

SEPTIMUS HEAP

✦ BOOK SEVEN ✦

# Fyre



THE  
STUNNING  
CONCLUSION  
TO THE  
MAGYKAL  
SERIES!

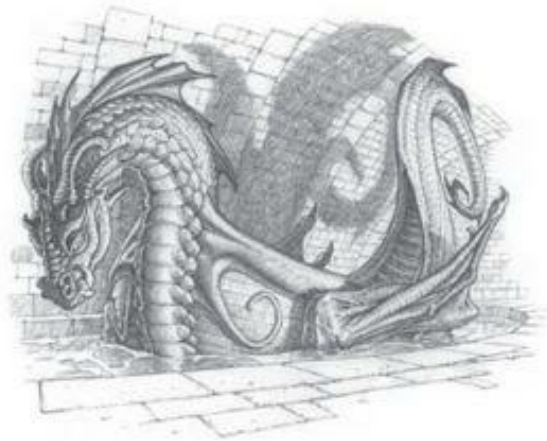
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SEPTIMUS HEAP

↔ BOOK SEVEN ↔

# Fyre



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KATHERINE TEGEN BOOKS  
*An Imprint of HarperCollins Publishers*

## **Dedication**

*For my father and mother,  
thank you*

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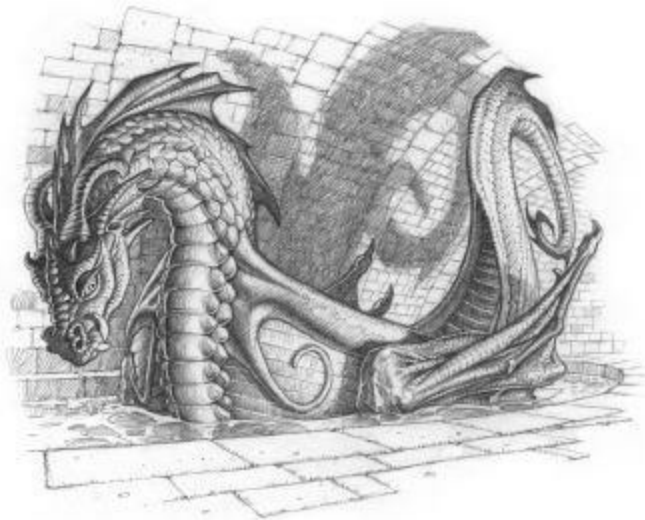
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## PROLOGUE: HARBINGER



*A flame burns at midnight.* On an island in the wild Marram Marshes, a young woman holds up a lantern. Her long dark hair blows in the warm wind, salty from the sea; the lantern light glints off the gold circlet around her head and the golden edging to her long red robes—the robes of a Castle Queen.

The Queen is not alone. Beside her is an old man with long, wavy white hair held back with an ExtraOrdinary Wizard headband. He is resplendent in purple robes richly embroidered with **Magyk** symbols—this is the very first ExtraOrdinary Wizard, Hotep-Ra.

The island on which they stand is an ancient **Listening Place**, and Hotep-Ra is **Listening** carefully. As he stands statue-still, absorbed in something far away, his frown deepens. “It is as I feared,” he whispers. “They have discovered me at last.”

The Queen does not understand **Magyk**, but she respects it because it once saved her daughter’s life. She nods sadly. She knows that this will take Hotep-Ra away from her forever.

A flame burns at half past midnight. The Queen and Hotep-Ra are underground, and the light from the lantern shows a smooth white wall covered in bright columns of hieroglyphs. The Queen is searching for a

symbol. She soon finds it: a blue-and-gold circle enclosing a dragon. She places her hand on the circle and they wait. The Queen sees Hotep-Ra twist the ring on his right index finger: a delicate gold dragon with its tail in its mouth and a bright-green emerald for its eye. The ring is beautifully made, but the loveliest thing about it is the soft yellow light that comes from deep within and glows in the shadows of his hand.

And now, with a deep, slow rumble, the wall of hieroglyphs begins to move, rolling back to reveal a dark, wide space before them. The Queen smiles at Hotep-Ra. He returns her smile a little sadly and together they step forward.

The Queen holds up her lantern and its light illuminates a pair of brilliant white marble columns that rise up into the darkness. They walk between the columns, and progress slowly across the mosaic floor, bright with reds, yellows, whites and greens. And then they are there. The Queen hands her lantern to Hotep-Ra and he holds it high so that its light shines on the most beautiful creature he has ever seen: his faithful Dragon Boat.

The Dragon Boat's hull is broad and sturdy, built for the sea, and recently Hotep-Ra has gilded it. This—and the mast with its azure sail—is the inanimate part of the boat. The rest is living dragon. Tucked neatly alongside the hull are the dragon's wings, shimmering folds of green. Her head and neck are the prow and her tail is the stern. The half boat, half dragon lies in a deep sleep, alone in the darkness of an ancient underground temple, but she is awakened by the opening of the wall. Drowsily she raises her head, arching her neck upward like that of a swan. The Queen approaches the dragon quietly, careful not to alarm her. The dragon opens her eyes, she bows her head and the Queen loops her arms around the dragon's neck.

Hotep-Ra hangs back. He looks at his Dragon Boat, resting on the mosaic floor as if waiting for the water to rise and carry her away to distant lands. Indeed, that was what he had planned for her, to take her on the last journey of his old age. But now that his enemies have tracked him down, Hotep-Ra knows he must leave his Dragon Boat hidden safe below the ground, keeping her secrets from them. He sighs. The Dragon Boat must await the time when she will be needed by another Dragon Master. Hotep-Ra does not know who that will be, but he knows that one day he will meet him.

The Queen promises the Dragon Boat that she will return in a year to the day, but Hotep-Ra promises the Dragon Boat nothing. He pats the dragon's nose, then turns and walks quickly from the temple. The Queen runs after

him and together they watch the wall of hieroglyphs rattle closed once more.

They walk slowly along the sandy passageway, which takes them to one of the hidden exits near the edge of the island. There, Hotep-Ra pulls off his Dragon Ring. To the Queen's amazement, he tosses the ring onto the sandy floor as if it were nothing to him. It lies on the floor, its light fading away.

"But that's your *ring*," whispers the Queen, shocked.

Hotep-Ra gives a weary smile. "Not anymore," he says.

The Queen and the ExtraOrdinary Wizard return to the Castle, but Hotep-Ra does not leave right away. He knows he is running the risk of drawing his enemies to all that he cares about, but there are things he wishes to do in order to make the Castle and its Queen as safe as he can.

Hotep-Ra **Engenders** protected Ways to allow the Queen to visit the Dragon Boat and other places that are special to her in safety. He fills his Wizard Tower with all the **Magykal** power he can spare and sets up a system of **Questes** for the brightest and best ExtraOrdinary Apprentices. That way he believes that he will still get news of the Castle and will be able to give advice if needed. He asks the Queen to visit his beloved Dragon Boat every MidSummer Day, and deep in the Castle wall he creates a Dragon House as a place for the Dragon Boat to rest when one day it will be safe for her to come to the Castle.

But Hotep-Ra has stayed too long.

Forty-nine hours after he **Listened** to his enemies approaching, Hotep-Ra is on the Palace landing stage, saying farewell to the Queen. It is a dark and thunderous day, with a spattering of rain that mirrors the Queen's feelings about Hotep-Ra's departure.

Her barge lies ready to take him to the Port, where he has a ship waiting. As Hotep-Ra is about to step aboard there is a massive clap of thunder and the Queen screams. But she does not scream because of the thunder; she screams because of what she sees flying out from the black cloud overhead—two Masters of the **Darke** Arts, Warrior Wizards, Shamandrigger Saarn and Dramindonnor Naarn. The Wizards shoot down from the sky, a trail of darkness streaming from their robes, which spread out like ravens' wings, showing their iridescent blue-green armor beneath. Like two huge birds of prey the Wizards drop down, their piercing green eyes focused on their quarry below.

Hotep-Ra's enemies have found him.

The last time they found him, Hotep-Ra was saved by the Dragon Boat, but now he knows he will have to face them alone. The Queen, however, has other ideas. From her belt she takes a tiny crossbow and loads it. And then, as Shamandrigger Saarn and Dramindonnor Naarn swoop in for what they think will be the kill, the Queen shoots the bolt.

It hits Dramindonnor just below the fourth rib on his left-hand side. He crashes to the ground, and the landing stage shudders with the force. But the **Darke** Wizard merely winces and as the blood gushes out, he **Seals** his heart. Meanwhile the Queen has reloaded her crossbow and is lining up the second bolt. Hotep-Ra panics; he knows the Queen has no idea what she is dealing with. He throws a **SafeShield** around the Queen—much to her disgust—but not before she has also shot Shamandrigger in the heart. The Warrior Wizard drops to the ground, but he too **Seals** the wound just in time.

The Wizards get to their feet, and the Queen is horrified to see they are huge—ten feet tall—and clasp the notorious **Volatile Wands** that Hotep-Ra has described to her. Like machines, in perfect time—*one-two, one-two*—they advance on the **SafeShield**. They speak one sentence between them.

“For this.”

“We will.”

“Kill you and.”

“Your descendants.”

“We will.”

“Never.”

“Forget.”

Under the assault of the **Volatile Wands**, the Queen's **SafeShield** begins to fail. Hotep-Ra grasps his **Flyte Charm** and shoots up into the air, knowing that the Wizards will follow him.

And they do.

In these ancient days, the Art of **Flyte** is yet to be lost. But it is still unusual enough to bring the Castle below to a standstill, especially as it involves a fight between three powerful Wizards. But soon the spectators are racing for cover as **Thunderflashes** are thrown and the foundations of buildings begin to shake. The Castle people become anxious. Although many remember a time when there was no Wizard Tower or ExtraOrdinary Wizard, they have grown to like Hotep-Ra. He has been a good man and no problem has been too small for his **Magyk** to help. As they peer nervously from their