

THE MADNESS OF CHARTRULEAN
A Gardeka Story

S1:PROLOGUE
"GHOSTS FROM THE PAST"

Written by

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PROLOGUE: GHOSTS FROM THE PAST

NARRATOR

It is said not every obstacle that's faced can be overcome. But nothing can be overcome if no obstacles exist. Such obstacles have tested humanity's resolve through all of history. Be it by luck or grand design, sometimes we pass the test. Other times we fail. But despite those failings, we persevere, and are reminded of the frailty of our being and the facades we wear in spite of it.

What follows are the events that marked the end of The Long War, and the beginning of the Age of Azurea. The story begins on Arcas, a planet mired in existential threats. Home to both men and supermen, Arcas' gods are as real as its inhabitants, who walk on soil as broken as their spirits.

Prior to the events of this story, Arcasians long upheld the façade of a unified planetary society. It was built on the promise that our proximity to the starmakers alone would ensure evolution.

But the darker aspects of our nature manifested in the shadow of that façade. Avarice seeped through its cracks, fueled by fear, and intensified by the inevitable death of our planet. Eventually the façade fell away completely, the truth laid bare for all to see. Humanity would eventually perish. The fallout of this realization was swift and violent. In a series of upheavals, our ancestral knowledge was nearly lost, and the world was split into the old way and the new.

(MORE)

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

The old with their awakened minds and messiahs, and the new with power-hungry men and systems of control.

The establishment of the Starbringer Dynasty was a shallow attempt at unity. The kings looked to the stars to save us from the blight, and found it. Off-world resources delayed our exodus. But prosperity deluded the minds of many. The wise abandoned the greedy. The rich abandoned the poor. So-called desirables wreaked havoc on the bloodlines of those less desirable.

Just as a civil uprising was about to erupt, a new foe appeared: The Rau. A vagrant humanoid race from another world, led by a ruthless demagogue. The Rau sought to build an all-powerful galactic empire, their massive armada built to conquer everything in its path. And so The Long War began, playing out over centuries, and spanning great distances. An arms race between two peoples bent on survival, one with nothing to lose, one with everything to lose.

Then one day, it stopped.

This story chronicles what happened in the aftermath of that day. On the surface, it is the story of two mortal enemies making an attempt at civility. It is a story about gods, good men, and the devil they call progress. And it is a story about humanity. The witless masses, the brave, and the divine.

But at the core, it is the story of a man at war with himself.

(MORE)

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

A man who walked through the gates of perception at the edge of the human experience, and the calamity that followed him back in.

It is the amalgamation of personal accounts, and is as reliable as those who experienced these events first hand. But as with all such stories, the true ending might emerge over the course of centuries, if not millennia, as the full story comes into focus. Heroes, villains, victims and martyrs all the same until the dust settles and their stories are footnotes in the pages of the final iteration.

This is The Madness of Chartrulean.