René Kaiser

Julian and the Guardians of the Elements

Book 3

The Dragon from a Handful of Embers



Book 3 · English edition

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Earth · Water · Fire · Air

A Little Guest with a Big Request

Dear children and everyone reading aloud,

sometimes a new adventure needs only a saucer. This time, Fenn is sitting in it: a tiny dragon who has brought a path to the Fire Realm.

Julian and Lio, the silver fox, have already visited the garden of Borun, the Earth Guardian, and the realm of Sira, the Water Guardian. Ten stars in the compass remember earlier journeys. Two little rune echoes now travel with them: a pebble and a shell.

In this third Elements adventure, they meet Ember the Fire Guardian, Timo and Jara. There is plenty of warmth here. It simply cannot reach the places that need it. Fenn wants to help, but he is still discovering how much heat is right for him.

The 25 chapters tell a complete story and follow on from the previous books. Reading in order is recommended; important connections are explained here too. Pictures and open questions at the end invite you to look together and carry on talking.

Enjoy Julian and Lio’s path to the Fire Realm!

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CHAPTER 1

The Guest in the Saucer



The spark sneezed again. A tiny smoke ring rose above Julian's windowsill.

“Lio?”

“I can see it,” said the silver fox. “I'm still trying to sleep through it.”

Julian sat up. Something was moving in the saucer. The red light became four feet, a round belly and two wings. The creature was scarcely longer than his finger. It looked like a dragon that hadn't quite decided how big to be.

“Fenn,” it squeaked.

“Is that your name?”

The dragon nodded. He was trembling so much that his wings tapped against the edge of the saucer. Julian offered an open hand. Fenn stayed where he was.

“That's all right too,” Julian said, drawing his hand back.

Lio came closer. “We know a door slammed shut somewhere. Can you tell us anything else?”

Fenn looked at the black scale beside him. “Warmth stuck. Houses cold.”

He nudged the scale with his nose. A red stripe appeared across it.

Julian fetched his map. The blue water sign shone steadily. Beside it lay the outline of a flame.

“We'll come with you,” he said. “But first we need to know how we'll get home.”

Fenn lifted his head. This time his wings trembled a little less.

CHAPTER 2

A Staircase That Waits



The black scale unfolded. One step grew out of another, until a narrow staircase led out through the window. Below it there was no street any more, only red mist.

Julian stayed on the carpet.

“The windowsill is too narrow for me.”

Fenn squeaked. Slowly, the staircase bent. Its broad bottom step settled on the floor. Two stone handrails grew along its sides.

Lio tested the first step with a paw. “Better. Has it thought about the return journey too?”

Fenn pointed to the scale's dark edge. “Stays. Till you're back here.”

Julian put a button beside the foot of the stairs. He wanted to see it there when he returned. Then he packed the earth pebble, the water shell, his water bottle and some bread. The shard of Stillglass from Borun's spring stayed in its sturdy pouch.

The ten old stars glowed in the compass. The green and blue dots shone beside them, without taking any star's place.

Fenn fluttered onto the first step. There he waited.

Julian tightened his bootlaces. “Now.”

They went one behind the other. Lio stayed so close that his soft tail brushed Julian's leg. The staircase did not move while anyone was standing on it.

At the top, the mist smelled of stone and cold ashes.

CHAPTER 3

The Mountain with the Cold Hat



A red mountain stood before them. A white hat of snow rested on its peak. Below, brick houses crowded around narrow flights of steps. Their windows were dark.

A boy came towards them. He had short auburn hair and wore a green waistcoat. A reddish leather bag hung from his belt.

“Fenn!”

The little dragon flew towards him, then turned away just before reaching his face. He landed on a post.

“I'm Timo,” said the boy. “Ember sent him. I was beginning to think he couldn't find his way back.”

Julian introduced himself and Lio. He pointed to the staircase behind them. Its edge remained visible as a narrow dark line in the rock.

“Our way home,” he said.

Timo nodded. “We'll keep it clear.”

Fenn gazed longingly at Julian's bread. Julian broke off a piece and put it on the post. The dragon blew over it. It turned crisp, but no flame appeared.

A heavy thud came from above. A red crack lit up in the snow.

Lio looked at the summit. “For a cold mountain, it makes some very warm noises.”

Timo tucked his hands into his sleeves. “The warmth can't reach us any more. It's staying inside.”

He led them to the forge. A pinwheel hung above the door. Not one blade moved.