René Kaiser

Julian and the Hidden Worlds

Book 5

The Island of Borrowed Names



Book 5 · English edition

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Maps · Doors · Worlds · Connections

A Role Can End

Dear children and everyone reading aloud,

After the City of Two Moons, the fifth Atlas journey leads to a fancy-dress festival. People can try other roles here. But the return routes have shifted, and borrowed names are sticking fast.

Julian, Lio and Kaja meet Tilda, Jaro, Neve and the island keeper Mena. They listen, compare clues and ask the people themselves. A break can come before every question has an answer.

The 25 chapters continue Book 4. Reading in order is recommended; important connections are explained again. The Atlas remains borrowed. Julian’s compass with its ten stars stays at home.

Floating role cards and home compartments are imaginary festival rules. They do not explain real identity documents or memory difficulties. Adults secure the stage and routes, handle tools and undertake heavy work.

Read together and pause. Not everyone wants a role, and not every personal story belongs on a stage.

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CHAPTER 1

A Bowl at the Gate



Kaja laid the invitation on the fifth Atlas page. A doorway opened between the painted flags. Julian and Lio followed her to the island gate.

A large bowl of name cards stood outside. Some names sounded funny; others sounded very grand.

Kaja held her envelope firmly. “Our invitation lets us in. We don’t need somebody else’s name.”

Julian felt relieved. Lio read KING OF THE APPLE TREES and pushed the card back with his nose.

Beyond the gate lay an island of pale houses and colourful flags. A fancy-dress festival filled the square.

A girl in a captain’s coat approached. Above her head floated the word SEAFARER.

“I’m …” she began, then stopped.

Julian waited.

“I can’t remember my name.”

She looked towards the gate. “Yesterday I knew it.”

Kaja took an empty card from her bag. “Then let’s start with what you really do know.”

The girl pointed at the coat. “That isn’t mine. My red shoes are.”

Mena placed the bowl on a steady table beside the entrance. Visitors who wanted nothing from it could still pass.

Julian checked his invitation again. It addressed him like a king. He left it inside his notebook without accepting the title.

“Can we simply watch?” he asked.

“Of course,” Mena said. “And leave again.”

Kaja showed him the separate pocket for their return envelope. The festival letter must not replace it.

Lio planted all four paws on the paving. “I shall begin by bringing my entirely ordinary presence.”

For a moment, the girl smiled down at him.

CHAPTER 2

A Festival of Other Roles



Mena, the island's keeper, explained the festival. For one day, people could try another role: captain, gardener, inventor or something completely new.

"In the evening, they returned the names," she said. "Their own stayed safe in the home compartments."

Now those compartments had shifted. The borrowed names stuck fast. Some people kept performing although they were tired.

"The Atlas has folded the festival square over the home compartments," Kaja said.

Mena nodded. "The new map showed only the cheerful festival. The return routes were missing."

Julian looked at the girl. She needn't remain nameless. But they needed a reliable match.

Lio sniffed her red shoes.

“One of these has recently been in a strawberry hedge.”

The girl gave a faint smile. “I was looking for my ball.”

Mena recorded the memory without putting a name above it yet.

She led them to a quiet edge of the square. They could talk there without somebody holding another role over their heads.

The girl examined the borrowed coat. Its pockets were large, but none explained where her own home stood.

Julian didn’t ask for a prettier replacement story. He pointed at the shoes. “What are we sure about today?”

She lifted one foot and put it down again. Then she told them about the ball once more.

Kaja recorded that memory as a clue. One smell from a hedge was not a complete name. They would keep checking with Mena.

CHAPTER 3

A King Who Wants to Sleep



A little boy wearing a crown sat on a high bench. KING OF THE WHOLE GARDEN floated above him.

His sceptre was almost as long as he was.

“I only wanted to be in charge once,” he said. “Now everyone asks me where the flowers should go.”

His eyes were growing tired.

Julian didn’t simply take the sceptre away. “Would you like to put it down?”

The boy nodded.

With his permission, Mena laid it safely beneath the bench. Kaja fetched a blanket. Mena wrote a sign: THE KING IS HAVING A BREAK.

Nobody needed to find his proper name before allowing him to rest.

The girl in red shoes laid the borrowed coat beside the bench and sat down too.

“I don’t want to be a seafarer any more either.”

Julian nodded. “Then we’ll find the return route.”

They moved slowly, leaving crown and sceptre behind. The borrowed words still floated above them. But they no longer had to obey them.

Mena brought the boy water. He could hold the cup in both hands instead of carrying his sceptre. His crown lay beside the bench.

Julian sat a little way off. “Shall I wait or fetch someone?”

“Wait,” said the boy.

They could do that while Mena prepared the next step. His break didn’t depend on how quickly he answered a question.

The girl stroked her yellow sleeve ribbon. Lio lay on the ground without blocking the path. For a few minutes, nobody needed a performance, a title or a particularly good answer.