

## TRUTH RESTORED

### Chapter One: Born in the Shadow of Rome

Carthage was never meant to survive.  
Its greatness made it threatening.

Its independence made it intolerable.  
Nestled on the North African coast, Carthage was more than just a trading hub. It was an empire — bold, brilliant, and unapologetically foreign to the rising Roman world. While Rome expanded with the discipline of a machine, Carthage flourished with the creativity of a merchant civilization: a place of harbours, markets, towering ships, and cultural fusion. Wealth flowed through its hands. Its navy ruled the western Mediterranean. Its influence stretched from Spain to Sicily, from the Sahara to the seas.

But to Rome, this was a provocation.  
A rival.

A future enemy.  
What followed was one of the most bitter and relentless rivalries of the ancient world — a clash not just of armies, but of ideologies. Rome admired structure. Carthage prized commerce. Rome demanded loyalty to the state. Carthage empowered its families and guilds. Rome worshipped war as duty. Carthage viewed war as a necessity to protect trade.

Into this brewing storm was born a boy named Hannibal. From a young age, he was raised not to trust Rome. His father, Hamilcar Barca, had seen Roman betrayal up close and warned his son of what was to come. The oath Hannibal swore — to hate Rome until death — was not fuelled by senseless rage, but by ancestral memory and national survival.

When Hannibal crossed the Alps with elephants and hardened soldiers, it wasn't just a brilliant military manoeuvre. It was an act of resistance — the cry of a civilization refusing to bow. At that moment, Rome trembled.