

The First Female LEP Commander

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My story about the first female LEP commander in history; who by the way is none other than Anna-Maria, the daughter of a previous well-loved commander.

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1 - Vacation in Venice

Artemis inhaled the fresh Italian air. Ah, it's good to be in Venice. Isn't it wonderful, Butler?

Butler, Artemis' bodyguard stood behind him and grumbled, "Wonderful" hardly covers it.

Artemis smiled. Relax, Butler. We're here on vacation, for once.

Artemis, I'm your bodyguard. If I relaxed even one muscle, you'd end up with a bullet in your back in under five seconds.

The fourteen-year-old genius sighed. Point well taken, old friend. You're right. I suppose my numerous enemies wouldn't forgive me even if I sent each and every one of them a lavish gift basket?

Now it was Butler's turn to smile. No, it isn't very likely that they would.

Very well, then. Since I'm here, I might as well enjoy it.

Uh, Artemis, your mother suggested that you make some new friends. Butler reminded him.

And so I shall. Artemis folded his hands behind his head and looked around him. His eyes lit up when they came to a girl sitting on a nearby bench. The hair that framed her face was dark brown; a laptop was balanced on her knees.

That girl over there looks very intelligent.

Butler looked in the same direction as Artemis. She also looks very pretty.

Artemis frowned. I refuse to comment on that statement. I'll go meet her. You stay here; you might frighten her if you come with me.

The nearly seven-foot tall man sighed. His charge was not making his job any easier. All right, Artemis. But I'll be watching you. Be careful, and remember, appearances can be deceiving.

Boy, don't I know it. Artemis approached the girl's bench somewhat timidly. She looked to be about thirteen or fourteen. Her height was about the same as Artemis, maybe a little shorter. She had a cleft chin that made her look both sweet and rebellious. Her dark brown hair was very long and complimented her bright green eyes. Artemis felt like he had seen those eyes before. He took a deep breath and spoke in Italian. *Scusa* (Excuse me).

The girl looked up from the screen of her laptop. *Sì?*

Artemis extended his hand to her. *Ciao, mi chiamo Artemis. E tu?* (Hello, my name is Artemis. And you?)

The girl took his hand and shook it warmly. *Piacere, Artemis. Mi chiamo Anna-Maria.* (Nice to meet you, Artemis. My name is Anna-Maria.)

Do you speak English, Anna-Maria?

Certainly. Artemis was surprised. Her Italian had been perfect, but her English carried no hint of a foreign accent.

May I sit down? He asked.

Anna-Maria shifted her things on the bench. Go ahead.

Artemis settled down next to her. Thank you. Are you Italian, Anna-Maria?

Anna-Maria nodded. Yes.

And do you live here, in Venice?

She shook her head. Not exactly. I was born in Venice, though. But you are not Italian. Your Italian is magnificent, but you seem to be Irish. Are you?

Yes, I am Irish. Artemis replied.

Anna-Maria smiled. Are you Artemis Fowl the Second?

He looked at her sharply. Yes. But I've reformed. I am no longer a criminal, mostly.

Anna-Maria nodded and began to speak in Gnommish. Yes, I know that. You see, I have been waiting for you, Artemis Fowl.

Artemis felt slightly uneasy when she said that, but he kept his tone natural as he too reverted to the fairy language. What do you mean? How did you know I would be here?

Anna-Maria tucked some of her hair behind her right ear. An ear, Artemis noticed, that wasn't entirely humanoid. It was a bit pointy, more of a fairy ear than a human one. It wasn't a bad-looking ear though. And her earring was nice. Don't be frightened. Foaly sent me. I am actually half-fairy.

Artemis was curious. So you have one human parent and one fairy parent?

Again Anna-Maria nodded.

Which parent was which?

My mother was human, my father was a fairy.

What kind? Her father couldn't be a troll, a gnome, or a goblin; she didn't look like one. She seemed intelligent enough to be half-centaur, but again, she didn't look like one. She might have been born with wings or green skin if she was half-sprite. That left only two possibilities: pixie or elf.

Anna-Maria shrugged. I don't know. My mother never knew who my father was, or what he was for that matter. He was most probably an elf, or so Foaly tells me.

Your mother didn't know your father? Then how? Artemis' voice trailed off.

Anna-Maria's face reddened and she looked down and mumbled. It wasn't exactly done the natural way.

Oh. That was all Artemis could say to such a response. Well, what fairy characteristics, other than your ears, do you have?

My height for one. I'm taller than fairies are supposed to be, but I'm very short by human standards. And I possess all of the fairy powers. I have the *Mesmer*, the power to shield, healing, longevity, the gift of tongues. I'm also telekinetic, and I can manipulate images, but that's from my mother's family line. She came from a long line of psychics, although she herself wasn't one.

That explains a lot. Artemis admitted. How old are you, anyway?

Artemis then noticed that Anna-Maria was looking past him, not at him. He turned to see what she was looking at, and it was Butler. The tall Eurasian man was pretending to be absorbed in a magazine.

Anna-Maria nodded in his direction. That's your bodyguard, Butler, isn't it? I was wondering where he was.

How do you know about Butler?

Anna-Maria gave him a quizzical look. Everyone in Haven knows about you and your bodyguard, Artemis Fowl. Butler is the only human in fairy history to have taken on a troll, and a rogue for that matter, and survived. It was really quite an amazing sight.

You know about that, too? Wait, you saw it? Artemis asked.

Yeah, I saw it. I was reassembling an old hard drive for Foaly when it came on screen from Holly's camera.

You know about Holly too? You were reassembling a hard drive? How old were you? Exactly how smart are you?

Anna-Maria rolled her eyes. So many questions! I thought you were supposed to be a genius, Artemis!

Well, I am. It's just that it's not everyday that you get to meet a half-fairy. Artemis answered. Oh great, He thought to himself. Now she thinks I'm a dullard.

Yeah, well, don't get used to it, The half-fairy girl retorted. There's not that many of my kind hanging around.

I'm sure that you didn't show up here just to tell me all this for no reason. Artemis said, changing the subject.

You're right. Foaly told me to tell you. He also wants me to bring you to Haven. Butler has to come too.

Why?

Isn't a bodyguard supposed to follow you everywhere you go, except the bathroom?

No! I mean yes, but that's not what I was talking about. Artemis stumbled over his words.

Oh, why do you have to come to Haven? I don't know, Foaly wouldn't tell me. I tried to hack into his files, but they're on a separate network on his personal laptop, and he always clings to it like a second skin; I would never have been able to get it while he was conscious.

Artemis was a bit surprised at the hacking part but decided not to go into the subject. Fine, I'll call Butler over here. He lifted his hand to his mouth and whispered into the whisper-sensitive mike strapped to his palm. Butler, can you come here please?

The response was immediately heard through Artemis' earpiece. What's up, Artemis? Any signs of danger?

No, Butler. No danger, at least not yet. It looks like we'll have to make a little trip.

Butler sighed. He had actually been beginning to enjoy himself. What is it this time?

Do you have your binoculars? Artemis asked.

Of course.

Use them. This girl next to me, look at her ears; that should be self-explanatory.

Butler sighed again. Teenagers. He was probably helping Artemis measure the girl's ears for an expensive pair of earrings. Still, he lifted the binoculars and looked. He drew in his breath sharply. I'll be right there, Artemis.

Very good. Artemis let his hand drop to his side. Then, to Anna-Maria, he said, Butler will be here- The seven-foot-tall bodyguard arrived behind his charge in a flash. shortly. Artemis finished.

Anna-Maria cocked her head as she studied Butler's face. She showed none of the fear or apprehension that most fairies and humans exhibited at the sight of him. Finally, she smiled and said (in English, Butler is not very fluent in Gnommish.), So this is the infamous Butler. It's nice to finally meet you in person.

Likewise, except for maybe the 'finally' part. Butler replied. I presume that you are a half-fairy?

Yes, I m a half-fairy. But we ll talk about that later. Right now, I have to get you two to Haven. Follow me. Anna-Maria stood up and gathered her things into a backpack, one that looked similar to the ones used by the LEP. She slung the bag over her shoulder and began to walk toward an alley. You might want to tell your parents that you re going somewhere.

Right. Artemis took out his cell-phone and pushed the speed-dial button for Artemis Senior and Angeline Fowl.

Hello? Angeline s sweet motherly voice answered.

Hello Mother. How are the twins doing?

Oh, hello, Arty. The twins are fine, but they miss you. Are you having a good time?

Yes, Mother. But I m afraid I will take a while in getting back to the hotel. There are a few friends I need to visit.

Well, alright Arty. But if you need to stay overnight, call and let me know.

Yes, Mother. Please give Father my regards.

Of course, Artemis. Have fun. Goodbye.

Goodbye.

Artemis hung up and looked at Butler. If my hearing was correct, which I m sure it was, we were meant to follow Anna-Maria.

Butler nodded and followed his charge as he walked into the alley.