Kate O’Hearn was raised in the heart of New York City. Throughout her life, she has always had an active and vivid imagination. As a child walking down 5th Avenue, she would envision herself soaring among the city’s canyons on the back of a wild dragon. While in Florida, looking over the sea, she could imagine living among the whales and breaching in the heavy swells. At night, a star-studded sky was yet another playground. These dreams and ideas never faded. Instead they grew until they spilled over into the books she loves to write.

Don’t Miss: Shadow of the Dragon, Book 1: Kira
Shadow of the Dragon

Book Two
Elspeth
For Dad,
My biggest supporter and very best friend.
I love you.
Here now, the six points of the King’s First Law.

All royal subjects are required to memorize First Law and teach it to their children. The penalty for breaching any point of this law shall be swift and final, as described below.

Point One: Girls are not allowed to leave their homes unless escorted by their father, brothers or husbands and may never travel any farther than their neighboring village.

Point Two: Girls are never to be educated.

Point Three: Girls are not allowed to hunt, fight or engage in any activities that are considered boyish. They may not dress as boys and must never carry weapons of any sort.
The heavy rain did little to dampen the celebration of the dragon riders as they cut through the thick, dark clouds. Everything was perfect.

“We did it!” Kira cheered triumphantly. “We’re free!” She held Jinx’s reins in one hand and laughed and waved to her brother Dane and his friend Shanks-Spar on the back of their black dragon, Rexor. A very small part of her wished she could have seen Lord Dorcon’s face when he realized they’d escaped through Paradon’s Eye.

It had been a struggle getting to where they were. Many times she doubted they would ever make it. But they had! They were safely away from the evil Lord Dorcon and his legion of men.

Soon she would travel to the palace of King Arden and fulfill the ancient prophecy foretold by the great wizard Elan.

Point Four: Unmarried girls are never allowed to visit the palace or approach the king.

Point Five: Girls must be matched to the boy or man they are to marry by the age of twelve. They must be married before the age of thirteen. The day after the marriage ceremony, their husbands must send confirmation to the king.

Point Six: Under no circumstances are girls ever to be allowed anywhere near dragons.

Penalties: Girls caught breaking any points from one to five shall be escorted to Lasser Commons where they will face immediate execution. Any girl caught breaking point six of First Law shall be escorted to Lasser Commons where she will be severely tortured before execution.
It spoke of a girl who, like her, dressed as a boy, had long red hair worn in braids and rode a twin-tailed dragon. The prophecy said she would end the evil monarchy. This warrior girl, this forbidden dragon rider, would restore freedom to the land and finally end the kingdom’s terrible First Law.

Kira knew she was that girl. Somehow, some way, she was the one destined to challenge First Law, and only when it was abolished would she feel that she had succeeded. With the help of her beloved twin-tailed dragon Jinx, and the support of her family, Kira knew she would fulfill the prophecy.

It was just a matter of heading back to Paradon’s castle and preparing herself to take on the King.

“Kira,” Dane called excitedly. “Let’s get back to the castle!”

She nodded and waved again, her heart fluttering with excitement. Soon there would be peace in the land.

“Kira?” Kahrin tapped her lightly on the shoulder.

When Kira turned around, she saw her younger sister sitting forward in the saddlebox. “Kira, where’s Elspeth?”

Kira frowned, “She’s right behind – ”

She’d last seen her youngest sister riding with Onnie the fox on Harmony. Her frown deepened. She looked past Dane and Shanks, then turned to her left. She couldn’t see Elspeth anywhere.

Suddenly gripped by fear, she directed Jinx to fly closer to Rexor.

“Dane, where’s Shadow?” Kira used her pet name for her youngest sister. “She was right behind us, now I don’t see her.”

Both Dane and Shanks turned in their saddle and searched the dark sky for signs of Elspeth and Harmony.

“I can’t see her!” Dane called. “Let’s go back. Maybe she went to Paradon’s already.”

Kira turned Jinx, but she knew Elspeth wouldn’t have done that. They’d been through too much together – Elspeth wouldn’t change plans without telling her.

“Find Shadow, Jinx,” Kira called to her dragon, as panic seized her. “Where’s Shadow?”

Jinx reacted to Elspeth’s name. Despite the sound of the wind whipping around them and the constant pounding of the rain, she heard Jinx whine. Soon his whines turned into roars. These weren’t roars Kira had heard him make before. These were roars that came from fear, and the fear quickly spread.

“Kira, let’s go down lower,” Dane called. “Follow us. We can’t see through the storm when we’re up this high.”

Kira let Dane take the lead. Behind her, she could hear Kahrin still calling Elspeth. With Jinx keeping close to Rexor’s tail, the two dragons made their way down through the thick storm clouds. Kira could barely see Rexor as the heavy mist quickly enveloped them.

When they finally dropped below the clouds, Kira’s eyes grew wide with shock at her first glimpse of the world around them.

Gone was the wizard Paradon’s castle. Gone were the forests that surrounded it. Instead, she saw a new world full of
strange and frightening structures reaching high into the dark grey sky.

“Kira,” Shanks called back to her. “Where are we?”

Kira looked at him and shook her head, “I don’t know! Something must have gone wrong. Paradon’s spell didn’t work.”

Rexor and Jinx flew lower, drawing closer to the buildings. To Kira, they looked as grey and threatening as the skies. Between the tall structures, she saw wide roads with strange-looking carts. The carts seemed to be moving without the aid of horses. On both sides of the roads she saw many people. They were looking up at them and pointing.

“Kahrin, can you see Shadow or Harmony down there?” Kira asked.

“No,” Kahrin responded. “I can’t see Paradon’s castle either.”

“Kira,” Shanks asked. “Where should we go?”

Kira looked at the strange world that surrounded them. She had no idea where to go, or how they were going to find Elspeth. “Let’s circle back and keep looking for Shadow!”

“Kira? Kira is that you? Can you hear me?”

Kira heard a faint voice calling her name. It was difficult to make out over the whipping winds of the storm, but it seemed close by. “Hello?”

“Kira,” the voice said again.

It was coming from the pendant around her neck. She pulled the dragon’s claw amulet from under her clothes and held it up to her ear.

“It’s me, Paradon. Can you hear me?”

“Paradon? Is that really you?”

“Thank the stars!” the voice cried. “I’ve finally found you.”

Kira leaned forward and yelled to Shanks, pointing to her pendant. “It’s Paradon!”

Shanks couldn’t really hear her. As the wind changed direction and the rain intensified, she could barely hear herself. Searching below, she pointed to the tallest building nearest them.

“Land on that tower over there!”

Shanks motioned to Dane to take Rexor down. Kira followed closely behind, and Jinx was soon touching down beside Rexor.

Her back and side were still aching from the recent sword wound she received while she and Elspeth were freeing the girls of Lasser Commons. She carefully undid her harness and slowly climbed out of the saddlebox. Then, standing on Jinx’s wing, she helped Kahrin climb down. In the excitement of their escape she’d forgotten her wound, but now it started to burn like it had the first few days after it happened.

She headed to Dane and Shanks, her fear and confusion reflected on their faces.

“Where is Paradon?” Dane asked.

Kira held up the pendant for everyone to hear. “Paradon, where are you? What’s happened?”

The wizard explained quickly. “Everyone, listen to me very carefully. You are in terrible danger. You must leave the
city now and head to the Rogue’s Mountain. I’m in your old meadow. Come to me and you’ll be safe.”

“But where are we?” Shanks asked, looking around. “What is this place?”

“It is the same place you’ve just left. Only the time has changed.”

“Paradon, we don’t understand,” Kira spoke for all of them. “Kira, you and the others were in the Eye far too long. You didn’t travel three seasons into the future, you traveled over three thousand!”

“What?” everyone exclaimed.

“Three thousand,” Paradon repeated. “This is a dangerous and brutal time. There are no dragons here, only man-made machines capable of causing terrible pain and destruction. You must get on your dragons and get out of there. If they catch you, there’s no telling what they’ll do. I’m sure they’d want to capture Jinx and Rexor.”

“What about Shadow?” Kira demanded. “Paradon, we can’t find her! I’m not leaving here until we do.”

There was a long pause and a deep intake of breath. “You won’t find her,” he said finally. “Elspeth isn’t there. She didn’t come through the Eye with you.”

“Not here?” Dane asked. “Where is she?”

“I can’t explain now. But I promise you she’s safe.”

“I still don’t understand. What went wrong?” Kira asked.

“I went wrong,” Paradon said darkly. “I’m incompetent. I’ll fix this somehow. For me to do that though, you must get off that roof and come to the mountain! Even as we speak, armed helicopters and soldiers are heading right for you. You must go.”

“What do you mean? What are armed helicopters?” Shanks asked.

“Instead of using dragons, the people of this time have created awful war machines made of metal. Some can fly. They can go faster than any dragon and they are more deadly. If they catch you, there is no defense.”

“Then we’re as good as dead,” Dane said.

“Not yet,” Paradon called. “The helicopters are faster than dragons, but they’re not as agile. Use your skills, let the dragons do what they do best and you should be able to outfly them. But you must get moving!”

“Paradon, how will we find you?” Kira took another desperate look at the strange world around her. “Nothing is the same. Where is the Rogue’s Mountain?”

“No farther away than it was before,” Paradon explained. “This city rose up on the ruins of my old castle. I told you, only time has changed, not place.”

Still unsure of what the wizard meant, Kira scanned the rooftops spreading out before them. In every direction, she saw people gathering on the roofs and pointing at them. She had no idea where the Rogue’s Mountain was. Even if this was where Paradon’s castle once stood, it gave her no idea as to the direction in which they should fly.

“I still don’t know how to find the mountain from here.”
She looked at Dane and Shanks. “Which direction should we go?”

There was no answer. They too were watching the gathering crowds.

Finally Paradon spoke. “I’m using the Eye and can see you. I can lead you here. Now you must get your dragons into the air before it’s too late.”

Suddenly, the doors to the roof burst open and soldiers charged out. Kira had never seen anything like them. They were dressed in strange, shiny black armor that completely covered them from head to foot. With no eye slits, she wondered how they could see through their black helmets. They didn’t carry swords or even bows in their hands. Instead they held things she’d never seen before.

“They’ve got guns!” Paradon shouted. “Everyone, put your hands in the air. Show them you surrender.”

“Surrender?” Shanks cried, as he drew his sword and took a defensive stance. “I never surrender.”

“You do now,” Paradon warned. “Shanks, drop your weapon. You don’t know this world. They don’t need to be close to you to kill you. Trust me, please. Your sword and your armor are useless against their weapons. For the protection of everyone, do as I say and you’ll get out of this alive!”

Kira watched Shanks hesitantly lower his sword to the ground and raise his hands in the air.

Soon more soldiers filed out onto the roof. Standing still and holding her own arms high, Kira couldn’t see the soldiers’ faces to know exactly where they were looking, but from the angle of their heads, it had to be at the dragons.

As the soldiers drew closer, Kira heard Jinx’s low, rumbling growl. With a quick glance, she saw his twin tails start to whip the air, and he took a threatening step forward.

“Calm down, Jinx,” Kira called. She turned to the men. “Stay back. He doesn’t like strangers.”

“They can’t understand you,” Paradon called. “Kira, you don’t speak the same language!”

“Then you tell them!” Kira snapped. “Jinx looks like he’s getting ready to attack. You’ve got to warn them.”

A moment later, Kira heard strange words coming from her pendant. For the first time since they’d arrived, the men turned and concentrated on her. When Paradon finished speaking, the soldiers raised their weapons and pointed them at Kira. Soon one stepped forward and shouted at her.

Immediately Paradon started to speak again, but the soldier’s raised weapons told Kira he was making the situation worse. “Paradon, it’s not working! Warn them again. Tell them to stop!”

Before Paradon could speak another word, Jinx let out a ferocious, angry roar, reared up on his hind legs and opened his large blue wings. Beside him, Rexor did the same, though the armor restricting his mouth kept him from roaring.

Kira screamed as several soldiers pointed their strange weapons at the dragons. Loud steady popping sounds filled the air and sparks of fire came out of the ends of the weapons.
“Everyone, get down!” Paradon cried. “They’re shooting at the dragons. If they hit you, you’ll die!”

Jinx and Rexor lunged forward. The dragons had one target in mind: soldiers. They attacked the armed men, and Kira heard terrified cries coming from their black helmets, reminding her of what she’d heard when she and Elspeth were at Lasser Commons and Elspeth had used Jinx to attack the guards.

The men’s weapons were useless against the two rampaging dragons. They tried to get away, but Kira saw Jinx’s two whipping tails knock several men over the side of the building.

Kira quickly pulled Kahrin’s head to her chest so she wouldn’t see the awful sight. Behind her, Dane and Shanks spoke in shocked disbelief as both Jinx and Rexor came to their defense.

“Dragons don’t do that,” Dane cried. “They don’t care who they attack! They should have gone for us as well. Why didn’t they?”

“You still don’t understand, do you?” Kira challenged. “Jinx would never attack us. Nor would he let Rexor. You saw Rexor. He didn’t want to hurt us. Shadow says he likes you, Dane. Why can’t you believe it?”

“Because they’re dragons!” Shanks cried.

As the last soldier fell beneath the vicious claws of Rexor, Kira took in the terrible sight. All the soldiers were dead. Some were still on the roof, others had been knocked or thrown off the building.

“Keep your eyes closed,” Kira said gently. “Don’t look.”

“I’m all right,” Kahrin said, pulling Kira’s hand from her eyes. “I want to see.”

Kira hesitated for a moment before releasing Kahrin. She climbed to her feet, watching her sister closely as she too stood up. Kahrin calmly walked over to Jinx.

“Careful, Kahrin,” Dane warned, eyeing the blue dragon. At Kahrin’s approach, Jinx turned and faced her. A moment ago he had been a ferocious monster, killing anyone he could find. But as Kahrin came near him, he lowered his head to her, inviting her to scratch behind his ears.

“Thank you, Jinx,” Kahrin said lightly, and she put her arms around his thick neck.

Kira watched her sister with fascination. She realized this was the first time since she’d been rescued from Lasser that Kahrin had shown any emotion towards the dragon. Actually, it was one of the few times she had shown any emotion at all. As for Jinx, despite what Paradon said about twin-tailed dragons only liking their riders, her beloved blue dragon seemed to like Kahrin just fine.

“This isn’t over yet!” Paradon’s voice warned from the pendant. “The helicopters are almost there. All of you get off that roof now!”

Realizing the danger, Dane turned cautiously to Rexor. The tall black dragon looked at him calmly, showing no signs of hostility. Dane reached carefully for the reins, and climbed into the saddle. Shanks was quick to follow and climbed on behind him.

Kira went to Jinx and kissed him gently on the snout.
before helping Kahrin climb back into their saddlebox.

Once they were all seated, Kira glanced at the dead soldiers on the rooftop a final time. She had tried to warn them.

“Kira, you lead and we’ll follow.” Dane pointed Rexor towards the edge of the building.

Nodding, Kira turned back to Kahrin to make sure she was strapped in. Then she gave the reins a light tug and Jinx flew back into the storm.

Elspeth was close to panicking. She was looking at an unfamiliar world. She was still on Harmony, and Onnie was still in his pouch on her back, but she could see no trace of her sisters, nor Dane, nor Shanks.

“Where are they?” she cried to Onnie, as he too looked around, searching for the others. “What’s happened?”

They were soaring through a clear, blue, cloudless sky. Elspeth couldn’t see Paradon’s castle either. There was only lush green forest. Everything she knew was gone.

“Where is everyone? We were right behind them.”

Now Elspeth could feel Onnie’s tension. He threw back his head and howled mournfully.

“What do you mean Paradon messed up again? How?”

Onnie gave a few short yips and Elspeth turned to look over her shoulder. “I don’t understand. We were right behind