Jon, I'm scared.

ARCHIVIST

The whole world is afraid, Martin.

Because of me.

He seems to be laughing in the background- or it could be crying.

ARCHIVIST (CONT'D)

And The Watcher-

His voice is *distorted* when he speaks, in a way extremely reminiscent of Michael/Helen and Nikola Orsinov.

ARCHIVIST (CONT'D)

-drinks it all in.

MARTIN

(quietly)

Jon?

ARCHIVIST (CONT'D)

(still distorted, with shaking
laughter/tears)

Look at the sky, Martin. Look at
the *sky*. It's looking back.

And now he does begin to laugh in earnest. It's not a laugh we've heard on him before; not a short, clipped laugh; not a surprise burst of genuine hilarity. This laugh seems afraid, and yet cold. It's reminiscent of Elias's villanous laugh, but is tinged more with fear than satisfaction.

He does not stop laughing.

TAPE CLICKS OFF.

The Magnus Archives' theme comes in.

ALEX

The Magnus Archives will return.

April 2020.

CREDITS

JONNY

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