

TFEO Chartulean Transcript

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SPEAKERS

Borsha, Havelion, Pilot, H.M. Radcliff, Yoba, W. Keith Tims, Pilots, Chartrulean, Another Pilot, Admiral Lapedine

W. Keith Tims 00:00

[Theme music.] Hello, and welcome to The First Episode Of, a podcast about audio drama and the creative process. I'm W Keith Tims audio drama producer and podcaster. In this show, I listen to the first episode of an audio drama, then have a discussion with the creators about their show their methods and struggles and successes. Today, we're discussing the first episode of The Madness of Chartulean.

W. Keith Tims 00:39

[Opening theme from The Madness of Chartrulean plays.] The Madness of Chartulean is a political sci fi epic, written and produced by H.M. Radcliff. Chartrulean is a genetically engineered Messiah, who, when war came to his people, abandoned the life of piety, to build warships of unimaginable power. The war is now over, and diplomacy has begun. But Chartrulean finds himself drawn into politics and power play against his wishes. Moreover, something has gone wrong in his ships and in himself, an uncontrollable destructive urge is growing within him. And he must reconcile with his past and his consequences before he succumbs to it. Radcliff runs Packhowl Media, a production company is active on the Audio Drama Lab Discord server, and started the ADRAID program that draws attention to indie audio dramas. I spoke to H.M. remotely from her home in Texas.

W. Keith Tims 02:02

Before we jump into things, I do want to acknowledge that you and I have worked together on several projects before and I've always enjoyed those. We did the Phonic Fiction Fest together in our show EMET, I was a voice actor for you in the first Kill-FM. And then we are also involved in the Audio Drama Lab as people who sort of help out and work there and hang out there. And so I want to say it's been a real pleasure getting to know you there and working with you. And I'm excited to have you here on the show.

H.M. Radcliff 02:33

Thank you. Yeah, those projects, EMET and I Dare You is the name of the Kill-FM entry. It's funny, those those are both produced under such fire. It'd be great to do something that you know, had some plans. (laughter)

W. Keith Tims 02:47

Right? Maybe maybe we do our best work under pressure, right? (Laughter)

H.M. Radcliff 02:51

I think so. (laughter)

W. Keith Tims 02:53

Well, let's start off with just tell me something about yourself as an artist and creative person.

H.M. Radcliff 02:57

I grew up in rural Illinois, which was very flat and very bleak, very boring. A couple of things factored into, I guess, how I how it turned out really in the way I approach and explore the arts was really through kind of a lack of them at that kind of time in my life growing up. So you know, I'm an older millennial, we didn't have technology or a lot of access to the outside world, things we didn't really access or have access to. And when I say we, I really mean me, my brother and sister are both quite a bit older than I am and grew up quite a bit more religious. There's, I think, 12 years between me and my sister, years between me and my brother, so I really kind of grew up in a way and only child and the sense of being a child. You know, we didn't have you know, cable TV for a while. The Internet, you know, didn't come until I was in high school. So no cursing, no scary movies, no violence and stuff like that for a lot of that time. But my mom was really good about books and reading books to us and making sure we were exposed to literature. And so we had a Little House on the Prairie and Anne of Green Gables and then the Chronicles of Narnia. We even had a box set of the Lord of the Rings, BBC audio drama that we would break out on occasion. So yeah, it was a very, I wouldn't call it backwoods but you know, it was very much a childhood that was fueled by other forms of media and entertainment. And a lot of the kind of downtime was spent just kind of like in my own mind. I was homeschooled for up until about the eighth grade. And so that's really when I started interfacing with other kids and consuming what they consumed and stuff like that. But there were a lot of quiet times in those were times I really spent inside my own head being a little, you know, we didn't have a lot of money. We weren't very modern. We didn't have a lot of things other people had, but my aunt had a video camera. Anytime a project would come up through school... I had figured out by my sophomore year, really junior year that I was a terrible student and Not really academic, I didn't have the attention span or the interest for school. I think I just stopped taking math altogether, like algebra two and nobody noticed. (laughter) But like, the only way I can really get through a lot of my classes, history classes, English classes, in particular was through making videos. And so I would go to my aunt's house and borrow her video camera. And then we would run around as like, you know, Antigone or Rosencrantz and Guildenstern and act out our English projects, or whatever it was we were working on. You know, it was a time again, before a lot of kids were doing that. And so we were kind of known for doing this for making these really kind of great entertaining video projects. That's kind of how I started to explore storytelling media. I edited the movies, basically using our TV and VCR. And so I kind of disassembled

the entire entertainment center to do these things, too. It's like I had our, our six, you know, disk changer and our equalizer, everything hooked up stopping and pressing play and record on the VCR at the right times. I did the same thing. When my mom decided that she wanted to present, she always worked for radio stations, she wanted to produce a show called I Have A Story where she would interview a bunch of people from the region, artists, educators, musicians, like or just anyone with like a crazy story. Like one guy had like an alien abduction story. And she wanted to pitch this to a radio station. And so I actually helped her produce a lot of those early episodes of I have a story using the same kind of deconstructed stereo system.

W. Keith Tims 06:35

Did you go to college?

H.M. Radcliff 06:36

I did. So like, after all that I actually use those things. It was my mom's idea to attend Webster University for filmmaking. It seemed like the right fit. And so I used those radio stories, and I use my stupid high school projects. Like I think one of them was I was like, dressed as a shark. Like I, I might have a clip that I could, you know, share at some point. But yeah, and so I actually put those on my college application and some music. And I'd written you know, from staying in the band room instead of eating lunch in the cafeteria when I was feeling not so great. No. So kind of like all these, that were kind of basically the products of like compound childhood trauma, this all went into this film school application and I got in.

W. Keith Tims 07:19

So how did you make the transition from, from that into working on audio drama?

H.M. Radcliff 07:24

I think that a lot of people with a film background come at it in a way that's a little bit different than I feel like I came at it, I feel like the assumption is that this is something that's easy to do versus something that's like, requires the overhead and all the people and stuff like that.

W. Keith Tims 07:41

Oh, audio drama has is a low barrier to entry, it's easier to accomplish. Because you don't have all the the crew and the visual elements in the film and all that kind of stuff.

H.M. Radcliff 07:49

Exactly. And I think that's a very limited way of looking at it, you know, for people who are coming in. And I think there are people who use it as like a method to pitch a concept or something like that. And there's nothing wrong with these things. You know, I think it's great that people get out there and try the medium. To me, it wasn't really anything having to do with the medium. I think what it was for me really had to do with kind of some of the back end, I had been doing media production for 15 years in various forms as a camera operator, as a video editor, you know, in a director and cinematographer in the independent scenes in St. Louis and like, I felt like at my mid 30s, I should be at a point where I wasn't justifying myself to be able to reach the next milestone, even if it was like really small. I'm a very shy

person, I have a lot of social anxiety. And I really found myself in a world that required more of the go getter, a lot more of the salesperson. I felt like I was stagnating a little bit. audio drama has a low barrier to entry. You know, all those things are true. But it was really more of that, like I was craving a storytelling place where no one could stand in front of me and tell me what to do.

W. Keith Tims 09:05

At some point you formed pacol Media, which is your production company.

H.M. Radcliff 09:09

Yeah, it's my production whatever.

W. Keith Tims 09:12

The Madness of Chartrulean has been getting some good recognition. You and Realm have partnered.

H.M. Radcliff 09:16

Yeah. So recently, we partnered with Realm and they will be distributing basically everything that Packhowl Media produces.

W. Keith Tims 09:24

And so The Madness of Chartrulean got selected for the LA WebFest this year. So congratulations.

H.M. Radcliff 09:29

Yeah. Thank you. Yeah, we're excited.

W. Keith Tims 09:31

Since you've been working in the indie audio drama field you started the A D raid program. Do you want to talk about that?

H.M. Radcliff 09:39

So the idea really belonged to Ian Knowles, who just came through and I think it was like a Twitter circle. And he was like, Hey, we should just do like a raid and we should always go raid people's like thing. So it's like cool. I'll do that. (laughter) You know. So like, I basically just set up a simple site form and made a landing page for just on that Packhowl Media website.

W. Keith Tims 09:59

This is a program that highlights a particular indie show or two, and encourage people to go listen and leave reviews and support.

H.M. Radcliff 10:06

So basically, yeah, we "raid", we raid a show. And so I had people signing up. And then we were blasting out the shows on our social media channels and encouraging people to go leave their ratings and reviews for those shows. And we went for like a solid few months until I decided that like, this was enough of a thing where I could probably give a little more infrastructure and backbone and kind of look

at a few things that we could do a little bit better. So I'm actually working on rebuilding that site and site form right now. And hopefully, by the summer, I'll be going again, with that.

W. Keith Tims 10:34

You're pretty active in promoting and supporting the indie audio drama community, why?

H.M. Radcliff 10:40

There's kind of two halves to the answer. I think there's a part that's like, really, you know, way emotional, and there's, there's a part of it, that's really practical. One of the barriers, that audio drama, as an industry faces, I think, is just to in getting people, you know, the strength in numbers that they need for visibility, and that that holds down everybody trying to do the same thing. When no one's looking at audio drama, there's all these wonderful shows going without a lot of support or a strong listenership, and they deserve it. The other side of it is people sometimes just need to hear something really nice.

W. Keith Tims 11:13

Why don't we talk about your show for a little bit then? Tell me about The Madness of Chartrulean. What does this show mean to you in your own words?

H.M. Radcliff 11:20

I think what ended up happening when I was putting kind of pen to page with the story was really kind of just a way to digest things. When I started writing in earnest was Dino during the pandemic, like so many projects. But I think what was coming out was really the way I was feeling about the world and thinking, you know, kind of having these thoughts that are so kind of prevalent in the theme, which are, is humanity, I don't want to say is humanity worth saving, but like to kind of put these words in the mouths of someone else who was qualified to have those thoughts? I was kind of looking at our history, you know, a little bit of, you know, previous civilizations, you know, the Holy Roman Empire, yada, yada, yada, and kind of-- I was trying to put what was happening in our world and like a broader historical context, I guess you could say. I don't pretend to be a highly literate person, I'm not the person that can sit here and rattle off all the Epithetises and stuff like that, you know, in history, maybe I can take this context in these kind of these collections of things people have said that I have read and craft around a little bit of mythology, you know, a safe place for me to have these thoughts without feeling like I was getting something wrong. Kind of looking at how we deify in our culture and have like a little more so a few years ago, before the purchase of Twitter, you know, people like Elon Musk, you know, and like all these, you know, kind of hyper billionaires and technologists and and the gravity we as a culture, give these people in our society, and then also kind of looking at this evangelical Christian thing that America specifically has going on. I kind of asked myself one day, but what if the Messiah was like one of these tech deities and what would that look like?

W. Keith Tims 13:05

The Madness of Chartrulean, it is a sci fi epic, broad scope and deals with large issues and very wealthy, very powerful people. And it does revolve around Chartrulean, who is a messiah figure. He was sort of genetically engineered to be a super-man type. He recently ended a war. He designed nine

ships that were so powerful they wiped out the enemy fleet, but his use of this energy which is called Azuria did two things: number one it upset a lot of people because they believe there is a spiritual component to Azuria and also that something went wrong in the construction and that the use of Azuria has created this impulse to destroy that lives inside the ships and in Chartulean himself with that which is termed the Berserker.

Havelion 13:55

[Begin clip.] (dramatic music, voices coming through radio, sound of space flight) It's time to show them what we can do. We need to interlink.

Pilot 13:59

What's our on target?

Havelion 14:00

That big one. If we can take that out the rest will lose confidence. (spaceships lock together)

Pilot 14:08

We're all here.

Havelion 14:09

If we don't push our limits we're all going to die. Now's not the time for mercy. It's us or them. Remember that. Let's go!

Havelion 14:18

Fire! (massive energy weapon fires, metal creaking, rumbling)

Pilots 14:18

(together) Ready!

Admiral Lapedine 14:28

Incredible! It is working!

Another Pilot 14:30

(struggling, pained) My system ... I can't control it!

Chartrulean 14:37

What's happening out there?

Havelion 14:38

Azuria! It's... it's gone out of control!

Chartrulean 14:41

Sever the link!

Havelion 14:41

(pilots in pain, feedback, rumbling) We can't! It's like it's acting on its own!

Admiral Lapedine 14:52

Chartulean! Can you stop this calamity?

Chartrulean 14:54

I can try. [end clip]

W. Keith Tims 14:58

One of the things I do like about your show is that the characters are written very believably and very human, that even though these are very wealthy and powerful, and almost everyone you meet is royalty or highly placed, they still talk and behave in a very sort of human and approachable way. I mean, there are some great scenery chewing villains, but you know, Chartrulean himself is this grumpy guy who is just wants to be left alone to do his thing. And he doesn't want to deal with all this stuff. Yoba is the chamberlain, who is really very likable and roll with it kind of guy and later episodes King Starbringer is the he's very affable for being the ruler of all of humanity. He's got that heavy is the head that wears the crown kind of thing. I do think that focusing on the characters as you do, the way they speak to each other and the dialogue can be sometimes very funny and very endearing, but also very human, very believable.

H.M. Radcliff 15:54

I think we see enough media that kinda like lean on like the corrupt politician, we see enough that leans on like these kind of cliches and stereotypes to tell these same kinds of stories that I really didn't want to do that I just can't write those characters. If I can't empathize with them, then they don't really get on the page, every character I've written has something about them that I can empathize with. And if I'm creating a character that like, it's just a cliché, and I can't get in their head, like it's just not going to happen. Yeah, who really holds a lot of power, he still needed to be vulnerable. You know, I tried to kind of really approach this like less is like, what do I think this person would do but like more of like, well, what kinds of qualities do I have that can be projected onto them so they can understand them better and actually write it.

Yoba 16:43

[Begin Clip] Ah. There he is, the super-man in his natural habitat.

Chartrulean 16:48

Whatever remains of him.

Yoba 16:50

Still as dour as ever I see.

Chartrulean 16:52

Give me an auspicious occasion and you might find me in a better disposition.

Yoba 16:57

Is being reunited with an old friend not sufficient occasion?

Chartrulean 17:02

(pause) It is good to see you, Yoba.

Yoba 17:06

A long time has passed, hasn't it? I'm not sure if seeing you like this makes me feel younger or older.

Chartrulean 17:15

I have a little nostalgia for our seminary days. Those were tumultuous times.

Yoba 17:22

I'm liking the beard by the way. It complements your black aura.

Chartrulean 17:29

And you are turning gray.

Yoba 17:32

(chuckles) Us lowly life forms don't age as gracefully as Etruvians. Look at all this. Such a crazy ordeal.

Chartrulean 17:46

Doesn't sit well with me.

Yoba 17:47

We're supposed to put on a show of confidence.

Chartrulean 17:50

Haven't we already done that?

Yoba 17:51

No, we've shown them power. The rest is up to diplomacy.

Chartrulean 17:55

We won! Just let them leave!

Yoba 17:57

They're stuck here unless we can help them leave. We have to learn how this type of diplomacy works while we still have the advantage. [End clip.]

W. Keith Tims 18:06

I will say this about characters and having vulnerabilities. You're right there are tons of the sort of macho tough guy never worries about anything. Me personally, I find a lot of those characters be really boring. And the reason why is we become interested in characters that have risk that they have something to lose. If a character has nothing to lose, I don't-- why should I pay attention? If they don't care, why should I care? When you add vulnerability to a character suddenly that shows that they have something to lose and the fact that they overcome these weaknesses and makes them all the stronger. You want characters that are vulnerable that's the interesting stuff.

H.M. Radcliff 18:43

I mean, you can have these huge stakes you know these things that are at risk that are like these giant planet killer kinds of conflicts which you know, church related basically does you know, but it's really the minutia that people find more interesting than like "will the Rau blow the planet up?" Like that's not the thing that keeps people coming back. You know, they're coming back because they saw something in a character and they're you know, kind of stuck to that. The first episode goes all the way from this interaction with a cosmic being somewhere out in, you know, the void and then you're in space and then like, suddenly the last thing you end on is a jewel and it's like, I kind of want you to be thinking more about the piece of jewelry that he's holding at the end of the first episode than you are like whether or not aliens are going to attack, you know? Because I think that's a million times we're interesting.

Chartrulean 19:30

[Begin clip] Can we please focus on the dilemma at hand which greatly concerns my dignity? Should I go or not?

Admiral Lapedine 19:36

It's not about you. It's about Astreus.

Havelion 19:39

Exactly. You're being melodramatic.

Chartrulean 19:41

My involvement in this war has been very polarizing!

Havelion 19:44

Here we go!

Chartrulean 19:45

One public misstep from me could compromise everything.

Admiral Lapedine 19:49

I will be there buttering up the warhawks ahead of the summit.

Chartrulean 19:52

They aren't what bothers me.

Borsha 19:55

(approaching quickly) A package just arrived for you.

Chartrulean 19:58

From who?

Borsha 19:59

The capitol, I think.

Chartrulean 20:01

Leave it outside my room.

Havelion 20:03

Ah! Not so fast. Give it here, Borsha! (grabs the package)

Borsha 20:05

But...! (Havelion tears the paper and opens the package)

Chartrulean 20:06

Don't you dare?

Havelion 20:06

Dare what?

Chartrulean 20:08

Havelion! (Havelion laughs.) Oh, no.

Admiral Lapedine 20:10

Would you look at that.

Chartrulean 20:13

Oh no, no, no no no no.

Havelion 20:14

(giggling) What's wrong? Not your style?

Chartrulean 20:16

I don't have the energy for this.

Borsha 20:18

Oh! What a beautiful suit!

Chartrulean 20:22

You're kidding me.

Borsha 20:23

So rich in color!

Chartrulean 20:25

A bit too rich.

Borsha 20:25

Oh! And look at this embroidery. Such immaculate gold threading.

Chartrulean 20:31

You must be joking.

Borsha 20:32

Don't you just love it, Chartulean?

Havelion 20:34

I guess it didn't come in black.

Chartrulean 20:36

Give me that! (takes suit)

Havelion 20:36

Hey, hey, hey!

Chartrulean 20:37

He's obviously messing with me. This is the gaudiest thing imaginable. [End clip.]

W. Keith Tims 20:41

The first episode of The Madness of Chartrulean is called the Star Bringer Gifts. And we get a lot of exposition here in this first episode, which is typical, right? We need to know what's going on. We get to meet Chartrulean this Messiah figure. We also get to learn that he has recently ended this war with these aliens called the Rau and the Rau are coming to meet with humanity for a diplomatic end to the war to negotiate peace. We also learned that Chartrulean is kind of on the outs with a lot of his own society, and that he's worried about this thing called the Berzerker, which is infecting the nine ships and himself. We get to meet some of the pilots of the ships. And the whole thing concludes really with the fact that Chartrulean has been invited to this grand ball, which is a celebration of the end of the war as well as welcoming the diplomats from the Rau. He's expected to attend and socialize and mingle with the, the most powerful people in human society. And he really doesn't want to.

H.M. Radcliff 21:39

(laughter) Yeah. There are a lot of things I feel like if I was to go back in time, in the back in my mind, I'm always like, well, maybe there's things about this first episode, I could have done differently. I gave it a lot of thought. There were some concessions were like I need to get this story going. I know this isn't going to be perfect. But also, I felt like the contrast was really fun to have all this hubbub kind of on the front. You know, with all this diplomacy, kind of like in all this the story dealings or the story details and things that are going on and to have the sticking point be for him be what he was going to wear to the party. To me, there was something funny about that, but also kind of real, because I feel like even when we are going to go do something monumental, like our brains are stuck in the weeds of how we're going to present, how we're going to, you know, walk into the room, what we're going to say, the public's perception of us. So to me in a way, it's not really so much about what he's going to wear, it's more so like an allegory of how he's going to fit into society.

W. Keith Tims 22:42

Right? Yeah. And the fact that he feels outcast, and that he doesn't belong, and that he doesn't have anything in common with these people. And he actually is rather contemptuous of most of them.

H.M. Radcliff 22:53

Exactly, you know, which I thought, you know, just in general, having a Messiah who really kind of has this closed off outlook was incredibly interesting. Like, I don't want to be like would Jesus want to go to the party? you know, but like, in a way, it was kind of like would Jesus want to go to the party? you know, like, really, (laughter) I don't think he would, you know. If you have someone who is like, have this incredibly kind of humble mindset, then suddenly, they have to go into this really kind of contrived setting in suddenly put on his performance that like they're not prepared for, I felt like that would be a place that we can leave people that they can relate. And that is one of the main things people remember about the show was the stupid robes he got.

W. Keith Tims 23:32

Talk to me about your world building and what your approach to it is, and how you want to draw people into your fictional creation.

H.M. Radcliff 23:40

The world building is kind of like a moving train that's on fire a little bit like, (laughter) it sounds really weird to say it that way. But a lot of classic sci fi really kind of lays out their stuff in this way where you are kind of hit with, you know, a lot of information, a lot of info dumps, a lot of these story details that you can sink your teeth into. I just kind of did it, it came out. I didn't like have like, much of a dictionary or anything like open, I wasn't really tracking these things. It's kind of just something that happened. And that's what kinda say it's a moving, you know, flaming train a little bit because I feel like the world is going places faster than my brain can really track. I think what's happening is like, I put all these things in there, and I feel like one or two things happen. One, people hear it and they say, well, this is a lot, it's not for me, on one hand, that's unfortunate, but if you don't like it in the first episode, you're not going to like it for the rest of the series. The other thing that happens is that people are like, whoa, give me more of this! And they really want to sink their teeth in they want to know more than what I provided. And

there's kind of like this back end panic a little bit for me to fill in definitions and like really connect the dots on story elements and places and characters and things like that it's probably more world building that is really necessary for this kind of medium. But I think it's there to support whatever form the story takes, like, moving forward.

W. Keith Tims 25:11

Yeah, that is one of the challenges, like with with a novel, if you forget what a word means, or a place is, you can kind of skip back and reread and remind yourself things like that. That's a little trickier with audio drama. Um, it's not as easy to, you can but it's not as you know, it's not as convenient, I think to sort of rewind. What I like about the way you do it is that you don't overly explain it, it's there. And usually through context, you can kind of figure out what's going on. And people use these words in ordinary conversation like they would in, if they were actually talking.

H.M. Radcliff 25:41

I kind of go by a rule of three in a way where if it's mentioned a couple of times, you know what the word is, and you're looking for a definition. And so I did a lot of planting, where I would bring something up, the next time it was brought up, it was a little, you know, more seriously. But by the third time it's brought up, they're talking about what it is. I feel like because we're so used to consuming things that are like spoon fed to us, like over and over and over, you know, we're expecting things to be so on the nose, that they're overly explained to us that when something comes at us that we actually have to think, and we actually have to listen, and we actually have to pull things from, I think that's something not a lot of audio drama listeners are really expecting

W. Keith Tims 26:25

A lot of people listen to audio dramas, like, in the background, or while they're working, or while they're doing laundry or something. You know. That's how people a lot of people watch TV, you kind of put it on and then you do whatever else you're going to be doing. And that's one of the reasons that TV is the way is designed the way it is. It's like you know, the musical cues happen before the action so that the audience knows to look up and pay attention so they can see the action.

H.M. Radcliff 26:48

Yeah. And I felt like I didn't want to make that. I feel like if you're a creator, and you're putting your work and your energy into something, you don't really want it to be something that people just consume the background and then forget about. You want to make something that people discuss, and that they remember that they come back to even if they have to like a lot of my listeners, like they'll come back to listen to story details, but they come back. And they're the ones that are like really wanting to focus on it and like get into it. That's what I would want. It's what I do want, like is that level of listener who's, who's engaged, I don't like this kind of culture of feeling like we have to just make a bunch of compelling things to play in the background of our lives. Like, I feel like that's a waste of time and creativity.

W. Keith Tims 27:33

You've got some really amazing sound design and music. I mean, it's it's really sumptuous. Can you talk to me a little bit about your philosophy of sound design, and you must spend a lot of time developing this.

H.M. Radcliff 27:45

It didn't always sound great. From its earliest iterations, I kind of tried like a single reader performance, just so I can hear the words spoken. And this was like kind of in the earliest days of the production cycle where I wanted to see if this was something I wanted to do. And then it kind of went from there where I, you know, had some friends and some Fiverr VOs, kind of fill in some of the secondary parts. And then I was able to kind of put it together more like a scene like more than I was more like I was used to from like film editing. And then the third iteration was really kind of just building on that to kind of explore some more conceptual sound design. And I didn't know anything really about sound design, I at the beginning of this process was and still am a commercial editor for video, like years ago, I kind of dislike fallen into this, like apathy, a little bit of thinking that that's someone else's job, like I'm gonna stay in my lane in my pocket, because, you know, that's not for me to explore from a career standpoint. And so I'd actually said at some point, maybe multiple times that I cannot sound design.

H.M. Radcliff 28:31

I'm laughing because it's astonishing, honestly, you know, Chartrulean sounds amazing.

H.M. Radcliff 28:54

Well, you know, there's a couple of things to keep in mind there. One is I've been pressing buttons in media for a long time, and I had a lot of support from people who actually knew what they were doing. I think the other thing about me is just my general learning curve is pretty fast. And so like when I go in, I'm gonna learn something I learn the crap out of it. In the other kind of huge part of that was collaborating with Shawn Renner, who is the composer of the show.

W. Keith Tims 29:18

You and I have talked a lot about trying to make a career in the audio drama field. We've shared struggles and frustrations as well as achievements and victories with each other. How do you feel about this artistic worlds that were in the way it's set up? The people that are working in it? What are your thoughts about this idea of a career?

H.M. Radcliff 29:38

I kind of had this contentious opinion that I don't really feel like audio drama works well as a podcast. So a lot of the tools that are really useful for podcasters to generate revenue and stuff like that are a lot harder for especially independent audio dramas to leverage. And then we also have, you know, a lot of these bigger companies and these bigger production houses making great work. What has the risk of happening is a lot of the independents that are really wonderful will be at risk of not being found or as easily discoverable. You know, the tools that were making podcasts discoverable, you know, are becoming either oversaturated or ending up behind paywalls and stuff like that. I think it's actually more of a social barrier. From what I've seen, the people that have the farthest reach are the people who are really good at networking, who are really good at meeting other creators and finding ways to kind of lift

one another up. Any creators that feel like, hey, I want to support you will do for like promo swaps, and feed drops, like that kind of provide that support for people to meet other people and kind of amplify one another is like really important.

W. Keith Tims 30:46

How do you measure success?

H.M. Radcliff 30:47

I haven't thinking about this damn question. (laughter) I think it's a little disturbing, because I don't really have an answer. I feel like for me, success is this kind of like formless evolving thing. It's just having a thing that exists. And having done it, you know, on like that kind of like human level of just having accomplished something. Anything beyond that, I kind of have a problem where I have a hard time being satisfied. I, you know, I have a hard time keeping the positive in perspective. And it's not just the positive, but everything. You know, I can receive the best news one day and then suddenly feel very small. Like, I've tried to make milestones to be like, Oh, if we reach 30,000 downloads, you know, then X, I reached 50,000 downloads then X, you know, but then I reached those milestones and kind of just been like, that system of reward is not doing it for me. A good measure of success, for me will probably be the moment that I'm not hyper fixated on it, where I feel comfortable enough with something to walk away from it. I always say that I have Border Collie energy, where I just always have to be engaged, I have to be herding the project in some way. And it's not really a healthy way to expend energy. And you know, sometimes I wind up very exhausted because I spend a lot of energy doing nothing but worrying about things. I feel like the moment I can put that aside, that's probably where I'm going to be like okay, I succeeded.

Chartrulean 32:13

[Begin clip.] (mournful music) (thinking to himself) The last time I was in a crowd is the day of exile. All the people of Simitu had gathered in the streets to exacerbate my humiliation. They called me an abomination. (echoing: "abomination" "monster" faint sounds of an angry mob) But it wasn't the words or the stones that they threw that cut. It was the realization that I could hurt and I could hate. (echoing: "hate") Everything I did was for them. But they were blind. Will people tonight remember me as the monster or am I different in their eyes now? It may take more than this Technicolor frock to disguise what I really am. (Echoing: "what am I?") [End clip.]

W. Keith Tims 33:17

The Madness of Chartrulean is often compared to Epic works like Dune or Foundation, dealing with high level political themes. The show is buoyed by strong voice performances and sound design. It's a story rich in lore and philosophical themes that rewards listeners seeking a thoughtful, detailed experience. [End theme music.] You can listen to The Madness of Chartrulean on most major podcast platforms, or see our show notes for more information. The First Episode Of is written and produced by W. Keith Tims. All the opinions expressed in this show belongs to the people who expressed them and not necessarily to anyone else. The theme song is Mockingbird by David Mumford. This show is a production of Alien Ghost Robot Creative Media. If you want more information, want to sign up for our newsletter or are on audio drama creator and would like to be on the show visit our website at

thefirstepisodeof.com. We're happy to be a part of the Audio Drama Lab, a Discord-based resource for audio drama, development and networking. Check it out at audiodramalab.com. Keep telling stories. It's the only way we're gonna get out of this mess. Until next time!

W. Keith Tims 34:35

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