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Opening extract from

Artemis Fowl

Written by

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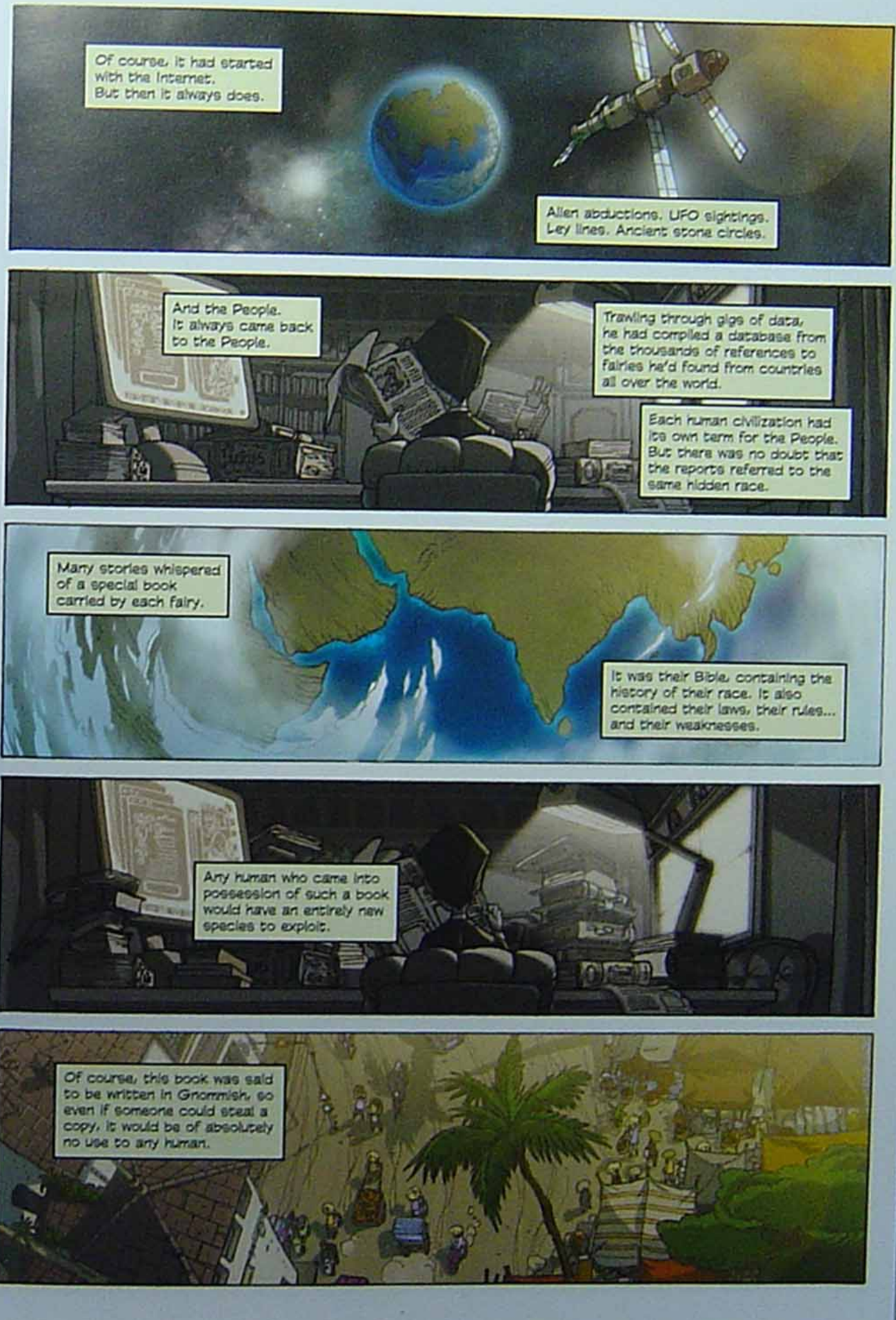
How does one describe Artemis Fowl? Various psychiatrists have tried and failed. The main problem is Artemis's own intelligence. He bamboozles every test thrown at him. He has puzzled the greatest medical minds and sent many of them gibbering to their own hospitals.

There is no doubt that Artemis is a child prodigy. But why does someone of such brilliance dedicate himself to criminal activities? This is a question that can be answered by only one person. And he delights in not talking.

Perhaps the best way to create an accurate picture of Artemis is to tell the by now famous account of his first villainous venture. I have put together this report from first-hand interviews with the victims, and as the tale unfolds you will realize that this was not easy.

This story began several years ago at the dawn of the twenty-first century. Artemis Fowl had devised a plan to restore his family's fortune. A plan that could topple civilizations and plunge the planet into a cross-species war.

He was twelve years old at the time . . .



CHAPTER 1:
THE BOOK

At least, any ordinary human...

I HOPE THIS ISN'T ANOTHER WILD-GOOSE CHASE, *BUTLER.*

ESPECIALLY AFTER OUR LITTLE MISHAP IN CAIRO.

NO, SIR. I'M CERTAIN THIS TIME. NGUYEN IS A GOOD MAN.

Ho Chi Minh City in the summer. Or Saigon, as the locals still called it. Sweltering by anyone's standards.

There seems no end to the crowds. Even the alleyways are full to bursting. Cooks smile and drop fish heads into woks of hissing oil. There's a new smell on every corner.

HMM. AFTER SIX FALSE ALARMS SPREAD OVER THREE CONTINENTS, I HOPE SO.

I BELIEVE THE CAFÉ IS LEFT AT THE NEXT JUNCTION, SIR.

SNACK

A TABLE FOR SOME TEA, SIR? I'LL BE YOUR WAITER.

YOU ARE WEARING A SILK SHIRT AND THREE GOLD SIGNET RINGS. YOUR ENGLISH HAS A TINGE OF OXFORD ABOUT IT AND YOUR NAILS HAVE THE SOFT SHEEN OF HAVING BEEN RECENTLY MANICURED. YOU ARE NOT A WAITER. YOU, SIR, ARE OUR CONTACT.

SIT DOWN, *NGUYEN.*

IF YOUR PATHETIC WAITER DISGUISE WAS AN ATTEMPT TO CHECK FOR WEAPONS THEN I AM HAPPY TO TELL YOU THAT I AM UNARMED.

HOWEVER, BUTLER HERE IS CARRYING A PISTOL, TWO SHRIKE THROWING KNIVES, A DERRINGER, A GARROTTE WIRE, AND THREE STUN GRENADES.

DON'T FORGET THE COSH, SIR.

OH, YES, AND THE COSH.

I KNOW WHERE YOU CAN FIND WHAT YOU ARE SEARCHING FOR.

EXPLAIN.

"This woman. She is a healer, near Tu Do Street. She heals in exchange for rice wine. All the time, drunk. She is what you seek, Mister... Master Fowl."

AND NOW YOU'LL TAKE US TO HER.

NO, NO. INFORMATION ONLY. THAT WAS THE AGREEMENT. I DON'T WANT A CURSE ON MY HEAD.

I'M SORRY, MR. NGUYEN, BUT THE TIME WHEN YOU HAD A CHOICE IN THESE MATTERS IS LONG PAST.

"If you have brought us to the end of our quest, Mr. Nguyen, you will be well rewarded. If you have wasted our time, I am afraid Butler will not be pleased."

IT SEEMS WE MUST PROCEED ON FOOT. RUN IF YOU LIKE, BUT EXPECT A SHARP AND FATAL PAIN BETWEEN YOUR SHOULDER BLADES IF YOU DO.

"Don't worry. I won't run."

SHE'S UNDER THERE. SHE NEVER GOES OUT. NOT EVEN TO BUY RICE SPIRITS.

BUTLER, THE GOGGLES PLEASE.

MADAM, I HAVE A PROPOSITION FOR YOU.

GIVE ME DRINK.

The gift of tongues.

Check.

Aversion to light.

Check.

PLEASE PAY OUR FRIEND, BUTLER, IN FULL.

AND, REMEMBER, MR. NGUYEN, THIS STAYS JUST BETWEEN US.

MY LIPS ARE SEALED.

"They had better be. Or Butler here will seal them permanently."

NOW, MADAM, TO BUSINESS. I MUST CONFESS, I DO NOT WANT HEALING. APART FROM A SLIGHT ALLERGY TO DUST MITES, I AM PERFECTLY HEALTHY.

NO, WHAT I WANT FROM YOU IS YOUR BOOK.

YOU WANT BOOK? GO LIBRARY.

YOU ARE NO HEALER. YOU ARE A SPRITE, A FAIRY, A KA-DALUN. AND I WANT YOUR BOOK.

IF YOU KNOW ABOUT THE BOOK, HUMAN, THEN YOU KNOW I HAVE ENOUGH MAGIC IN ME TO KILL YOU WITH A SNAP OF MY FINGERS!

I THINK NOT. LOOK AT YOU. YOU'RE NEAR DEAD. DRINK HAS RUINED YOU. I CAN SAVE YOU... IN RETURN FOR *THE BOOK*.

SAVE ME? EVEN A FAIRY TETHERED TO THE HUMAN REALM WILL OUTLIVE YOU, HUMAN.

NOT WITH HALF A PINT OF HOLY WATER INSIDE THEM.

LISTENING NOW, ARE WE? HERE'S THE DEAL. YOU GIVE ME YOUR PRECIOUS BOOK FOR THIRTY MINUTES, AND I SAVE YOUR LIFE. AND AFTER THAT, AS A BONUS, I'LL RETURN YOUR FAIRY MAGIC.

RETURN MY MAGIC? NOT POSSIBLE.

"One is spring water from a fairy well. That will counteract the holy water.

"The other contains a virus that feeds on alcohol. It will flush you clean."

WELL? DO WE HAVE A DEAL?

"Thirty of your minutes, human. No more."

MAKE SURE YOU PHOTOGRAPH EVERY PAGE. AND EMAIL THE IMAGES HOME AS SOON AS YOU'RE DONE.

OF COURSE, SIR.

"No use to you anyway.

"Written in the old tongue."

YOUR NEEDLES HAVE STRONG MAGIC.

I'M AFRAID THE AMNESIAC MIXED INTO THE SECOND INJECTION MEANS THAT YOU WON'T REMEMBER US.

GOOD.

"Time to leave, Butler. A hundred years of alcohol leaving a body by any means possible is not going to be a pretty sight."

"Thank you, madam.

"It's been a pleasure doing business with you."