



~ Preface ~

by Matthew S. Carauddo

In late December of 2017, I began upon my journey to write the *screenplay* version of 'Diamond Dragons'. Even prior to typing a single word, upon one evening--late at night in the dark before I slept--I had a profound and clear vision in mind. It was a spectacular moment which essentially concluded the film. Now, because telling you about this moment would reveal the finale of this *book*, I'll skip ahead to continue.

But, *before* I continue, I want to **THANK YOU!** I am humbly blessed by both your curiosity and trust in my words. I offer you my most sincere expression of Chi-Yong ('gratitude' in Dragonspeak) and Chi-Foi ('honor'). Reading any author's work takes *patience* and *time*, and my own work is only a single gem upon an *endless* canvas of scholastic stars in the void. So, again, Chi-Yong, and Chi-Foi, Zell Amal ('dragon friend').

Ironically, those two concepts mentioned (patience and time) were precisely what were required in order to complete the first screenplay. One of many works to come, as it turned out. Additionally, those two concerns are *also* at the very crux of 'Diamond Dragons'. Dual prerequisites for the heroes (and villains) of the story to truly unlock their own potentials. But until the *very* end of it all, each would remain infinitely imprisoned.

And so, in order to transform my initial vision (from late 2017) into a *complete* story, the end of my tale was truly 'where to **begin**'! Because, before we start, *we must see our end*. And, by Althe'aya herself, I certainly did. Soon, more ideas blossomed. New moments for non-sequential (yet essential) scenes surfaced. Small epiphanies developed into pages and pages. Concepts were amplified into parallel story-lines, powerful character arcs, mysterious musical lyrics, enigmatic prose, a new language (both spoken and written), a unique numeric system, and far more. World-discovery. Lore! *And it felt exhilarating*.

A mere thirty pages from January of 2018 transformed into *ninety* by mid-February. And as soon as 'Pi' day arrived (3.14.2018), that epic hero's journey clocked in at a hefty *one-hundred thirty* pages. All in less than three months. Character names and their ages were solidified. The primary colors of each dragon had long since materialized. Powers of flame, ice, electricity and more were properly attributed. And one by one, the dragons' struggles, conflicts, and epic moments both triumphant and tragic unfolded! At this point,

'Diamond Dragons' (the screenplay) was nearly complete.

But, I didn't stop there. I was devoted to shaping it into the best work I could possibly yield. So, I naturally sought input from peers, friends, associates, and fellow writers. I applied any relevant, insightful notes offered, but also carefully deliberated over all judgements rendered. I made minor changes, tiny edits and tweaks here and there, but overall: the story, characters, scenes, and core concepts *remained unaltered*.

*And so, I'd now **truly** 'begun'...*

Throughout late 2018 and early 2019, I continued to develop (and often pared down) dialogue, reworked certain action blocks and added scenes. There were additional ideas for more scenes, but they did NOT belong in *this* story. Could it be? Would there be a 'Diamond Dragons II'? Perhaps. So, I stored these additional ideas for a sequel in a separate document (and later, its own folder--alongside 'DD3' and 'DD4').

I organized an initial, 'beta style' table read. I gathered local actors to read for several of the characters so that I could get a feel for the possible run-time. It was a ton to undertake. I prepared copies of the screenplay and example artwork, rented a space, hosted the actors, fed them, and provided drinks. I voiced 'Artemis', along with several other characters (thanks to my own experience as an actor, I was perfectly capable).

*What I'd begun didn't end **there**, either...*

I was duly dedicated. As development of the screenplay progressed, I requested help from voice-over actors, a few concept artists, and a gifted composer. When the worldwide pandemic of early 2020 began, I'd created a rough 'pre-visualization' of the first twenty minutes of 'Diamond Dragons' (screenplay version). The video contained music, voice-over work, my own narration of the action blocks, and limited animation and visuals.

To give viewers an overview, I also uploaded interviews of me speaking about the screenplay and characters, all intertwined with the graphics, music, artwork and character descriptions. They remain on my channel to this day. Perhaps.

But all at once, life on Earth threw a 'cataclysmic curve ball' ... toward EVERYONE. :(

As the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 worsened, my life was already partially beset by previous misfortune. My finances were not so great, and I was (obviously) forced to stop working certain jobs. Someone whom I cherished more than anyone in the world vanished from my world altogether. Phone calls and emails went unanswered. Tragedy after another unfolded (including suicides of close friends and associates, and multiple relationships ended in ruin). Staggered, but not knocked out, I re-relocated from L.A. back to my hometown arena of S.J./S.F., California. Everything which had not fit in my car had to be sold or junked. I was also pretty broke, especially thanks to unscrupulous past roommates. Unraveled like a loose thread in a washer's spin cycle, and even after months of attempting to salvage my existence, uncertainty plagued me. I was fairly (and understandably) **devastated**. I had no friends, no contact, no conversations... almost nothing left at all.

Enter 'THE NOVEL'.

Cornered by the pandemic, I began typing the first draft in August of 2020. Obviously, you're reading it *now*, but whether you believe it or not, I'd *never* intended to write a 100,000+ word tome about the characters of

'Diamond Dragons'. Initially, I wanted nothing to do with a *book* version of 'Diamond Dragons'--Nae--I'd intended it for 3D animation/film! I solely loved the process of utilizing the 'Unreal3D' engine, capturing vocal recordings, sound design, and working closely with my amazing composer. But, since all of that had stalled out, I *adapted*. At the end of August 1st, I'd pounded out a solid 2,000+ words, and just like that, August (my birth month) became a '30-day writing challenge'. Apparently, so did *September*.

*And so, it was time to **start again**.*

I'd committed to *begin* this epic novel, and so, I'd also made up my mind to *complete* it. I applied the very same **patience** and **time** to the book which I'd already conferred upon the *screenplay*. But a 140-page film script was *far* less work than that of scribing out a bloody novel! It required an even *fiercer* sense of discipline and consistency than before (and, incidentally, also with my daily physical exercise--to remain FIT).

I wrote *every* bloody day of *every* week. No exceptions were made. Sometimes I wrote a little, sometimes quite a bit, and there in the 'twains, as well. The screenplay version granted me the obvious cache of resources it already was: a robust 'skeletal structure' for the novel. However, I feel that I must emphasize (although I also *empathize*): I wrote every day. **EVERY DAY**. Upon every tomorrow which came. If that helps anyone out there; wonderful. I hope you listen. I feel that it is pretty self-explanatory. Discipline. Consistency. *Work*.

On September 21st of 2020, *barely two months had passed*, and the first draft of 'Diamond Dragons', book #1, was complete! It stood strong and proud at a wondrous 113,800+ words and 50 chapters. I will leave it to you to find out what subsequent edits, corrections, developmental additions, and tertiary drafts yielded.

It's all been a harrowing, but wonderful journey, both full of strife and arduous struggles. Triumph and tragedy. I fought hard to work consistently at world-building even while I attempted to organize, arrange and edit the screenplay's rough pre-visualizations. The lore, music, language, magic, and character descriptions alone (all created prior to the completed screenplay version) remain simply *enchanting*--in my opinion.

While scribing this preface, I considered providing the 'world-building' documents and materials as addenda to the actual book. But, even if they are not in this particular version of 'Diamond Dragons' which you have undoubtedly purchased (again: Chi-Yong to you, Zell Amal), I'm certain that I'll have found ways to make them publicly available. Perhaps via videos, or as documents on web pages, or perhaps even both.

But, *perhaps* this Preface has become overly 'explorative', and I should end it. However, before I do, it's important that you are aware that someone ELSE offers important messages. May their words enter your heart, mind, and body: three of six key aspects which chronicle the summation of 'Diamond Dragons' I-IV...

...and which can only be found at the very end of this tome.

Read those words *only* when it is Time.

You will know when.

"Before I start... I must see my end."

--Matthew S. Carauddo

--p.k.a. "Greytale Novastar"