René Kaiser

Julian and the Guardians of Time

Book 10

The Last Moment



Book 10 · English edition

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Moments · Questions · Routes · Time

What Remains When a Route Ends?

Dear children and everyone reading aloud,

Nine golden experiences shine on the Chrona. One place remains empty. Julian and Lio visit the hall of moments: a bicycle meadow, a birthday and a closed curtain before a possible future.

These 25 illustrated chapters conclude the fourth Julian series. Reading the previous nine Time books is recommended for the continuing story arc.

The Chrona has been borrowed from the beginning. Before Julian returns it, he may understand what that means, ask questions and say goodbye. His memories aren’t taken away.

The story contains a gentle farewell and a meeting with Nora, whose friend has died. Read together, take breaks and decide what you would like to discuss. Nobody needs to describe personal experiences of loss.

No new compulsory task waits at the end. Julian returns to his parents. Happiness, sadness, help, playing and rest may have room together.

Contents

1. The Clock That Stopped Ticking 6

2. Towards the End of the Time Route 8

3. The Hall of Moments 10

4. On the Meadow Once More 12

5. The Birthday with the Flags 14

6. The Blue Curtain 16

7. The Boy with the Future Book 18

8. Nora’s Empty Place 20

9. The Room Without Clocks 22

10. The Hardest Task 24

11. A Perfectly Ordinary Moment 26

12. The Question About Today 28

13. The Tenth Hand 30

Contents · continued

14. The Great Clock Waits 32

15. A Question for Lio 34

16. A Story Lio Wanted to Tell 36

17. What May Come Home 38

18. Returning the Clock 40

19. Ten Signs at the Centre 42

20. The Last Walk Together 44

21. As Far as the Threshold 46

22. The Little Weight in the Pocket 48

23. A Special Ordinary Day 50

24. A Letter from the Guardian 52

25. The Last Look Back 54

CHAPTER 1

The Clock That Stopped Ticking



The next morning, Julian stood at his window early. The previous evening's invitation lay beside his notebook. Mum knew the guardian was coming to collect him once more. On the rug, Lio carefully stretched all four paws.

The Chrona stayed silent. Nine golden experience hands stood in their places. Only one little space remained empty, at the bottom right.

"It was still ticking yesterday," Julian said.

He put the clock on its soft mat. He didn't want to shake it. After a while, a line appeared in the lower picture display: THE LAST ROUTE IS WAITING.

Beneath it stood: ONE MOMENT MAY REMAIN.

Julian frowned.

“What is meant to happen to the others?”

Lio sat beside him.

“We’ll ask that before we choose anything.”

The guardian appeared in the broad doorway. Her dark hair was in its familiar bun; the silver streak shone in the morning light.

“Nobody is taking your memories away,” she said. “And nobody has to stay inside a picture. The clock’s words don’t explain enough.”

Julian was glad she admitted it.

Mum put water on the table. The guardian explained the visit and the open route home to her. Julian could take time over his questions.

He wanted to know what the ending meant for the borrowed clock, and for Lio. The little display hadn’t answered that. So he took his notebook. This time, the journey began with an explanation that was still missing.

CHAPTER 2

Towards the End of the Time Route



Beyond the checked doorway lay the same broad gallery as the day before. A railing followed the path. The guardian led the way; Julian and Lio followed at their own pace.

The great clock stood in the distance. Three main hands rested over its outer circle. The inner socket remained empty.

“The Chrona belongs there later,” Julian said.

“Yes. It was lent to you so you could come to know its ten experiences. Afterwards, we return it.”

Julian stopped beside a bench.

“Must I decide immediately today?”

“We’ve secured the area. You may understand, ask and take breaks. Nobody is hanging a heavy part over your head.”

Lio considered the solid ceiling.

“That’s a pleasant kind of final journey.”

Julian only smiled briefly. The word final felt bigger than the gallery.

The guardian pointed out a side entrance. The hall of moments waited there. Its pictures could show earlier experiences or open a possible future. They weren’t places Julian had to live in.

“And if I don’t want to keep any picture?”

“Then you may close them again. We aren’t finding a prize for the best part of your life.”

Julian wrote down the answer. He didn’t yet know which picture would be waiting. But he now knew an important boundary: an invitation should allow questions. A beautiful frame didn’t make an unclear condition easier to understand. He could go on without already having agreed to everything.

CHAPTER 3

The Hall of Moments



Three great frames stood in the bright room. A meadow shimmered behind the first. Through the second, Julian saw a tablecloth with colourful paper flags. The third stayed closed behind a blue curtain.

A bench stood between the frames. Blank cards lay on a low table.

“You may look from here,” the guardian said. “A picture can be paused and closed again. It doesn’t change the people who were there.”

Julian sat down. Lio lay beside the bench and waited until Julian held out a hand. Then he leaned his head against it.

The guardian explained the difference. The first two pictures came from Julian’s memories. The third frame could show a possible later scene. None of them was his whole life.

“Why these two memories in particular?”

“The hall picks up something you recognise today. It isn’t claiming that other days were worth less.”

Julian thought about a breakfast whose taste he’d forgotten, and the morning after an argument. Not everything important came in a particularly beautiful frame.

He could decide which picture should become visible first. His other memories stayed with him, even if he didn’t fill in a card.

Julian pointed towards the meadow. A little bicycle leaned at its edge. Beside it stood his father, younger than today, with one hand on the saddle.

Suddenly Julian remembered a yellow helmet, far too much excitement, and a word Dad had kept repeating that day: slowly.