René Kaiser

Julian and the Hidden Worlds

Book 9

The Market of Lost Things



Book 9 · English edition

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Maps · Doors · Worlds · Connections

A Find Isn’t a Gift Yet

Dear children and everyone reading aloud,

The ninth Atlas journey leads to a market with three different areas: sale, return and things still unclear. Julian, Lio and Kaja seek the missing spine clasp for the shared Atlas.

Market keeper Marn helps them compare drawings, entries and particular features. A shining fabric clip isn’t the piece they need. A red mitten and a cloth bear show how careful recognition can work.

The 25 chapters continue Book 8. Reading in order is recommended; important connections are explained again. The Atlas remains borrowed. Julian’s compass with its ten stars stays home.

Folds in living worlds belong to this imaginary story. Adults secure glass frames and loads, handle tools and undertake building checks. The little Atlas cover window remains for messages.

Read together and pause. Questions can stay with the characters and pictures. Nobody needs to disclose personal names, private letters or lost things of their own.

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CHAPTER 1

Three Tables at the Entrance



The market letter lay on the ninth Atlas page. Kaja smoothed it and showed Julian the separate return envelope. Then he packed the borrowed Atlas. The ordinary wick lamp stayed unlit at home.

Beyond the door came smells of wood, warm cloth and a bowl of roasted apples. Three long tables stood beneath a roof. On the first, goods lay beside a coin sign. The second carried a return sign. A large question mark hung above the third.

Lio studied the many keys. “Pleasantly clear differences. None of those looks likely to explain where it belongs voluntarily.”

Julian took Tarin’s drawing from his notebook. Two curved ends, a little bridge, smooth inner edges: that was the missing spine clasp.

The market keeper Marn welcomed them. Her waistcoat had so many empty pockets that Julian couldn’t count them all at once.

“Does nothing stay in there?” Kaja asked.

“Not everything I find,” Marn said. “A find receives an entry and a suitable place.”

She listened to their search and took the drawing only after Julian handed it to her.

“We begin in the uncertain area. Not with whatever shines prettily.”

Behind her, a trader pulled a metal crate across the paving. Something curved lay on top, rather like Tarin’s drawing.

Julian’s fingers moved towards his bag fastening. Then he stopped. He hadn’t heard a price or a provenance entry yet.

Marn noticed his glance and nodded to the trader. “We would like to compare something.”

CHAPTER 2

The Shining Clip



The trader set his crate on the firm shelf. His name was Daro, and he sold second-hand fittings. His large fabric clip shone so beautifully that for a moment Julian saw only its outline.

“Three ordinary trading buttons or a good fastening hook,” Daro said.

Kaja didn’t reach for Julian’s sewn-on city button. It was a reminder, not money set aside for trading. Julian himself didn’t want to give it away either.

“First we compare,” Marn said.

Daro laid the clip on a cloth. Julian held his drawing beside it without lifting the object from the table. The two curved ends roughly matched. The little bridge was in a similar place too.

Then, at their request, Daro turned the clip over.

Broad teeth stood inside. They could hold fabric firmly. Tarin's drawing, however, showed smooth edges there.

Marn asked for the provenance slip. Daro fetched it from a separate compartment. The piece came from a sewing workshop, rather than Tarin's materials cart.

Julian released his bag fastening.

"Similar," he said. "But not the same job."

"For fabric, it would be very respectable," Lio remarked. "For Atlas pages, I would rather not try its teeth."

Daro grinned. He didn't pack his goods away indignantly.

Julian drew the teeth beneath the wrong outline. His first hope could change without making the trader suspicious.

"If you need a fabric clip later, come back," Daro said.

They thanked him and made room at the table for the next visitor.

CHAPTER 3

A Similar Outline Isn’t Enough



Beside Marn’s roof was a free drawing board. Julian laid his notebook on it. Tarin’s confirmed shape was at the top; Daro’s fabric clip was beneath.

He wanted to cross out the lower outline. Marn didn’t hold his pencil, but asked, “What do you want to remember?”

“That it was wrong.”

“Unsuitable for your search,” she said. “For Daro’s work, it may be right.”

Julian left the picture. Beside the broad teeth he wrote what they were used for. Beside the Atlas piece he noted the smooth inside edge.

Kaja returned the drawing to its firm pocket. She didn’t want a copy slipping among uncertain find slips. Somebody working at the table later should recognise what belonged to their search.

Lio sat with his tail out of the cart lane. “Happily, one can be more accurately mistaken after looking more accurately.”

Julian laughed. He really had wanted the fabric clip. Now he was glad it wasn’t inside the Atlas.

Marn showed him the free margin. There was room for more confirmed features. A similar outline could begin a comparison, but couldn’t finish it.

From the return table they heard a woman ask, “Was there perhaps one with a seam inside?”

She held up a red mitten.

Marn took her found-property ledger and went over. The friends followed without touching the goods on Daro’s shelf.