

Salt Lake City is home to its fair share of creative minds and companies. From musicians to video game development studios, art is never in short supply. However, many residents fail to notice the thriving comic book and graphic novel efforts from their community. Delve a little deeper into this aspect of the city and you'll discover Quinn Johnson, founder and chief creator of Darkhan Studios, LLC.

Johnson describes Darkhan Studios as the business entity behind his personal creative ventures, a vehicle for producing top quality artistic material. "We figured it was necessary to form our own studio so we wouldn't have to report to anybody else," he said. "I didn't want to have to work on everybody else's (intellectual) properties. I always wanted it to be my baby, my own story where I could bring my own dreams to life."

Thus far, Johnson's dreams have materialized in an original comic book series entitled *Elders of the RuneStone*, coming soon from publisher Ape Entertainment.

The series follows a group of five teenagers struggling to discover their true purposes as they deal with family and social complications. The discovery of a strange rune stone that gives them superhuman abilities and the arrival of a dangerous new figure in the city's underworld only add to the drama. Johnson promises a gripping storyline supplemented with plenty of action. "It's not a story about powers that happen to be wielded by characters," he said. "It's about deep characters who happen to have powers."

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Darkhan Studios also produces an entertainment news and reviews podcast called *The Darkhan City Awesome Comics Culture Podcast*. In addition to providing insights on the latest developments and releases in the collective entertainment industry, Johnson and his co-hosts offer tips, advice and strategies on successfully producing and promoting creative work. “We also like to think we’re pretty dang funny,” Johnson added.

Turning creativity into substance and getting it into the hands of the public is a challenging process, however. With many skilled individuals to pay, producing a comic book is an expensive endeavor. In addition to money, Johnson identifies time as a difficult obstacle to navigate. “The production work just takes forever; we’ve been working on issue one for years,” he said with a chuckle. “It takes a lot of diligence.”

Whatever the difficulties, Johnson feels that the studio’s successes are worth the effort. “It’s amazing to see the comic in the hands of people who get really excited about it and enjoy it,” he remarked.

The podcast has also garnered its share of attention. “It’s been really cool to meet people from around the world who are listening to our show, who really enjoy the humor and who are learning a lot from the advice and experience that we bring to the table.”

Johnson recognizes that there is a long road ahead for Darkhan Studios but keeps an upbeat attitude about his creative aspirations. “We believe in the story, we believe in the characters and we believe in the quality of what we have,” he said.

For more information on Darkhan Studios and its productions, visit <http://www.runestonecomic.com>.

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