

## And The Curtain Falls

~By Danhee Han

When the supreme and ancient God, Zephyr, decided to materialize the universe, he also designed the Heavenly Creators. These beings had two jobs: to create a beautiful world in Zephyr's image and to design the guardians of this beautiful world.

After the world of Bor was created, the Heavenly Creators created the first beings—the Five Heroes. These beings were blessed with extraordinary power that manifested into Soul Gems. Each gem imbued each hero with incredible knowledge and life force. Each hero had a unique Gem: Truth, Passion, Resolution, Abundance, and Freedom.

After a short while, the Heavenly Creators chose to create a race whose original purpose was to praise the Heroes along with the Creators. However, some of the Creators worried that if they made humans strong, they would overthrow the Gods, so they made them weaker than everyone else in the universe.

Over time, The Five Heroes couldn't control their greatest weakness, greed. The Heroes craved power because they were convinced Zephyr and The Creators gave humans a secret power source. edge. They nearly wiped out the population, a colossal waste of their gem powers. To search efficiently, the Heroes gathered human followers who took an interest in their paranoid beliefs. This group took a name, The Jokesters.

The Creators couldn't bear to watch such violence upon their people, so, for peace's sake, they sealed the Heroes in the Tree of Alpodai; to this day, they are called the Five Fallen Heroes. The Fallen Heroes were Anvindr, Astrid, Baxtalion, Drisella, and Pompa. In the tree, each of them became a mere branch, their consciousness sealed within.

With the Fallen Heroes sealed away, The Creators felt greatly relieved the chaos was gone. However, they could not protect Bor from the remaining Jokesters by themselves. So they decided to give the Soul Gems—and more sensible judgment—to five new heroes in hopes they would use this extraordinary power to protect and prosper humanity. The Five Heroes are now Estelle, Syfa, Sabir, Zarek and Fabian.

Over a century of rulership, Zarek and Fabian increasingly argued about who was superior. They argued until, in a rage, they simultaneously shot gem energy at each other. The beams of energy fused until the two heroes vanished, causing the Gems of Freedom and Abundance to explode.

But amid this fighting, a half-blood child was created by the two soul gems. A baby boy with Zarek's brute strength and Fabian's intelligence.

After their deaths, the other three grieved. They refused to acknowledge their blood-related child because he reminded them of their loss, so they transformed him into a human and sent him to Poppy, a former goddess who had retired to earth during

a long stretch of peace. There Ben was raised completely unaware of his godly parentage.

## Chapter 1: Poppy's Farewell

"BEN! COME DOWN HERE THIS INSTANT!" shouted Aunt Poppy.

Ben looked up from his pillow. He was fifteen, with messy brown hair, and emerald eyes, wearing a greasy tank top with jeans. He slid down the railing of the oaken stairs and was suddenly face to face with Poppy in the living room.

Ben muttered, "Did I break another vase?"

The living room had a musty odor. It was lit with a dim lamp in the far corner. There were flower-patterned curtains—all of this buried under thick layers of dust. There was a constant *tap-tap-tap* sound on the windows.

Poppy sighed, "When will I understand how children actually work?"

Ben said, "Children are an irregular force, and you are a drill sergeant trying to structure them."

Poppy snapped, "Of course they are, but you must be different!"

"Must be—there's the drill sergeant in you"

Ben grinned at his aunt. She rolled her eyes.

Poppy pointed towards the television, "Look at what's happening."

Ben glared at the television, "Recent reports from today tell us that five beings have risen from the sands in Alpodai. We aren't sure who they are, but they—"

The image shows the desert of Alpodai with five beings covered in darkness rising from the sand, heads hanging downward.

The camera focused on a strange man (probably in his late teens) wearing jester's clothes and a mask with strange engravings and glowing pupils. The jester's costume was black and drenched in blood.

The man cackled, "HELLLLO, FELLOW CITIZENS OF BOR! I AM FYNN, KING OF THE FALLEN JOKESTERS, ALLIES OF THE FALLEN HEROES!"

The reporter muttered, "W-what are you doing?"

Fynn's cackling continued, "What am I doing? That's a great question. WE, THE FALLEN JOKESTERS, ALONG WITH THE FIVE FALLEN HEROES, are BACKKKKKKK! GET READY FOR CHAOS, MAYHEM, and of course... LAUGHTERRRR! See youuuu!"

Fynn continued to cackle as the camera blacked out to a logo of a blood-drenched sword with a skull dangling from it. Ben turned it off. Ben's face was grim, and he turned towards his aunt.

They stared at each other in silence.