René Kaiser

Julian and the Guardians of the Elements

Book 10

The Heart of Open Paths



Book 10 · English edition

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The Heart of Open Paths

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Earth · Water · Fire · Air

An Ending That Leaves Paths Open

Dear children and everyone reading aloud,

the four bridges of the connecting courtyard carry people again. Yet beneath the old linden, Orin’s machine still collects movement. A grey Stillglass ring holds the trunk fast. Julian, Lio and their friends face the final shared task of this journey.

Julian carries four little rune echoes: a pebble, shell, clay shard and feather. Each has helped with suitable small tasks. Now he will also discover what he can do without these helpers and what he freely wishes to pass on.

The 25 chapters conclude the Elements series and continue Book 9. Reading in order is recommended; important connections are explained again. Adults secure and inspect the machinery while children observe, ask questions and carry messages from protected places.

Julian finds his way home at the end. A new clue awakens his curiosity about hidden worlds. A separate preview page introduces the next planned series.

You can read together, study the pictures and pause whenever you wish. Enjoy this final journey through the four elements!

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CHAPTER 1

The Wheel beneath Breakfast



Lio had already divided his bread into three pieces. One for now, one for soon, and one in case soon took too long. Julian sat beside him at the connecting courtyard's table. Above them, the linden still carried green leaves, blue blossoms, golden-red fruit and white seeds all at once.

The four bridges were connected again. Many hands and voices had worked on them yesterday. Yet Julian's cup trembled. Beneath the island, a wheel was turning. With each turn, the grey Stillglass ring tightened a little around the trunk.

Esko rested a hand on the table. “Today we’ll let the centre pass on what it collects. But first we eat and share out the work.”

Orin sat down carefully. His right hand remained bandaged; a grey glove covered his left. He reached towards a jug. Piri moved it nearer. “You can explain things. Others will carry them.”

Julian looked at the trunk. Four routes reached the island. Their movement still could not travel through its centre.

“Will the linden be finished today?” he asked.

“We’ll check together,” Esko replied. “A plan isn’t a result yet.”

Lio studied his last piece of bread. “Then I may need a fourth division.” Hedi offered him the bread basket. For the first time that morning, the whole table laughed.

CHAPTER 2

Room for Every Voice



On the upper platform, Jara put up a board. Four columns stood for earth, water, warmth and air. Beside them, she left room for messages from the centre. Each group would observe, report back, and wait for a confirmed reply before continuing.

The adults took charge of access to the machinery beneath the courtyard. The children had safe observation places above it. Nobody would step between moving parts. Esko checked the barriers and the routes out before allowing work to begin.

Edda sat in her low cart, her injured foot resting on a cushion. “I’ll stay at the air window. Sami will carry my messages when I take a break.” Sami nodded and repeated their agreement. Only then did Jara add his mark beside Edda’s name.

Nela showed Julian Lio’s shady place, with water and a bowl. Piri kept his bandaged left hand still; with the other, he fastened coloured message clips.

“What if two groups need something at the same time?” Julian asked.

“Then we stop and agree the order,” Jara said. “The loudest voice doesn’t automatically go first.”

The wheel hummed beneath them. Julian laid the pebble, shell, clay shard and feather on a cloth. The little rune echoes would help at the upper stations. The adults would plan and check the larger changes.

“And I,” Lio said, “will reliably report an empty bread basket.”

CHAPTER 3

What the Return Channel Kept



Piri led Julian to a protected window above the return channel. Below, Esko had stopped the movement. Adults collected smooth Stillglass pieces in padded boxes. The children stayed behind the railing. Some fragments shimmered as though pictures had fallen asleep inside them.

In one piece, Julian saw a garden in the rain. Water shone on a leaf; a door stood open. Suddenly, he felt how much he wanted to go home. His fingers tightened around the rail.

“The machine held more than the flow,” Piri explained. “Pictures of memories were caught in the glass too.”

“Could I take that one?” Julian pointed at the garden.

Esko held the box steady. “We need to make the pieces safe first. They can’t stay in the return channel. We can discuss keeping them later.”

Julian nodded, although waiting was difficult. Lio pushed his nose beneath Julian’s elbow. “Your garden won’t run away because a picture is being put away here.”

Another piece was lifted. Behind it lay a narrow channel. The water stood still, although drops were already arriving from farther up.

Piri pointed at the connection. “That needs to be a passage, not a shelf for memories.”

Julian looked once more at the garden picture. Then he watched the box receive a labelled place. The picture was being kept safe. The route still needed clearing. Both things could matter at the same time.