

# AUTHOR'S NOTE



## TO THE READERS OF DEORUM LEGIONS

Salve amici! The idea for this fantasy novel was first conceived back in 2019 when I was 25 years old. At the time, I was living in Japan. It was there, in that most sublime gem of the orient, that something had fundamentally changed inside of me. For a myriad of reasons, I came to reacquire myself with my own heritage to western civilization. This, coupled with my passion for history, invariably compelled me to study the Greco-Roman world of classic antiquity. Before I knew it, the core foundations of what would eventually become **Deorum Legions**<sup>TM</sup> was formed.

But its exact origins extend much further back into my boyhood years. It was on a cool spring morning in 2006 that I knew precisely who I wanted to be when I grew up. At the tender age of 11, I had just finished the very first volume of Masashi Kishimoto's popular manga series: NARUTO.

Once I placed it down, I was convinced of my life's mission: to become a world-class manga artist. In fact, Deorum was ALWAYS meant to be a manga; not a novel. When I picture Velkan, Ensis, or Bhutaki, I envision anime characters drawn in that uniquely Japanese aesthetic.

Hopefully, the artwork dotted throughout this book clearly illustrates that intent. This boyhood goal, of which I affectionately refer to as **The Manga Dream**, is a pursuit I still commit to as of this writing. It is my *modus operandi*. It's also my sincere hope that this series of books can eventually inspire a whole new generation of people; just as I was enamored by the classic works of legendary Japanese mangaka such as Akira Toriyama, Eiichiro Oda, Tite Kubo, Masashi Kishimoto, Hiromu Arakawa, Hajime Isayama, Kentaro Miura, and so many more...

For many years, I often struggled with a contradiction inherent in my own dream... Manga was, for the longest time, a fundamentally *Japanese* endeavor... How could a Puerto Rican American from Florida ever hope to create a literary work that would be adapted into a globe-trotting anime? Growing up, many facets of my upbringing and environment were antithetical to that very pursuit. Many times I felt discouraged. Even academia felt diametrically opposed to such aims. Although, there's truly *nothing* in this world that spurs my heart quite like **manga**. I love manga! It is my great passion. Thus, against all common sense, I remain firmly rooted to this foolish dream.

One persistent travail, however, is that as I get *older* and life gets busier, so too does my available time begin to shrink. With pitifully stagnant wages and ever-increasing costs of living, making manga no longer seems attainable. In Japan, becoming a manga artist is a legitimate career path. Sadly,

this is not the case in the United States. American-borne comics simply don't have the global market share they once enjoyed. Yet *Japanese* manga and anime is quickly rising in prominence to become the new pop-culture hegemony.

Over the years, I've come to realize just how intense and all-encompassing a labor manga creation is. And in the absence of financial stability, its production seems rather unjustifiable outside of Japan. Due to a sincere lack of actionable opportunities and a deluge of my own personal struggles, I could not conceive of a way to realize my dream of making manga. How could I thrive in a competitive and commercial capacity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? The solution came to me during the global pandemic of 2020. I decided that I wanted to form an official manga production studio.

Alone, there is only so much I can achieve. But with a studio of talented men and women, I can supercharge the creation of quality content while also publishing it in a timely manner congruent to modern demands. Of course, such an operation requires a sizable quantity of funds; something I've always been in short supply of. In lieu of trying to correct this monetary deficiency, I no longer have the time to draw as I once did. But part of me still yearned to share the story of Velkan Aurelian with a wider audience. The compromise I ultimately settled upon was to take my old manga drafts and adapt them into a series of novels.

*That* is how this current book came to be. The biggest advantage to authoring books is that you can easily edit text. Any mistakes can be erased and replaced in seconds. But manga, despite its much slower production cycle, has the advantage of being a visual medium. Even a terrible story can provide *some* entertainment value if the art is good enough. Meanwhile, literature lives or dies by the quality of

its writing. In preparing to draft this novel, I spent most of my waking hours immersed in the expansive history of the ancient Mediterranean world with a special emphasis on Rome, Greece, and Egypt. But even more important than historical research was learning the **art of storytelling** itself.

Since before the dawn of recorded history, humanity has been telling stories. It is our in-built mechanism for making sense of the world around us. And though much has changed since the days of Aristotle or Wu Cheng'en, the fundamentals are archetypical and universal. I am by no means an expert. I see myself as a student of the craft; perpetually aiming to improve my skills and understanding of the form. I'm under no illusion that *this* book is some magnum opus in the same vein as Homer's '*Odyssey*' or Tolkien's '*Lord of The Rings*'. There's still so much for me to learn as a storyteller... There is much room for growth.

I have dutifully revised this book countless times. I've incorporated valuable critiques from my arsenal of trusted beta readers; no matter how harsh it may have seemed. I've spent many sleepless nights altering the narrative structure, trimming dialogue, altering scenes, and sometimes even removing whole characters from the plot. Even *then*, I'm not 100% convinced that this particular book which you've just read is a perfect story... And I'm at peace with that.

I cannot predict how Deorum will be received by the global marketplace. But I take solace in the fact that *this* book was the very best I could muster. The beauty of this book is that it's only the *first* of many. Like with longform manga serials, Deorum Legions is a multi-part story. **Book 1** covers Velkan's origin. The saga of his life will continue in the next installment, which I am already working on. I have a lot of exciting things in store for you regarding **Book 2**.

One day, it is my sincerest hope that I can return to Japan. I hope that I can indeed launch that manga studio either in Tokyo, Osaka, Kyoto, Sendai, or Fukuoka. During my private meditations, I see this series becoming a full-fledged manga distributed around the world. I see that manga being adapted into a breathtaking anime that is streamed on devices all across the planet. I see crowded conventions, feature-length films, immersive video games, enthused cosplayers, action figures, and a plethora of other apparel and merchandise. But most importantly, I see a thriving international community of fans whose lives are touched by the exciting world of **Deorum Legions™** and its characters. I see myself working with a stellar group of fellow artists striving to create the best possible manga. And it will all be sourced from these very books!

I'm profoundly joyous that this story will finally debut. No more is it merely a collection of disembodied concepts inside my cranium; but a physical manifestation. I hope you enjoyed – or were at least entertained by – Velkan and the ancient world of Theia. I ask that you please join me, dear reader, on this journey for the next installment. I have some marvelous ideas planned, and you won't want to miss it. Thank you very much for reading. Gratias tibi!

The Owl Shogun ( Age 27 )  
Davenport, Florida, USA  
April 10, 2022

Until we meet again! See you in **Book 2!**

