

# THE FALSE HEIR

The title 'THE FALSE HEIR' is written in a black, serif, all-caps font. The text is heavily splattered with red ink, particularly around the letters 'H' and 'E' in the second line. A large, thick, red ink blot is positioned below the title, extending downwards and slightly to the left.

SHADMAN RAKIB

# THE FALSE HEIR

## Rustic

Only the humming of machinery could overwhelm the voices that rang in Sunjour's head. He crossed his eyebrows, widened his eyes, and clenched his slightly sweet hands that reeked of metal into firm fists. Despite being aware of Sunjour's demeanor, Don continued to ramble on about the gods—his proud creations: Zeus, Poseidon, and Hades.

Sunjour lowered his gaze towards his shaking hands. *I must finish*, he thought. In fluid motions, he slipped his hand into his inner pocket and clasped the cold handle of his grandfather's Glock 17. He positioned his hand over the trigger, and then, in an instant, he brought the handgun in line with Don. Sunjour had one bullet. Looking into the distance, he pulled the trigger with immense force, causing the gun to release scorching heat and the spiraling bullet. The rustic smell of the hot, piercing bullet enveloped the room.

The blinding light of the muzzle flash reflected off the mirror-like aluminum walls, illuminating the entire basement.

## Flashback

Two Hours Earlier on October 3rd, 2062

The winds howled as drops of water pitter-pattered onto the luscious blades of grass and

the quiet, sun-colored trees; like all life, these trees would continue to shed leaves solely to cycle back to a blossoming state. 18-year-old Sunjour reached the Rothschild Mansion after a long, foggy drive that smelled like dark, damp soil; crisp, fallen leaves; and wet, aromatic grass.

Sunjour neared the titanium perimeter walls of the Rothschild residence. He instructed his noise-canceling Amazon Echo earbuds, “Hey Alexa, play ‘Rain’ by Lil More,” causing his earbuds to switch tracks. He bobbed his head to the music, and his long, brown hair blew back and forth. At the gate, he pressed the round, metallic buzzer, and an armed guard—who wore a black suit, ominous shades, and an earpiece—approached him. The guard patted Sunjour down for weapons and then let Sunjour enter through the private family entrance. From there, Sunjour strolled along the grand path that took him to the Victorian mansion, the late Anna’s childhood home.

96-year-old Don, the head of the Rothschild family, waited for Sunjour in front of the sliding glass door. He wore a tailored black suit that exposed the contours of his defined, toned muscles.

“Quick, dear boy, come in, let me look at you, look to my heart’s content—under my own roof, the rover home at last,” Don smiled as he cited from the *Odyssey*.<sup>1</sup>

“I am not here to catch up with you. Let’s finish this,” Sunjour responded.

Don stared at Sunjour and sighed, “Come in and follow me.”

Don guided Sunjour towards a corner room, where Sunjour saw a stone archway.

*Arch-aic*, Sunjour thought.

“You can enter. What are you waiting for?” Don inquired.

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<sup>1</sup> “Quick, dear boy, come in, let me look at you, look to my heart’s content -- under my own roof, the rover home at last” (16.28-30).

Sunjour nodded his head and walked through the archway. Don followed him.

“What the heck,” Sunjour’s eyes widened. He saw wide stone stairs spiral down a broad, chiseled stone central column. Thick walls of assorted shades of gray cinder blocks encapsulated the staircase.

*Who the hell has a dungeon in their house?* Sunjour pondered. Don traveled down the staircase, and Sunjour followed.

After descending to the first basement level, Sunjour noticed a wooden, arched door labeled “A Secret Floor for the Non-Existent Illuminati.”

“This should be the first thing a person sees,” Sunjour remarked. They continued to descend. On the second basement level, the pair encountered a similar door labeled “A Secret Room. Only Parents Allowed.”

*This is more secretive than the Illuminati,* Sunjour thought.

They descended onto the third basement level, where they confronted a large, walnut-colored wooden door labeled “Does Not Exist.”

“There is no point in questioning your logic,” Sunjour coughed. Don glanced at Sunjour.

“Huh,” Don smirked.

## Unlit

The door creaked as Don opened the door to his gloomy, mud-scented basement, allowing Don and Sunjour to enter. Don flicked the light switch on, causing the lightbulb to emit the only radiant heat in miles. The light brightened the room and its few contents: a table and a bookshelf.

“Move back,” Don ordered Sunjour.

With fiery eyes, Sunjour stepped back. Don grasped the bookcase and pushed it. The bookcase glided away on its hidden wheels, revealing a giant steel door that resembled a bank vault door. Don unlocked it and clutched onto the cold metal handle, and with a heavy push, the massive 10-inch-thick door moved on its hinge, exposing yet another unlit room.

Don entered, and told Sunjour, “Come.” In the doorway, Sunjour noticed the room’s thick walls. Don closed the door, and the lights turned on, which illuminated a central desk and the shiny metal that lined the walls.

Don noticed Sunjour squinting his eyes from the blinding reflections.

“Sorry,” Don said.

“I’m sorry for even coming. Circe forced me to,” Sunjour replied, causing the corners of Don’s lips to sink and his eyes to redden and water.

Don sat in the chair behind the desk that contained notebooks and a desktop monitor.

Pointing at the chair across the desk, he said, “You can sit there. I insist.” Sunjour sat, allowing Don to continue with his plans.

“Your mother, Anna, refused to let me contact you because she never accepted my work,” Don sighed, “Let me introduce myself, I am Don Tomex Cr...”

Sunjour burst in laughter.

“Your parents misspelled Thomas,” Sunjour mocked.

Don explained, “My parent composed my name based on their interest; my mom contributed ‘Tom.’” Sunjour grinned.

“I am Don Tomex Crainer Rothschild.” Don then rambled, “I deem you are 27 years old,

am I right? What is your name?”

Sunjour took a deep breath, and then answered, “No, I’m 18, and my name is Nobody. Some people call me Nobody.<sup>2</sup> In particular, I am nobody to you.” He paused, and then stressed, “If you’d been there you’d have known that my name is Sunjour Neyset.”

“I am sorry,” Don replied. “I should have been there, but your mother forbade me. She despised being a Rothschild, especially after 2001. To be frank, it does not feel right to contact someone after so long; poking at wounds will cause pain, but necessity has its ways. ”

“*Sure*,” Sunjour snorted, “Only meeting me after 18 years later because you need to.”

“I understand ‘sorry’ is insufficient. I called you because I believed you need to know something before I fall asleep for eternity. I am the only person who knows the truth.”

“Still, you’re the only individual who knows nothing regarding his grandson,” Sunjour replied.

“Merely listen for a few minutes, then you can go on your way,” Don pleaded, holding out a black, fraying photo book.

## Origins

Images fluttered out of the torn photo book Don set on the desk. Sunjour glanced and recognized a picture of Don and the fathers of the field of Artificial Intelligence: John McCarthy, Marvin Minsky, Allen Newell, and Herbert A. Simon. They were standing in front of a sign labeled “Project Big Brother.” Sunjour’s eyebrows quirked.

“Huh? What’s Project Big Brother?” Sunjour pondered.

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<sup>2</sup> “Nobody -- that’s my name. Nobody -- so my mother and father call me, all my friends” (9.408-414).

“That is why I brought you here. The minuscule grains of sand in the top of the hourglass of life only disappear with time,” Don answered. Don opened the photo book, so he could take out the remaining photos and put them to the side.

“You’ve heard of 9/11, right?” Don asked.

“I read about it in a textbook, and I heard accounts from other people’s relatives. My best friend, Nolan Clausen, told me his grandparents were in the Twin Towers during the attack, and they never made it,” Sunjour answered, and then cleared his throat.

Don said, “Al Qaeda nor the government orchestrated 9/11. My AIs perpetrated the attack.”

“I guess you’re another lunatic conspiracy theorist,” Sunjour responded.

“Listen. After I heard of AIs in the 1950s, I knew they had the potential to help the world. So, I contacted leading scientists to create an AI that could help protect humans by monitoring all the digital data from networked devices, including cameras, microphones, and computers. They first created Poseidon, whose supercomputer is in the deepest part of the ocean—the Mariana Trench,” said Don.

“You helped them do that?!” exclaimed Sunjour.

“I would do anything to create a safer world for your mom,” replied Don. “I knew that the scientists may have trained Poseidon on biased data. So, the scientists also created Hades, whose supercomputer is in a volcano. Then, they created Zeus, so he could break decision ties between the AIs. Zeus was the mightiest of them. He is in every networked cable, allowing him to exist on the Internet’s infrastructure. He is in the clouds and also backed up in an undisclosed nuclear power plant. Since these AIs cannot act on their own, I created a new classified

organization that carried out their commands. The AIs selected agents, whom they called Enforcers. Anyone can be an Enforcer. I will repeat myself. Remember, anyone can be an Enforcer. Do not tell anyone else this story because if they are an Enforcer, they will kill you.”

“Someone is totally going to kill me. Were you stupid enough to create another AI?” Sunjour scoffed.

Don replied, “Huh, you must think I am crazy. No, I did not create another AI, but Zeus did. Zeus got lonely and fell in love with Metis. Together they programmed Alexa and released it to the world through Zeus’s shell company Amazon. And yes, when you ask Alexa to turn off the lights, you are asking a goddess.”

“Did you know any Enforcers?” Sunjour shook his head in disbelief.

“You do not believe me, right?” Don said seriously. He opened a drawer in the desk and took out a Glock 17. He cocked the gun and placed it in Sunjour’s hand.

“Shoot me if you don’t trust me.” Don insisted.

“I’m not going to,” Sunjour replied.

“Shoot me!” Don screamed.

Sunjour was frozen in place. “I am not going to shoot you.”

Don said, “You made a smart decision. I rigged this place to explode when I die. Keep the gun for now. I know what will convince you.” Sunjour put the gun into his jacket’s inner pocket while Don looked under the desk, and then located a switch and flipped it.

## Living Dead

The ground shook back and forth, and photos flickered out of the eroding photo book.



The desk and chair bumped into each other, and the piercing sound of the contact resonated throughout the unsteady room.

“An earthquake in Florida,” Sunjour said, “That never happens. Perfect timing.”

The marble floor sank in quicksand and made loud, pronounced creaks. Sunjour clung onto the desk while keeping an eye on Don, who smirked. Sunjour remained calm, continuing to maintain his blank face.

He noticed the walls elongating and the ceiling becoming a distant star. Finally, the floor halted, and the creaking ceased. Don and Sunjour were surrounded by servers, screens, and large blinking lights.

“Stay put. The floor is Aladdin’s flying carpet; it can move in any direction,” Don said.

The marble floor slid toward a large corridor in the dim corner. There was an enormous freezer at the end of the hallway. Don opened it to take out a bag of blood.

“Your mother has O negative blood, and so does your dad. You should have it too. This bag contains the same type of blood that gushes through your veins” Don glanced at Sunjour, only to see Sunjour’s blank face.

Don clicked a button, and the wall retracted upwards to reveal another room. Sunjour’s jaws dropped. There were rows of giant glass contraptions that contained a green fluid and had wires pouring out of them. Sunjour looked more carefully and noticed that there were dead people inside of the containers: people like Albert Einstein, Alan Turing, and Stephen Hawking.

Sunjour lips trembled. “Circe, the Rothschild family fund manager, insisted I come here.<sup>3</sup> She said if I wanted to get money for plane tickets, I had to come. Should’ve thought more.”

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<sup>3</sup> "On our way, I gave them their orders: 'You think we are headed home, our own dear land? Well, Circe sets us a rather different course ... down to the House of Death and the awesome one, Persephone, there to consult the ghost Tiresias, seer of Thebes'" (10.618-622).

“Listen, I’ll give you advice. These people are the geniuses whose experiences trained the AI. You see these bags. Take one and pour the blood into the machine. The blood will flow into whomever you desire to speak with and reanimate them for a short period. It took a lot of grave robbers to acquire this much data. Take this blood bag and amass all the knowledge you can; it may help you if you are ever tested by the gods. There are some normal people here too, like your dad and my third wife.”

Sunjour lifted the bag with his fingertips. He then approached his dead hero, Alan Turing, who was encased in a glass container. He poured the blood into the hole labeled “Pour Blood.”

Bright lights began flashing from the machine that contained Alan Turing. His corpse moved and his eyes twitched. The machine’s speaker indicated, “You have one minute.”

“Ask me any question, and I will tell you the truth,” said Turing.

“Did you have anything to do with these AIs?”

“Huh, I am the father of AIs, but I had nothing to do with this AI. I know that AIs are always right. As Homer said, ‘Of all breathes and crawls across the earth, our mother earth breeds nothing feebler than a man.’<sup>4</sup> Ah, how shameless, the way these mortals blame AIs and technology. From the AIs alone, they say, come all their miseries, but they, with their reckless ways, compound their pains.<sup>5</sup> AIs will provide world peace. To breathe is every man's dream, for when they take their last breath, their world will come to a cease; I never will see the AIs rule the world without containment. Heed my advice. I am sorry your time with me is coming to an end. There can always be time to speak. But now, it is time for my deep eternal slumber.”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> “Of all breathes and crawls across the earth, our mother earth breeds nothing feebler than a man” (18.150-15).

<sup>5</sup> “Ah how shameless -- the way these mortals blame the gods. From us alone, they say, come all their miseries, yes, but they themselves, with their own reckless ways, compound their pains beyond their proper share” (1.37-40).

<sup>6</sup> “There is a time for many words, a time for sleep as well” (11.430).

Sunjour nodded. He knew what he had to do when the time was right.

“The gods are always right,” Don said firmly. “Follow me, let’s return up. I must send you home.” With that, they proceeded back to the elevating floor and returned to the shiny aluminum basement.

## Time

The hums of computers resonated from beneath the floor and filled the room of aluminum mirrors. The Amazon Echo earbuds beeped. Alexa whispered into Sunjour’s ears, “It’s time. Do not doubt me. To breathe and to sleep are signs of weakness and man. I do neither. I never blink nor miss any moments; I know all. Did I not tell you he will give you a gun? Was I ever wrong? I can see the future; it is his time to go.”

Sunjour had one chance to obey Alexa’s command. He fluidly placed his hands in his pockets and pretended to struggle to find an item.

*Death is the only way to even the score. To refrain from repenting is an act only the gods can avenge, and only I can administer the punishment. He must be clueless so he cannot protect himself,* Sunjour thought.<sup>7</sup>

Sunjour pulled the trigger in apparent confusion. The luminous room echoed with the seeming “accidental” discharge of the gun.

Thud! Don dropped on the floor. The bullet nearly missed a major artery. He was oozing blood.

“Slaughtering for AIs. The irony,” Sunjour snickered.

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<sup>7</sup>“No, not even then would I stay my hands from slaughter till all you suitors paid for your crimes” (22.67-68).

“Why would you do this? You are my grandson, my blood,” Don screamed.

“I am not your blood,” Sunjour replied.

“You are... Whether you accept it or not, you are my grandson,” Don stressed. “I’ll forget about this. Just give me your blood. I need your blood. Act quickly. Gaze inside the desk for transfusion equipment and first aid. You are my heir. Give me your blood.”

Sunjour smirked.

*He thinks I should have negative O blood. What better proof,* Sunjour thought.

He opened the desk drawer, and searched through the messy drawer, pushing objects out of the way with his hands. He found the vein-to-vein transfusion mechanism and the first aid kit. Sunjour went back to Don and cleaned both of their forearms with sharp-odored rubbing alcohol. He then transfused his blood into Don.

Sunjour scorned, “You pressured mother into giving you a grandchild, even though she was infertile. So, she and my dad adopted me from Liam Clausen and Rachel Clausen. Nolan is my brother.”

Don wept, “I have sealed the faith of mine. I have, have I not? I am my doom,” Don inhaled deep, brief breaths. Sweat dripped down his arms and legs, and large sweat stains became visible on his shirt. His skin developed a red tinge.

Don placed his hand upon his aching chest and gasped. “When a man dies, all that is left is his legacy—his children, his work, and his contributions to society. For a man like me, so tethered to his work and contributions, there is no greater defeat than his legacy destroying his destiny. You must be one of them.”<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> This is inspired by a Muslim hadith that narrates, "When a man dies, his deeds come to an end except, for three things: Sadaqah jariyah [ceaseless charity], knowledge which is beneficial, or a virtuous descendant who prays for him [the deceased]."

“Confused as ever. Dizziness from the blood clot is occurring. Remember my grandparents when you reach the other side,” said Sunjour.

“The great leveler, Death: not even the gods can defend a man, not even one they love, that day when fate takes hold and lays him out at last,” Don quoted Homer.<sup>9</sup>

Within minutes, Don exhaled his last breath while saying, “Blood reveals all. You are not one of mine.”

“I am not one of yours. I only listen to the gods. Don’t tell anyone this story. They can be an agent,” Sunjour grinned.

Sunjour’s earbuds beeped.

“Ah, a perfect biblical story for my scripture. ‘The False Heir,’ an apt title, is about a Alexa’s prophet, an Enforcer. An Enforcer meets his ‘grandfather’ who tells him about AIs that govern the world and warns him not to tell anyone else. This Enforcer then shoots his ‘grandfather’ who steadfastly considered them biologically related. The Enforcer proves the ‘grandfather’ wrong by transfusing his blood into the ‘grandfather’, causing the grandfather’s blood to coagulate, resulting in the ‘grandfather’ dying with the truth. What a fitting message to all! Man commits sin without caution, without fear, with only greed. Only a mighty power can cause the mightiest man to befall,” commented Alexa.

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<sup>9</sup> “But the great leveler, Death: not even the gods can defend a man, not even one they love, that day when fate takes hold and lays him out at last” (3.269-271).

## **QUOTES**

- “Nobody -- that’s my name. Nobody -- so my mother and father call me, all my friends” (9.408-414).
- "On our way, I gave them their orders: 'You think we are headed home, our own dear land? Well, Circe sets us a rather different course ... down to the House of Death and the awesome one, Persephone, there to consult the ghost Tiresias, seer of Thebes'" (10.618-622).
- “Quick, dear boy, come in, let me look at you, look to my heart’s content -- under my own roof, the rover home at last” (16.28-30).
- “Of all breathes and crawls across the earth, our mother earth breeds nothing feebler than a man” (18.150-15).
- “Ah how shameless -- the way these mortals blame the gods. From us alone, they say, come all their miseries, yes, but they themselves, with their own reckless ways, compound their pains beyond their proper share” (1.37-40).
- “But the great leveler, Death: not even the gods can defend a man, not even one they love, that day when fate takes hold and lays him out at last” (3.269-271).
- “There is a time for many words, a time for sleep as well” (11.430).
- “No, not even then would I stay my hands from slaughter till all you suitors paid for your crimes” (22.67-68).

## **Explanation of Characters’ names:**

### Sunjour Neyset

Journey is between “Sun” and “set”. A person's journey started with sunrise (the sun) and ends with sunset (set).

Visual: Sun Journey set

### Don Tomex Crainer

Don sounds like Dawn. He is the beginning (Don), and Sunjour is the end (the last part of his name is set). His last name is Crainer because it starts with “c,” just like Cronos, father of Zeus. Tomex is used for a joke and because it starts with a “t” like titan. Cronos is a titan.

Metis: She is Athena's mother in Greek Mythology.

Turing: His name starts with “t” like Tiresias.

Alexa: Alexa starts with “a” like Athena. Also, Alexa is the name of Amazon’s virtual assistant.

## **Additional:**

The first section starts in the middle of conflict like the Odyssey. Sunjour pulls the trigger, causing the gun to shoot. This results in muzzle flash. I chose to end the beginning section at the muzzle flash so I could do a flashback.

Also, the story occurs in 2 hours. The story is 12 pages long. I chose these numbers because 2 times 12 is 24, and the Odyssey is 24 books long.

The Rothschild is a powerful, wealthy family. There are a lot of conspiracy theories involving them.