



The Fowl Twins

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Because, as his big brother often said, 'Know thine enemy, and assume everyone is your enemy, for it is ever true that the world resents genius.' Words Myles intended to live by, even though they were grandiose and long-winded, like Artemis himself. For some critics, 'grandiose and long-winded' might well describe the telling of this novel and its predecessors, but sales for the **Artemis Fowl** series of 25 million reflect how much readers love Colfer's 'grandiose and long-winded' comic voice. His American publisher, Disney, clearly share their enthusiasm; an **Artemis Fowl** movie, directed by Ken Branagh and featuring Judi Dench, is due in 2020.

The Fowl Twins marks a new departure with a younger age group in mind and a series to follow. Artemis is away and (almost) out-of-touch on a 5 year mission to Mars, leaving the stage to his younger brothers, eleven-year-old twins Myles and Beckett, along with a new cast (albeit not too unlike that of the earlier series). The story involves an inquisitive troll called Whistle Blower, Lower Elements Police (LEP) Specialist Lazuli Heitz (one of the fairy folk), and the Artemis-designed Nano Artificial Neural Network Intelligence (NANNI) system. Then there's a Baddie (Colfer's word, not mine), Lord Teddy Bleedham-Drye, The Duke of Scilly. There's a slightly less bad Baddie, Sister Jeronima Gonzalez-Ramos de Zarate of Bilbao, expert in knives and nunterrogation and chief of the Amsterdam headquarters of ACRONYM. Sister Jeronima paraphrases her employers' Spanish name, which generates the acronym ACRONYM, as 'an international intergovernmental organisation charged with monitoring fairy activity.'

At the core of things are the contrasting, non-identical twins, Myles and Beckett. Their relationship has endless comic potential. Myles has an IQ of 170, he's brilliant in Science and Maths, precise in thought and grammar, personally fastidious, obsessively neat, though not strong on emotional intelligence. Beckett is the polar opposite of all that 'free as nature intended', physically agile and fearless, irredeemably messy (the state of his bedroom drove his parents to Mindfulness). Beneath the twins' bickering lie a deep and growing affection and a respect for the other's talents, especially as these turn out to be seamlessly complementary in the many crises the plot throws at them. Easing the story along are countless ingenious technical gadgets and gimmicks. The narrative is driven by themes familiar to readers of the original series coupled with Lord Teddy's search for ways of extending his life as long as possible, no matter what the cost to others or his dwindling finances.

The adventure whirls around the twins' home on an island in Dublin Bay, Lord Teddy's family seat on the Scillies,

ACRONYM's HQ in Amsterdam - and back again. Close shave follows close shave ? literally and metaphorically, as it happens. Some adult readers may find Colfer's style at times self-conscious and repetitious to the point of indulgence, risking slowing the action and so deterring young readers. Colfer, Disney, HarperCollins and those sales figures clearly know better.

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