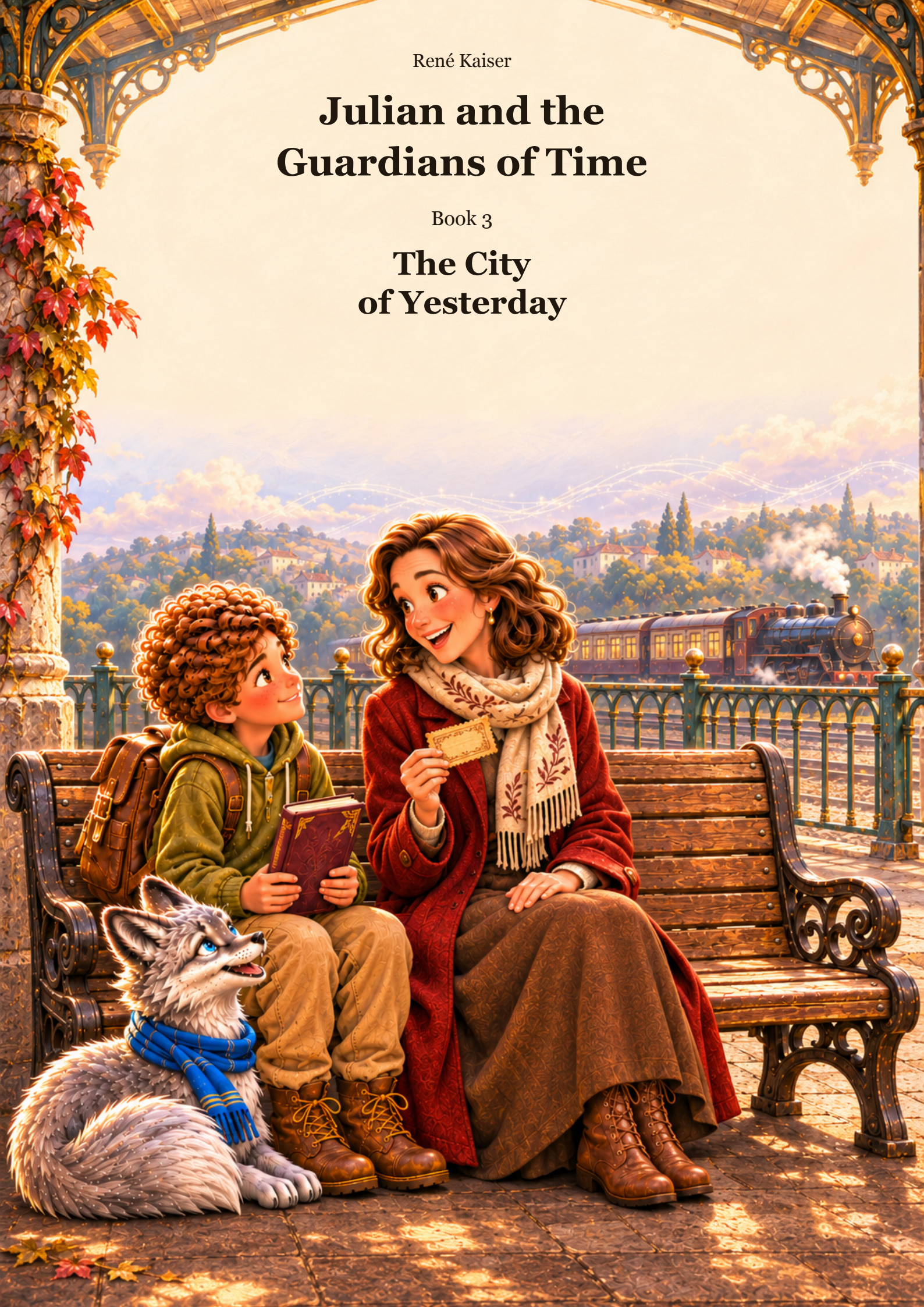
René Kaiser

Julian and the Guardians of Time

Book 3

The City of Yesterday



Book 3 · English edition

Julian and the Guardians of Time

The City of Yesterday

René Kaiser



Moments · Questions · Routes · Time

A Goodbye and Its Connections

Dear children and everyone reading aloud,

Ada remembers saying goodbye to her sister Berta. A station, an argument, a train: that seems to be all that remains of the day. Julian wants to make the sad picture prettier and catches a suitcase handle.

Across 25 illustrated chapters, Julian and Lio look for the connections beyond the goodbye. Personal memory, observation and confirmed documents don’t always tell the same story. A letter can help without answering every question.

This story continues “The Clock Without Hands” and “The Day That Kept Returning”. The Chrona begins with Moment and Insight. Reading in order is recommended for the continuing story arc.

The memory town is imaginary. Its past sequence cannot be changed at will. Difficult feelings needn’t vanish immediately. Adults check crossings and safe routes; private letters are read only with permission.

Read together and pause wherever you like. Nobody has to describe a personal goodbye. Ada, Berta and Julian’s little mistake card give you plenty to discuss.

Contents

1. A Place on the Bench 6

2. Salme’s Thread Basket 8

3. Three Different Questions 10

4. The Baker Waves Again 12

5. The Door Ada Knew 14

6. Berta Wants to Leave 16

7. Julian’s Hand on the Handle 18

8. The Prettier Picture 20

9. A Street Without Names 22

10. The Cards on the Steps 24

11. The Letter After the Journey 26

12. Another Way Through the Passage 28

13. Only Ada’s Envelope 30

Contents · continued

14. Four Pieces Fit Together 32

15. A Card for the Mistake 34

16. Their Hands Stay Outside 36

17. A Handkerchief Is Enough for Now 38

18. Cherries and Two Old Photographs 40

19. The Window Stays Empty 42

20. A Letter Without Magic 44

21. Today Isn’t Post Lane 46

22. The Folded Hand 48

23. Two Cherries for Lio 50

24. The Bucket on His Head 52

25. A Ticket with Several Lines 54

CHAPTER 1

A Place on the Bench



The guardian checked the doorway before Julian went through. Beyond it lay a platform. Its tiles looked like old photographs, and somewhere there was a smell of coal and warm iron. A locomotive stood behind a railing. Julian stayed on the broad space beside the bench.

Lio put down one paw, then the others.

“Firm,” he said. “For a station, that’s a good beginning.”

A woman in a red coat moved along the bench. Her scarf was cream-coloured. Between her fingers she held a ticket Julian recognised from the Chrona’s window.

“I’m Ada. Are you looking for someone?”

Julian studied the empty place beside her.

“Perhaps. I saw this station in my clock.”

He showed her the Chrona. The golden leaf hand was called Moment. Beside it lay the open spiral, Insight. Eight spaces were still empty.

Ada didn’t look at it for long.

“My sister Berta sat here. Or perhaps she was already beside the train. I don’t remember exactly.”

A town began behind the bench. Julian could see some houses clearly. Others were so transparent that the rooftops behind them shone through. Fine threads lay above them.

A sign faded before he could read its name.

“Where did your sister go?”

Ada stroked the ticket.

“To another town. But I keep coming back to this goodbye.”

Julian sat down. The question he wanted to ask next could wait a moment.

CHAPTER 2

Salme’s Thread Basket



An old woman sat at the end of the platform. Cards wound with fine threads stuck out of her basket. She wore a navy shawl jacket and a turquoise apron.

“Edda?” Julian asked.

The woman looked up.

“Salme. You’re thinking of somebody else.”

“Sorry.”

“A mistaken name can be corrected. Here, hold this card. Don’t pull the thread.”

Julian took the card by its edges. Salme loosened a knot with her fingers. The label read: ADA AND BERTA. STATION. GOODBYE.

Lio lay beside the basket without touching the loose ends.

“Is that the truth about the station?” Julian asked.

“It’s part of Ada’s memory. Memories tell us something. But they aren’t the same as a complete recording of everything that happened.”

Salme pointed towards a solid building at the end of a street.

“The archive keeps copies of tickets, letters and records. They can confirm some things. There are gaps there too.”

Ada was now standing beside them. She held her ticket so tightly that one corner bent.

“And why are the houses disappearing?” Julian asked.

Salme lifted a broken thread.

“Ada doesn’t want to look at an important part of her goodbye. Then other pictures lose their connections.”

Julian wanted to knot the thread together. Salme shook her head.

“First find out where it belongs. Otherwise you join two things that never belonged together.”

CHAPTER 3

Three Different Questions



Salme took them to a table inside the archive entrance. There was room for cards, but no letters had been placed there yet.

She pushed three blank labels towards Julian.

“What did you see yourself? What does Ada remember? What is confirmed by another trace? Those are three different questions.”

Julian laid the labels side by side and drew their shapes in his notebook. A circle for his observation, a wavy line for Ada’s memory, and a small rectangle for a checked document.

“Then I’ll always know straight away what’s true?”

“No,” Salme said. “First you’ll know where a statement comes from. You can overlook things while observing too.”

Lio lifted his ears.

“Such as a fox under the table.”

Julian looked down. Lio had already settled beside Ada’s boots.

“Or beside the table,” he corrected himself.

Ada managed a brief smile. Then she studied the three labels.

“I still know how angry Berta sounded. But I don’t remember every word.”

Julian wrote exactly that down. He didn’t put invented words into her memory.

Salme gave him an extra blank card to take along.

“You’re allowed to leave questions open. You don’t need a special sign for that beyond a question mark.”

Outside, a window flickered. Julian closed his notebook and held it in both hands. He wanted to help. For the first time, he wondered more carefully what he could actually begin with.