René Kaiser

Julian and the Guardians of Time

Book 8

The Night Before Tomorrow



Book 8 · English edition

Julian and the Guardians of Time

The Night Before Tomorrow

René Kaiser



Moments · Questions · Routes · Time

A Light for the Next Step

Dear children and everyone reading aloud,

The Chrona stays at 23:59. Julian waits at a checked threshold when Mira and a lantern keeper join him. Ahead lies a village whose morning isn’t visible yet.

These 25 illustrated chapters continue the first seven Time books. The borrowed Chrona has Moment, Insight, Memory, Hope, Priority, Beginning and Reconciliation. Reading in order is recommended for the story arc.

Route connections are locked in this imaginary night world. That doesn’t explain why people face difficult times in real life. The story doesn’t promise enough hope makes everything turn out well.

The lantern keeper checks the routes. Adults transport Lio and arrange help for his hurt paw. Amma stays available for Finn. Julian doesn’t need to solve other children’s worries alone.

Read together and take pauses. Nobody needs to describe an injury or personal sadness. Questions can stay with Julian, Mira, Lio and the village.

Contents

1. One Minute Before Tomorrow 6

2. The Distant Point of Light 8

3. Mira on the Bench 10

4. Different Kinds of Waiting 12

5. The Lantern Keeper 14

6. A Little Circle of Light 16

7. The Village Without Morning 18

8. What Is Missing Today 20

9. One Seed 22

10. The Mountain of Questions 24

11. What Do I Need Now 26

12. Lio Needs Help 28

13. A Message Downhill 30

Contents · continued

14. Many Little Lights 32

15. Finn Outside the House 34

16. For a While 36

17. The Hall of Long Nights 38

18. Beneath the Earth 40

19. The Last Minute 42

20. Slowly It Grows Light 44

21. The Eighth Hand 46

22. Another Route 48

23. An Ordinary Bad Day 50

24. What Somebody Can Offer 52

25. Not Only Your Time 54

CHAPTER 1

One Minute Before Tomorrow



23:59 stood in the little display beneath the dial. Julian sat on the bench just beyond the cleared threshold. Seven golden hands shone faintly; three places on the right stayed empty.

He had called to the guardian. Now her answer came from the connection frame.

“I can hear you. Stay at the entrance square for now. The lantern keeper is checking the route from the other side.”

Julian breathed out. Mum knew where he was waiting. Still, he would have liked to see her familiar room again. Its picture now lay behind a dark curtain.

“And Lio?”

“He went ahead on the night route. We’re trying to hear his connection clearly again.”

Julian looked at the clock. The last minute didn’t change. Far away, a tiny point of light stood above the dark valley.

He wanted to get up and follow it. Then he discovered something nearer: a golden edge on the paving. It led only to the next bench. Beyond that, the path wasn’t lit yet.

Julian stayed sitting until a little sandglass showed in the frame. The guardian’s agreed signal.

“You can walk that short section. Then wait again.”

He took the Chrona and his notebook. His feet found the wide paving. The distant point didn’t tell him whether a road lay beneath it. The checked edge immediately ahead was more exact. Julian followed it slowly to the next bench.

CHAPTER 2

The Distant Point of Light



From the second bench, the point of light looked just as small as before. Julian frowned.

“But I’ve walked a little way.”

He held the Chrona higher. Its warm glow showed his hands, not the whole route. Beneath the leaf hand it still said 23:59.

Beside the bench, the paving divided. One narrow branch led straight towards the light. Another curved sideways. Both vanished into darkness after a few steps.

Julian remembered Nils’s book on the Train to Tomorrow. A clear picture wasn’t a checked route yet.

He sat down again. Walking wouldn’t make the unknown path more reliable. He drew both branches in his notebook and put question marks at their ends.

A whisper came from the dark.

“It’s no use.”

Julian looked up. On a flat rock wall showed a dull strip, like a line without paper.

“What’s no use?”

No answer. The whisper only repeated the same sentence.

Julian put a finger on his drawing.

“I don’t know which route leads on yet. That isn’t the same thing.”

The word picture stayed on the wall. He didn’t have to convince it immediately. Behind the bench he heard a rustle. Somebody sat at the other end, half in the shade of a little tree.

Julian didn’t move closer.

“Hello? I’m Julian.”

A quiet voice answered. “Mira.” For the first time since crossing, he didn’t have to address his next question to the night alone.

CHAPTER 3

Mira on the Bench



Mira wore a plum-coloured sweater. Her dark bob brushed its collar as she raised her head.

“I heard the fox calling for you,” she said.

Julian sat with space between them.

“Do you know where he is?”

“Not exactly. He was on the route to the village. Then the connection grew quiet.”

Mira held up her own little clock. Its display stayed at 23:59 as well. It had no golden experience hands like Julian’s Chrona.

“How long have you been waiting?”

“It’s hard to say just now.”

She pointed towards the light.

“At first I thought I only needed to get there. But you couldn’t see a proper route from the square.”

“So you stayed here?”

Mira nodded.

“Amma from the village knows I’m waiting here. The lantern keeper wanted to check the turning.”

Julian looked at his route sketch. Its two open ends were still more exact than a quick line through the middle of the darkness.

“Perhaps we can put our questions together.”

Mira moved her cup aside. Julian opened the notebook between them. He pointed to the turning; she pointed to the village name she knew.

Together they knew more, but not everything yet. That wasn’t a reason to invent the missing part.

Suddenly a second light appeared above the paving. It moved slowly. The distant star wasn’t coming closer; somebody with a lantern was approaching along the side path.