René Kaiser

Julian and the Guardians of the Elements

Book 4

The City of Lost Winds



Book 4 · English edition

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The City of Lost Winds

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Earth · Water · Fire · Air

A Path among the Clouds

Dear children and everyone reading aloud,

a pinwheel turns backwards, a feather stirs and a path appears beneath Julian’s blanket. This time the glowing compass leads Julian and Lio to a city high among the clouds.

In the first three Guardians of the Elements books, the friends met earth, water and fire. A pebble, a shell and a clay shard remember those journeys. The compass’s ten golden stars still hold memories of the first Julian series.

Now they meet Edda, Sami and Aeris, the Guardian of Air. The winds are missing, houses are losing their footing, and Julian discovers he would rather look at very high paths from below. Luckily, he does not have to go on alone.

The 25 chapters tell a complete adventure and continue the Elements series. Reading in order is recommended; important connections are explained here too. The pictures and open questions at the end invite you to look, tell and think together.

Enjoy the City of Lost Winds!

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CHAPTER 1

The Staircase above the Bed



Julian pushed back the blanket. Beneath it lay a broad white step instead of the carpet. The next shimmered a little higher. A path of clouds led straight into the morning.

Lio lifted his head from the bedside rug.

“We already have stairs in the hall.”

The pinwheel on the desk turned backwards. Beside it stirred the white feather Jara had found in the air tower's flap.

Julian remembered its message: Our sky has lost its down.

He did not reach for the first step straight away. First he got dressed and packed his map. The earth pebble, water shell and clay shard lay in separate pockets. Ten golden stars shone in the compass. Three new signs remembered the paths to earth, water and fire.

When Julian touched the feather, the lowest cloud grew firm. Soft but sturdy handrails rose along both sides.

“And coming back?” he asked.

A thin white thread remained visible between the feather and the bedpost.

Julian put his button beside it. That had helped on the last journey.

Lio tested the step with a paw. “No bouncing, please.”

“I wasn't planning to.”

Together they climbed. Beyond the third bend, the air smelled of rain that had not fallen yet.

CHAPTER 2

A Basket without Wind



At the top, the steps ended inside a broad basket. Its gate closed softly behind them. A firm rail ran around its edge. Julian could see through the woven sides without leaning out.

The basket did not move.

“It usually comes by itself,” a voice called from above.

A girl with a fair plait leaned forwards behind a parapet. The sleeves of her rose-coloured jacket were frayed. A man stood beside her at a great pulley.

“Edda,” she said. “You'll need to wait a moment.”

Julian saw a loose rope end inside the basket. “Can I pull this?”

The man checked its holder. Only then did he nod. Together they raised the basket to the platform. Lio stayed seated, very quietly counting the final jolts.

Edda opened the gate only when two catches had clicked into place.

A city of pale houses spread before them. Colourful sails rose above the roofs. Bridges joined great cloud islands. But the flags stuck straight out, as though someone had cut them from wood.

Julian showed her the white thread attached to the feather.

“Our way home.”

Edda fastened its end to the landing ring. “We'll keep that clear.”

Then a cup rattled at the edge of the square. A little house was drifting slowly away from its platform.

CHAPTER 3

A House on a Thread



The man from the pulley was called Fenno. He took a second line and asked everyone to stay behind the broad post.

Inside the house stood a father and two children. A chair slid across the floor. The father kept the door shut.

“Not yet,” Edda called. “We'll give you a path first.”

Julian passed Fenno the extra hook. Edda guided the loose rope to the fixed ring. With the adults at the other end, they drew the house a little closer.

Lio stayed beside Julian's boot. His tail was unusually still.

Fenno checked the second fastening. Then Edda slid a broad bridge with handrails across. Only now could the family come out, one at a time.

The younger child carried a cactus in a pot.

“It can't fly,” the child explained.

“Neither can I,” said Lio. “We already have something in common.”

Julian moved aside so the pot would not bump against his backpack.

When everyone was on the square, Fenno secured the ropes around the post. He would hold the house there for now and check its cloud feet later.

Julian looked past the parapet. Between two clouds lay a great deal of air.

He sat on the nearest bench.

Edda noticed. “The height isn't going anywhere. We can wait here.”

Julian nodded. His stomach seemed to be still inside the basket.