René Kaiser

Julian and the Guardians of the Elements

Book 9

The Bridges of Four Promises



Book 9 · English edition

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The Bridges of Four Promises

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Earth · Water · Fire · Air

A Promise Finds a Route

Dear children and everyone reading aloud,

the great storm has passed. Julian and Lio return with their friends to the inner connecting courtyard. The clear key opens its gate. But four bridges stop short of the island with the old linden tree.

The routes belong to earth, water, fire and air. Julian knows their Guardians and carries four little rune echoes: a pebble, shell, clay shard and feather. They help with suitable small tasks. That alone does not make a bridge safe.

In this book, connections grow through precise agreements. The friends check who can take something on, when somebody will return, and who takes over during a break. A different view and an honest question contribute too.

The 25 chapters continue Book 8 and complete the shared bridge adventure. A final task at the courtyard's centre remains for the conclusion of the series. Reading in order is recommended; important connections are explained again.

You can read together, study the pictures and pause whenever you wish. Enjoy exploring!

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CHAPTER 1

The Gate Opens



Piri knocked only when Julian had almost finished his breakfast. Lio studied the last corner of bread on the plate.

“A good moment. Before now, this departure would have been incomplete.”

At the connecting courtyard, their friends waited on the checked side path. Edda sat in a low handcart with a backrest. Her bandaged ankle rested on a cushion. Ember had discussed how she could come comfortably and rest again whenever she needed.

Julian took the clear key from its cloth. Four fine lines lay inside its transparent bit. It fitted exactly this old lock.

The gate turned heavily, but without sticking.

Beyond it lay a round square. A linden tree with colourless leaves stood on an island. Four bridges led towards it. Each stopped short of the island’s edge.

Orin raised his left, grey-gloved hand.

“We check them before anybody steps onto them.”

Borun secured the open gate. Piri set up the first barrier posts. The key disappeared into its cloth again; it could do nothing to repair the bridges.

Lio sniffed from the broad outer path.

“Earth, water, warmth and air. Just not together yet.”

Julian placed his map inside Orin’s bowl. The wind could not carry it away from there.

Then they took a closer look together.

CHAPTER 2

Soil on Both Sides



The first bridge was made of interwoven roots. Its final section hung grey above the water. At the edge, a thin shoot searched for a hold.

Nela stayed behind Borun’s cord and studied it.

“The root is alive.”

Borun checked the base. Dry soil trickled beneath his stone fingers.

“But it has no bed on the island. It needs ground on both sides.”

Orin unrolled his drawing. A narrow maintenance access was marked on it. Aeris and Borun checked it before Piri crossed. It remained closed to visitors and heavy sacks.

Julian lifted a little pot of soil.

“We could begin with this.”

“Yes,” Borun said. “But we won’t carry heavier and heavier loads along a narrow route simply because the first one was small enough.”

Edda asked for a board to write on. She drew two posts, a line and a box. Then she passed the drawing to Sami, who had brought pulleys from the cloud city.

Sami considered the distance.

“A little goods cableway.”

Lio sat beside the empty pot.

“As long as nobody accidentally sends a fox in it.”

Edda added a wide box. Borun checked her drawing and brought over the heavy posts himself.

CHAPTER 3

The First Box



The goods cableway needed two firm ends. Borun secured the post on the outer path. On the island, Piri checked the second one with Aeris.

Julian held his air feather ready. It could not lift a box full of soil. But the first, very light pilot cord lay coiled on the board.

“Only as far as Piri’s hook,” Aeris said.

Julian waited for a little breeze. Then he guided the loose end across the water. Piri caught it with her unbandaged hand. Afterwards, the adults drew the stronger line across and secured it.

Sami checked the pulley with Borun. Nobody gripped the loaded line with bare hands. Julian and Nela filled a little box at the safe table.

Piri gave the agreed signal. The box glided slowly across the channel.

On the other side, Aeris lifted it from the carrier. Piri tipped the soil into the prepared bed. Another answer was needed before a second journey.

Julian wanted to refill it immediately. He left the shovel alone until Piri waved back.

Lio watched the empty box on its return trip.

“A remarkably polite cableway. It waits until somebody has room.”

After several small journeys, the bed was ready. The pot they had started with stood empty on the table again.