

THE MADNESS OF CHARTRULEAN
A Gardeka Story

BONUS SCENE:
"FOOLS AND THEIR PURPOSE"

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BONUS SCENE: FOOLS AND THEIR PURPOSE

EXT. ZARASTRAN BORDERLANDS - DAY

[Heavy blizzard sounds mixed with crunching snow and machinery.]

NARRATOR

A caravan of heavy excavation equipment ambled towards the Zarastran borderlands, crunching through a thick blanket of snow and ice. The most traversable passage into the region's interior was along a glacier that spilled down from the former Mount Zarastra. The blizzard of acid snow that now presided over the region was beginning to intensify, and was centered over the caravan's final destination: the ruins of the former metropolis, Zarastra.

Marking the borderlands were stone monuments of the founders of Jhardeho: Etruriel, Niven, and Dua. Separated across the landscape by miles, they were almost as tall as surrounding hillside, arms outreached towards civilization as if pleading to be saved from the encroaching ice. In the base of each monument was a tomb; the final resting places for the Mystic Saints.

The glacier ended at the feet of Niven. As the caravan approached, a sliver of amber light erupted from between Niven's feet. Two figures emerged from a narrow stone passage: an old man and woman, battling the howling winds and shielding their faces from flecks of snow. The caravan stopped, as if they had been expected.

ARTEDEMIS

(to woman)

See, I would not have awoken if an answer was not provided.

(yelling)

HOY!

Sounds of vehicles stopping and powering down. Sound of metal door opening.

DR FILLION

(yelling)

Hoy there! Are you in need of help?

[Snow crunching between feet]

ARTEDEMIS

(ignoring; casual)

This blizzard doesn't seem keen on letting up anytime soon, does it?

DR FILLION

It does not. In fact, I anticipate the opposite.

(confused)

I am sorry, did you stop my caravan just to talk about the weather?

ARTEDEMIS

(casual, probing)

I gather you are headed in the opposite direction as myself.

DR FILLION

We make for Crescent Pass near Zاراstra. Unless you have a death wish traveling on foot in such scant attire, I would assume we are headed in different directions.

ARTEDEMIS

You make for Zاراstra...in this?

DR FILLION

Our machinery travels beneath the elements. We will be unaffected by the storm, communications aside.

ARTEDEMIS

(condescending)

I cannot imagine what business would take you to that haunted place.

DR FILLION

Seminary business.

ARTEDEMIS

(firm)

What rests *there* is there to rest.

DR FILLION

(concerned)

This may come across as an imposition, but I can't help but feel some degree of concern for your lack of dress and general condition. I also happen to be a physician, if you would allow me to examine you. I can spare the time.

ARTEDEMIS

That won't be necessary. But perhaps you might be able to part with one of these infernal rolling contraptions? I make for Idrica with haste.

DR FILLION

(hesitant)

These excavators are critical to our objective. But I might be able to assist if you can demonstrate that your business in Idrica is worth the loss of resources.

ARTEDEMIS

(frustrated)

Do you pretend not to know me? Or are you really that dense?

DR FILLION

I wouldn't anticipate finding anyone I know to be living here, unless, of course, you are a ghost.

ARTEDEMIS

Ghost. Hah! I should be by now.

DR FILLION

(realizing)

You are Artedemis.

ARTEDEMIS

(annoyed)

Would you keep an Etruvian from carrying out his divine purpose? One who was pulled from death's grip, no less?

DR FILLION

(sarcastic)

I already know *one* and understand that to be impossible.

ARTEDEMIS

Then you will help me?

DR FILLION

Not so fast. A vehicle will require an operator, and *that* I especially cannot spare.

(MORE)

DR FILLION (CONT'D)

I would suggest the alternative that you accompany us for the duration of the expedition, and live under my care until such a time allows us all to safely return to Idrica.

ARTEDEMIS

(appalled)

Do you feign to argue that whatever urgent matter has delayed my expiration is less important than your idiotic expedition?

DR FILLION

(matter of fact)

So far you have not given me a good reason to part with a transport.

ARTEDEMIS

(incredulous)

What further explanation do you require?

DR FILLION

(sarcastic)

I bear the curse of being an overly pragmatic man. It doesn't matter to me who you are, I need tangibles.

ARTEDEMIS

Can you call for another transport?

DR FILLION

(patient frustration)

As I've said, my communications are currently less than reliable. I'm afraid options are limited. You're welcome to wait here for the next passerby, but no guarantees anyone else will reach you before you expire for good.

ARTEDEMIS

(under breath)

Tangibles....of all the people it had to be, this fool....

DR FILLION

This *fool's* name is Fillion.

ARTEDEMIS

(aloud)

Let's trade, fool Fillion.

(MORE)

ARTEDEMIS (CONT'D)

Tell me what you intend to extract from the ice and I will see what I can offer.

DR FILLION

Artifacts. Any further details would be extraneous, especially coming from a fool.

ARTEDEMIS

(aggravated)

A surprising amount of obscurity, even for a pragmatic fool. However, my predicament calls for a compromise.

(defeated)

It bears repeating that what rests in the ice should be allowed to rest. However, in exchange for a transport, I will aid you in your study of said artifacts upon your imminent return to Idrica...so long as I am still alive to offer such services.

DR FILLION

An Etruvian? Offering services? This is historic.

ARTEDEMIS

Spare me the ridicule.

DR FILLION

Says a nearly naked man in the middle of a caustic snow storm.

ARTEDEMIS

This purpose is important enough to drive me to walk if I must. My flesh matters not.

DR FILLION

(considering)

This arrangement might be interesting. Our findings would undoubtedly benefit from your experience. You're fluent in the lost languages?

ARTEDEMIS

I will ignore the blatant ignorance of your question.

(MORE)

ARTEDEMIS (CONT'D)

Suffice it to say that what knowledge has been imparted to me in my nearly two hundred years of existence is from this moment forward at your disposal.

DR FILLION

Without restriction?

ARTEDEMIS

Without restriction.

DR FILLION

Will you deliver said wisdom in riddles?

ARTEDEMIS

Depends on what you perceive to be a riddle. I cannot account for your ignorance.

BEAT

[Fillion sighs, then whistles. Sound of vehicle crunching through snow.]

DR FILLION

(resigned)

This transport comes at great cost to me. But knowledge is priceless. Go with haste.

ARTEDEMIS

Jhardeho bless and protect your expedition.

DR FILLION

Spare me your blessings. There are others in the world of the living who need it more.

ARTEDEMIS

(snide)

The world might be better off if you were to get lost in the ice.

DR FILLION

(laughing)

Already renegeing on our deal, are we?

ARTEDEMIS

I'm as much a serious man as one who goes back on his word.

DR FILLION

Good luck with your divine purpose,
old man.

ARTEDEMIS

(offended)

I will keep my blessings and you
keep your luck. Now. To Idrica.