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An extract from *Artemis Fowl and the Time Paradox*
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Prologue

Fowl Manor, Dublin, Ireland

BARELY an hour north of Dublin's fair city lies the Fowl estate, where the boundaries have changed little in the past five hundred years.

The manor house is not visible from the main road, shrouded by a fan of oak trees and a parallelogram of high stone walls. The gates are reinforced steel with cameras perched upon their pillars. Were you allowed to pass through these discreetly electrified portals, you would find yourself on a pea-gravel avenue, meandering gently through what was once a manicured lawn, but which has now been encouraged to evolve into a wild garden.

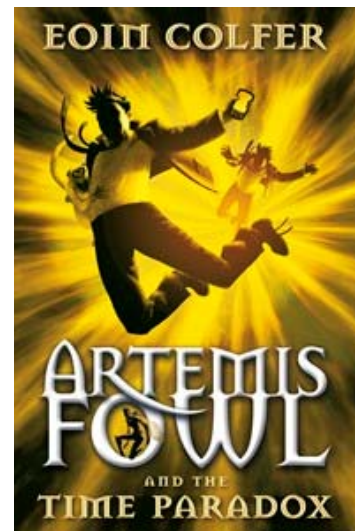
The trees grow dense as you approach the manor itself, soaring oak and horse chestnut, intermingled with more delicate ash and willow. The only signs of cultivation are a driveway free of weeds, and the glowing lamps that float overhead seemingly without tether or cable.

Fowl Manor has been the site of many grand adventures over the centuries. In recent years, the adventures have had more of a magical bent, though most of the Fowl family have been kept in the dark about this fact. They have no idea that the main lobby was completely destroyed when the fairy folk sent a troll to do battle with Artemis, the family's eldest son and a criminal mastermind. He was twelve years old at the time. Today, however, Fowl activity in the manor is entirely legal. There are no fairy special forces storming the battlements. No elfin police officers held captive in the cellar. Nor any sign of a centaur finetuning his listening devices or running thermal scans. Artemis has made peace with the fairy People, and formed solid friendships among their ranks.

Though his criminal activities earned Artemis much, they cost him more. People he loves have been distraught, injured and even abducted because of his schemes. For the past three years his parents thought him dead, while he fought demons in Limbo. And on his return he was flabbergasted to find that the world had moved on without him, and he was now the older brother to two-year-old twin boys, Beckett and Myles.

Chapter 1

ARTEMIS sat on an ox-blood leather armchair, facing Beckett and Myles. His mother was in bed with a slight case of the flu, his father was with the doctor in her room, and so Artemis was lending a hand in entertaining the toddlers. And what better entertainment for youngsters than some lessons.



He had decided to dress casually in a sky-blue silk shirt, light grey woollen trousers and Gucci loafers. His black hair was swept back from his forehead, and he was putting on a jolly expression, which he had heard appealed to children.

‘Artemis need toilet?’ wondered Beckett, who squatted on the Tunisian rug, wearing only a grass-stained vest, which he had pulled down over his knees.

‘No, Beckett,’ said Artemis brightly. ‘I am trying to look jolly. And shouldn’t you be wearing a nappy?’

‘Nappy,’ snorted Myles, who had potty-trained himself at the age of fourteen months, building a stepladder of encyclopedias to reach the toilet seat.

‘No nappy,’ pouted Beckett, slapping at a still-buzzing fly trapped in his sticky blond curls. ‘Beckett hates nappy.’

Artemis doubted if the nanny had neglected to put a nappy on Beckett, and he wondered briefly where that nappy was now.

‘Very well, Beckett,’ continued Artemis. ‘Let’s shelve the nappy issue for now, and move on to today’s lesson.’

‘Chocolate on shelves,’ said Beckett, stretching his fingers high to reach imaginary chocolate.

‘Yes, good. There is sometimes chocolate on the shelves.’

‘And espresso,’ added Beckett, who had a strange set of favourite tastes, which included espresso sachets and treacle.

In the same cup, if he could manage it. Once Beckett had managed to down several spoons of this concoction before it was wrestled away from him. The toddler hadn’t slept for twenty-eight hours.

‘Can we learn the new words, Artemis?’ asked Myles, who wanted to get back to a mould jar in his bedroom. ‘I am doing speriments with Professor Primate.’

Professor Primate was a stuffed monkey, and Myles’s occasional lab partner. The cuddly toy spent most of his time stuffed into a borosilicate glass beaker on the *speriment* table. Artemis had reprogrammed the monkey’s voice box to respond to Myles’s voice with twelve phrases, including *It’s alive! It’s alive!* and *History will remember this day, Professor Myles.*

‘You can go back to your *laboratory* soon,’ said Artemis approvingly. Myles was cut from the same cloth as himself, a natural-born scientist. ‘Now, boys. I thought today we might tackle some restaurant terms.’

‘Sneezes look like worms,’ said Beckett, who wasn’t one for staying on topic.

Artemis was nearly thrown by this remark. *Worms* were most definitely not on the menu, though snails might well be. ‘Forget about worms.’

‘Forget worms!’ said Beckett, horrified.

‘Just for the moment,’ said Artemis reassuringly. ‘As soon as we have finished our word game, you may think on whatever pleases you. And, if you are really good, then I may take you to see the horses.’

Riding was the only form of exercise that Artemis had taken to. This was mainly because the horse did most of the work. Beckett pointed to himself. 'Beckett,' he said proudly, worms already a distant memory. Myles sighed. 'Simple-toon.'

Artemis was beginning to regret scheduling this lesson, but having begun he was determined to forge ahead.

'Myles, don't call your brother a simpleton.'

'S OK, Artemis. He likes it. You're a simple-toon, aren't you, Beckett?'

'Beckett simple-toon,' agreed the small boy happily.

Artemis rubbed his hands together. 'Right, brothers.'

