

THE MADNESS OF CHARTRULEAN
A Gardeka Story

S1:E11SC
"STORY COMPENDIUM 5:
THE REACH FOR POTENTIAL"

Written by

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STORY COMPENDIUM: THE REACH FOR POTENTIAL

MALDORO

Forbidden technology is forbidden for good reason. It wasn't a decision that was come to lightly. It was driven by necessity. After the destruction of Zاراstra at the hands of the abomination queen, Rankusha, a millennium ago, it became clear that some power simply does not belong in the hands of man. The desire for it corrupts us. Better to lock it away and keep it from those who would be tempted by it.

Progress is an illusion. What's touted as progress, time and time again has ended in utter catastrophe. The cycle is as such: an abuse of power, of abominable technology, results in unresolvable conflict. War. Destruction. Inequity. Greedy industrialists once inflicted gaping wounds upon our very planet. For that, our world is a remnant of its former self.

Man's reach for potential has always been an overreach. But progress is not defined by the buttons we press. Progress can take on a different form. In how we relate to the world, and the people around us. The gods we worship, the principals we embrace, the problems we solve, and the choices we ultimately make. The absence of power is the absence of violence. The absence of violence means we are free to learn and grow from the experience of simply existing.

This is a vision of the future that The Order fights to protect. A future limited to benevolent technology. A future that doesn't stretch to satiate that thirst for more after there is nothing left to drink. A future free of Jhardekai.

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MALDORO (CONT'D)

It's for this reason that The Order sought to harness the Etruvian. An Etruvian tempted by power is a threat to that vision. We were lucky with Artedemis, but he kept to the mountains. He was no good to us removed. We needed someone strong, who could inspire others with the word of Jhardeka, and Jhardeka alone. An Etruvian who could guide us down a path of true spiritual awakening.

And so we installed ourselves at Boethema. There, we would build the perfect messiah, but what we got was the abomination. I blame myself. He wanted to see the Seminary. I thought my teachings had fortified him against his Jhardekai nature. He had me deceived. We tried for years to reform him, to erase what he had seen. But we had made him too strong, too difficult to control. He left us no other choice but to kill him or cast him out. I had enough mercy left to let him live, a choice I now regret.

Even when facing the possibility of complete annihilation, I believe it better to die by some external force than to push against destiny and go out grappling with the darker aspects of our nature.

The only way to break humanity's cycle of self-destruction is to break ourselves. A man without legs can't walk off the edge of a cliff. But he can be thrown. And that's exactly what Chartrulean will accomplish. By his hand, we'll all be tossed into the pit. I bear the burden of knowing this so that others don't have to. I have allowed myself to be tempted by power. I have invited this corruption into my soul with open arms so that it cannot touch others.

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MALDORO (CONT'D)

In the end, I alone will have to account for the gravity of these actions, so that the sanctity of others can be spared.

The people must break, and they must revolt. It's the only way to put an end to the horrors that come next. I will do whatever it takes to save us from ourselves, even if it destroys me.