



## The First Collier

*Kathryn Lasky*

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An ancient malevolence that will threaten the very existence of the great tree has been loosed from the past. With his dying breath, Ezylyrb tells Soren and Coryn to read the legends of Ga'Hoole hidden in his private library. There, they find a world of treachery and magic in which a young king and queen struggle to keep peace while Grank, their most loyal friend and supporter, studies embers and flames in a distant land. Then a desperate plea comes from the king, and Grank rushes to the aid of his noble friends.

## **The First Collier Details**

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## From Reader Review The First Collier for online ebook

### k. says

i liked the format of this!

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### Amara Tanith says

Say goodbye to Soren, the Guardians, the Band, the Chaw of Chaw, the wolves of the Beyond, Coryn, and even the Pure Ones. Because for some reason or other, we're blasting thousands of years into the past to deal with mythology that was never mentioned in the series until *The Hatchling* (but mostly *The Outcast*). And don't worry your pretty little heads, because this mythology will directly contradict what's been said before and will confuse the hell out of you.

Actually, you know what? Worry.

I have two massive questions/complaints:

#### What exactly is Glaux?

Glaux was stated to be owls during the time of humans, but the term is used like a Crystal Dragon Jesus ("By Glaux!", "Oh my Glaux!" etcetera, etcetera). Then it was said to be the first owl, not the whole group of them. But in The First Collier, suddenly the first owl is called Hoole... which confuses things further as this is a different Hoole from the Hoole of the Ga'Hoole tree, who was named for that first Hoole. (Are you confused yet?)

#### What the hell are hagsfiends?

During their first appearances, hagsfiends are dead owls from hagsmire, which is the term for owl hell. Now they're explained to be a cross between crows and owls. More specifically, they are descendant from a species called crowls, which are explained as the common ancestor of owls and crows.

But if the hagsfiends are just another bird species, why are they Always Chaotic Evil? And how can owls become hagsfiends just by hanging around them? Obviously it's supposed to be that the PURE EVIL rubs off on them, but that only works if they're actual demons of some kind, not a bird species. Which they were until this book Retconned it. (Are you confused now?)

Really, I feel like Lasky got confused halfway through writing this. Like maybe she took a long break and got her own mythology mixed up when she sat back down to continue. Or she wrote two or more wildly different drafts in which the mythology evolved and when she tried to bring the best of the drafts together, the mythology accidentally got confused. Or... I don't know, maybe she just thought kids would be too stupid to remember what she said in the previous books?

So, yeah. We're back at the bottom of the downhill slide from *The Hatchling*. The prejudice is back in full swing with the invariably PURE EVIL hagsfiends, and with the mythology getting so bungled and contradictory, I'm getting really close to just not caring.

And with the final reveal that Coryn thinks his mother is actually a hagsfiend, not an owl at all, I was really

close to throwing the book across the room. **You cannot retcon your villain into being a different species from the good guys.** Seriously, imagine that these were people instead of birds.

"Le gasp," Coryn says. "My mother's too evil to be a \_\_\_\_\_ like me I think she's really one of those terrible \_\_\_\_\_!"

Now fill in those blanks with things like white and black, capitalist and communist, Republican and Democrat, Northerner and Southerner, etcetera. Suddenly it's offensive, right? That's because it was offensive all along, and yet so many anthropomorphic and fantasy series try imply that discrimination is perfectly acceptable because it's not against people. It's not.

The little owlet Hoole was the highlight of this book. He was sweet and innocent, and since he'd never heard of hagsfiends, he didn't suffer the ingrained prejudice that the other characters flaunted. I can only hope he'll stay that way. (Though, unfortunately, I doubt it.)

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### **megan donaldson says**

my son and I enjoy this series together.

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### **Jessica says**

I really liked this book but it was really confusing until my mom explained to me that this book was going back of time. I think that this book should have been the first one because it was the beginning of something new and exciting. I think that 6 graders would like this book because it would be a very good book and then they could understand the book better.

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### **Kayla says**

I thought that the beginning was slow, but it turned out to be a good book. I was surprised that Nyra was actually a hagsfiend.

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### **Katie says**

LOVED this book too. I was thinking this book might be less interesting since the members of The Band wouldn't really be playing a role in the plot and this was basically the background story of the famous "legends of ga'hoole" referenced in the other books. However, the story was great, the plot was good, it was full of action, and by the end of the book you already love Grank and Siv just as much as any of the members of The Band. I can't wait to get the other two books from this part of the series and get more of the background on Hoole growing up and becoming king.

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## **Twyla says**

My favorite part was when Grank took Siv's egg somewhere safe to raise the chick so that the hasfiends didn't get to it. My least favorite part was when Ezylryb died, because he has been in all the books so far, since the second one where the owls met him at the great tree. I really liked the polar bear Svenka. She was strangley nice to Siv, even when they had just met, and eventually they became friends.

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## **Alyssa Lane says**

Yup I'm done with this series now. This was enough.

My nostalgia was pretty strong for the first three or four books.. then it just got so bad. But this is another level of sad. She couldn't just let the series go..

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## **Catherine ~Whatever you are, be a good one~ says**

**Warning:** This book has many dealings with "hagsfiends," spirits from owl h\*\*l that can both possess living owls and attack them.

This ninth book of the Guardians of Ga'Hoole series is a Legends book: The tale of Grank, the first blacksmith, and the hatching of Hoole.

The tale is easy to follow, but simply not engaging for me. I was neither excited nor curious about what was to come. It was vaguely interesting, but not enough so.

It's written toward children, which the style shows, but the hagsfiends part makes me rethink its appropriateness for children. Parents should give permission for anyone under 11 to read this book.

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## **Alina says**

I really enjoyed the previous books in this series (Guardians of Ga'Hoole books 1-8), forgiving the slightly repetitive writing because its intended audience is children, and because the story was interesting. This book, however, was a HUGE disappointment! It was like an episode of friends made up entirely of flashbacks that doesn't have the decency to call itself a re-run. It was basically a memoir, taking the entire book to tell a legend that could have been summed up in a chapter, and taking what I consider a PAINFUL detour from the real characters of interest. Maybe I just don't like memoirs, owl or otherwise. I'm not one to put down a book in the middle, and I couldn't even finish it.

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## **Sparks says**

The First Collier is the ninth book in the Guardians of Ga'Hoole seires written by Kathryn Lasky and is the first of a three parter known as 'The Leagends of Ga'Hoole' sieres which tells the story of the time when

Hoole lived and fort against the Hagsfiends and thier Nachtmagen (the hagsfiends form of magic). The story revoilves around Grank the firts Collier (how serprising) as he lerns the uses of fire and how to controle his fire site. Grank is the best frend of the king and queen and after the kings death he is tasked with looking after the egg. Some parts of the three book will sound a bit formiliyer and it should because the fire cycle mentioned in the previous book is basted from these three books. The first is written by grank and so focuses on granks story or how it will fockus on Queen Siv several times through the book. I liked this book because it gives you a completely new asortmant of characters, and finaly explains what the hagsfiends are! I don't like the fact that grank wont be the narator of the next book. The length isn't that much of a problem to me this time this time because after finshing it I realised that there wasn't much way in which the book could have been made longer. Althow this book can be skiped I wouldn't recomend you skiping it thow because althow you will most likely still understand the main story you will miss out on extra information.

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### **Aparajitabasu says**

Book 9 The First Collier, like the book 7 & 8(The hatchling & The Outcast) changes perspectives again from the band (Soren, Gylfie, Digger and Twilight) to Coryn in the last two books towards the old legends of ga'hoole. This book is the first part of a mini series trilogy.

From his death bed, the old owl Ezylryb warns Soren and the great tree's new king, Coryn, of a coming danger, and instructs them to read the Legends of Ga'Hoole so they will know the identity of this mysterious rising threat.

The first of these three ancient volumes is entitled "The First Collier." In it, Soren and Coryn find a world of chaos, warring kingdoms, and nachtmagen, the dark magic of the evil half-crow, half-owl creatures known as hagsfiends.

When good King H'rath is murdered by the foul hagsfiends, his mate Queen Siv knows she must give up her egg if it is to survive. The hagsfiend Ygryk knows that within the egg is a very special owl, and she wants nothing more than to steal it and turn the chick within to evil. To rescue her chick, Siv gives the egg to noble Grank, the first collier, so he can raise it far from the hagsfiends' harm.

Lasky was very elaborate with the characters names like: H'rath, N'yrthgar. Doing this was part of her creation of a new Scottish/ German owl language called "Krakish." This shows the creativity of the author when they are able to "make up" a whole language (in fact she made two).

By the tale's end, Soren and Coryn discover what Ezylryb intended them to learn: that the evil is not confined to the time of legends. An ancient malevolence has been loosed from the past that will threaten the very existence of the great tree.

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### **Mr. Graham says**

The First Collier is the ninth book of the Guardians of Ga'Hoole, and the first of the three Legends. It read a bit like a nonfiction biography. While it was very informative and gave good background information, I was not on the edge of my seat.

The main purpose of this book was to give some insight on where things came from and why things are the way they are. At times I felt like I was reading the owl version of Genesis, the book of origins. It discussed the origins of many things: weapons, taming fire, colliers, blacksmiths, iron tools, iron weapons, cooked food, the ember of Hoole. It showed that there really is nothing new under the sun. Many of the events of the first eight books had predecessors in the legends: kings and queens, war, mind control, ice weapons, treachery, dire wolves, owls' relationship with polar bears, hagsfiends.

There are three messages that pop to my mind from this book, the first of which is present throughout the series. The three messages have to do with power. Knowledge and learning is important. Ezylryb wants the Guardians to know that especially with the power they possess in the Ember of Hoole. The second is about the power itself. Power can be a dangerous and destructive thing in the hands of the wrong people. The Ember of Hoole was destructive in the hands of Gragg. The power of the hagsfiends was destructive in the hands of Lord Arrin. It is important that there shall always be a group of good and honorable Guardians of that power to keep it out of destructive hands.

The third is about the power of technology. Technology is present here in the form of fire. Fire is captured and used by the first collier for constructive purposes. What a great effect this knowledge of fire could have to advance civilization. However, it doesn't take long for that power to be used treacherously and destructively. There are many forms of technology that we have seen transform our human world: radio, telephone, television, Internet, wireless, electricity, internal combustion engines, airplanes, spaceships, etc. It is only a short time before these things become trouble in idle hands, treacherous in evil hands, or reprehensible in greedy hands.

The First Collier was a good background story to help us construct some of the events in owl history.

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### **Kayla says**

At first I thought this was going to be a bummer book because Soren and The Band weren't the main characters. And the fact that someone very important dies in the beginning of this book. But, I soon loved this new twist to the story plot and I enjoyed the story just as much as any other GoG'H book I have read so far. I loved this book! So don't stop reading the series just because there are a lot of negative reviews that are out to bring this book no justice. :-)

And I can't wait until the rest of the GoG'H come in that were ordered for B&N. :-)

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### **Jeremy Michael Gallen says**

In the ninth installment of author Kathryn Lasky's Guardians of Ga'Hoole saga, which she dedicates to Craig Walker, whom she terms "the Guardian," Soren and his nephew Coryn, in the prologue, come across a book that just so happens to bear the title of this particular entry, The First Collier, at the wishes of the dying Ezylryb. The main chapters are narrated by the titular protagonist of the story, Grank, who lives in exile in the Beyond the Beyond, developing his firesight and working with embers to create effective weapons. In a volcano in the desolate region, he finds an Ember that he wishes to keep secret for fear of misuse.

Grank acknowledges that the times of King H'rathmore, the High King of all of the N'yrthghar, were dark days, and that he himself is no fierce soldier. He has a fascination with fire alongside a sister named Yurta, and flies to the Beyond the Beyond to further his studies. In the Beyond the Beyond, he further learns about

wolves, with various original terms coming into play such as Ga', with his title of collier being coal miner, although other terminology such as spottilated don't receive definition. Even so, the ninth entry of Lasky's magnum opus is definitely recommended to those who enjoyed its predecessors.

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