

FADE IN

EXT- POSH VIETNAM STREET-DAY

The water in a shimmering moat reflects, upside down, a bronze statue of Ho Chi Minh, arm raised. SLOW PAN OUT to reveal the full statue, situated on a busy roundabout, being orbited by an endless parade of identical, termite-like mopeds. A HOT SUMMER'S DAY. THE CAMERA SWEEPS, dragonfly-like, towards a roadside café, where A CHILDREN'S BIRTHDAY PARTY is in full swing. A LONG TRACKING SHOT, weaving through kids dressed as cutesy fairies and elves, with tiaras and star-topped wands and Santa hats and striped red-and-white breeches. Ultimately, THE CAMERA STOPS by a lonely, parasol-sheltered table at the end.

Observing the children playact dispassionately from a corner table, a tiny china teacup raised to his lips, is a thin boy of about twelve.

This is ARTEMIS FOWL. An adult in all but age. DARK BLUE EYES to match his NAVY SHARKSKIN SUIT. There is an almost VAMPIRISH quality to him.

A SMALL, BALDING WAITER in a green silk robe and cap scurries over, bowed, ever the image of simpering servility.

WAITER

Have you decided yet, sir?

Artemis breaks out of his reverie. In one swift motion, he whisks up the MENU, and makes a brief show of reading through the items.

ARTEMIS

Well, I must say I'm torn between amusement... and...

(he noisily flips a page)

...annoyance.

(he snaps shut the menu and considers the waiter with a frown)

What would you recommend?

WAITER

(perplexed)

Eerrr... sir?

ARTEMIS

You asked if I had decided yet.

And I told you I was torn between amusement and annoyance... (beat)

As would anybody be if their supposed contact showed up at a business meeting masquerading as a miserable excuse for a waiter. Don't you agree- MISTER NGUYEN?

WAITER
(defensive)

Sir... but I do not understand... I am not this Mister Nguyen you speak of... I am humble waiter. My name is Le Minh Tan.

(he taps his badge)
You make mistake. Nguyen is very common name here. In fact, sir, if you have child called Nguyen and he get lost in crowd, good luck finding-

ARTEMIS
(interrupting)

Spare me that.
A badly disguised accent.
Five squirts of Caron Poivre, a perfume no minimum wager should be able to afford.
Manicured fingernails, capped teeth.
You, sir, are no more a waiter than I am the Czar of Russia. You are our local contact, Xuan Nguyen.

The waiter, or NGUYEN, is STUNNED. It is evident that the assessment was spot-on.

ARTEMIS (CONT'D)
(shrugs)

Well, in all honesty, I got your photograph by hacking into your KrazySingles.com account. No luck this month either, eh? Maybe you ought to lose the moustache.

There is an awkward silence, punctured by unrelated off-screen laughter from the children's party. Fuming, Nguyen stands up to his full, if modest, height, swiftly unstraps the Velcro robe and removes his cap, revealing a single-breasted tuxedo underneath. The affected mannerism dropped, he looks sharper, more REFINED.

NGUYEN
(in a jarringly posh, heavy British accent)

Very good, Master Fowl. But one thing my profile did not tell you is that I don't waste my time on little clever Dicks like you. I was under the impression that I was here to meet your father. I'm leaving. You can come back when you've grown some hairs on your chin.

He turns to go, but immediately walks into a WALL. Blinking, he steps away to realise it is not a wall at all. From his PoV, LOOMING over him, against the sun's glare, is the silhouette of an absolute GIANT of a man. BALD, wearing ROUND, TINTED SUNGLASSES. This is BUTLER. Nguyen's eyes widen in terror at the sheer size of this individual.

ARTEMIS

(unfazed)

Then perhaps you will find Butler more deserving of your time. Sit down.

Butler's enormous hands squelch over Nguyen's shoulders, buckling his knees and forcing him into a chair. Nguyen gives a squawk of protest.

ARTEMIS (CONT'D)

Right then. That little performance was to get a stock of our weapons, yes?

A brief shot of Nguyen, shrivelled like a prune in his chair, Butler looming behind him, almost thrice as wide. Sighing, Artemis picks up the kettle and pours out a fresh cup of steaming, pinkish tea. He places the cup on a saucer and pushes it towards Nguyen.

ARTEMIS (CONT'D)

Drink up, Mister Nguyen. It's very bracing. Now, as for our weapons situation, I am unarmed. But Butler here has a Sig-Sauer in his shoulder holster, two throwing knives in his boots, a two-shot Derringer up his sleeve...

The teacup starts to chatter in the saucer in Nguyen's hand.

ARTEMIS (CONT'D)

...garrotte wire in his watch, Gorkha kukri on his hip, dry-acid vials in his coat buttons...

The teacup chattering INTENSIFIES.

ARTEMIS (CONT'D)

...and three stun grenades in various pockets. Does that cover it, Butler?

BUTLER

There's also the tomahawk, sir.

ARTEMIS

Of course. A deer antler tomahawk. It was a gift from an Alaskan tribe. For beating up a grizzly bear that had been menacing them. Don't worry. The Grizzly is fine, they use it to turn a water wheel now.

Nguyen emits a sound half-way between a whimper and a squeak. Looking slightly ill, he downs the hot tea like a tequila shot. His eyes water. He looks quite pathetic.

ARTEMIS

(cheerful)

Oh, don't worry, Mister Nguyen. All overkill. The weapons won't be used on you.

Nguyen risks a wet chuckle. He is relieved, but not entirely convinced.

ARTEMIS (CONT'D)

No, sir. You are what Butler likes to call "Yowamushi." A human sandbag. Still, I would hate for you to see that side of him. As long as you have the information you promised, you have nothing to worry about.

(he leans closer, his tone is now sinister)

But if find I've been dragged all the way out here just to have my dust allergy triggered, you will be very, very sorry. Now which will it be?

CUT TO:

EXT: A BUSTLING FLEA MARKET- DAY

A cloud of hissing wok smoke. PAN THROUGH to a LONG AERIAL TRACKING SHOT of Artemis, Butler and Nguyen, threading their way past a riot of noise and colour, sights and smells. Shabby stalls selling everything from earrings to shawls to water puppets to Laughing Buddha statuettes. Hawkers and vendors in surgical masks wave Ha Long bay towels and jailbroken iPhones at passers-by. Seafood shacks and shops selling sticky rice balls. A rich cultural tapestry. Nguyen walks in front, tripping and stumbling, yelling in Vietnamese at urchins to stay away. Purposeful and stoic, Artemis and Butler stick out like sore thumbs in this place.

CUT TO:

EXT: A DARK, NARROW ALLEY- DAY

Silhouette of a rat scuttling across a low clothesline. Nguyen ducks into view, Artemis and Butler on his heels. Swearing, swatting mosquitoes and splashing in puddles, Nguyen bumbles through the squalor, leading them past skips overflowing with rubbish.

They stop in front of what looks like a little tepee, made of filthy, muddy rags.

NGUYEN

They call her Âu Cơ.

ARTEMIS

(nodding in thought)

After the legendary fairy healer
in Vietnamese mythology. I see.
Butler? The FerroScope, please?

Butler hands Artemis what looks like a SILVER SPYGLASS, covered with dials and buttons.

NGUYEN

(pleading)

It's definitely her. Can I go now?
You can wire me the money later. I
just remembered, I have a dentist
appointment I'm already late for...

ARTEMIS

(busy switching filters on the FerroScope)
Your last dental was a month ago and
your teeth are in mint condition, Mr.

Nguyen, I've seen your records.

THROUGH the round FerroScopic sight-
We see Butler, BRIGHT ORANGE against a BRIGHT BLUE background,
his vitals a bit darker, his various weapons showing up BLACK.
We then switch to Nguyen- also BRIGHT ORANGE. We then switch
to the tepee. The hunched figure squatting inside shows up-
BRIGHT GREEN!
A shot of Artemis, smiling as the lens zooms in.

ARTEMIS

Pay our friend in full, Butler.
Mr. Nguyen, you will not speak of
This encounter to anyone. If you do..
You remember, don't you?

NGUYEN

Yowamushi?

ARTEMIS

(nodding)

Yowamushi.

CUT TO:

INT: MADAM ÂU CÔ'S TEPEE

Countless fat, burning candles sit on top of woven baskets and
cupboards, casting the place in reddish light. Dead frogs hang
by the legs from wires, like photographs in a darkroom.
Artemis's polished Oxford shoes tiptoe around a carpet of
empty green bottles of rice wine. Butler, taller than the
tepee itself, follows, hunched forward, steadying an empty
birdcage he slightly bumps his head against. A Fea's viper,
snoozing in another cage, looks up.

ARTEMIS

Madam, I have a proposition for you.

MADAME ÂU CÔ is sitting on a duree rug, her body wrapped in
tattered shawls, a wide-brimmed sedge hat inclined over her
face.

ÂU CÔ

(in a very raspy voice)
Wine. English, wine.

Artemis reaches into his coat and hands her a bottle. Slowly, he holds it out, just out of reach. A FLASH OF GREEN. A triumphant expression lights up Artemis's face. Âu Cơ uncorks the bottle with a pop, and glugs in down in one. Artemis patiently waits.

ÂU CƠ

Aaah, delicious. This cannot be English. Pond water, that stuff is.

ARTEMIS

(removing his sunglasses)
Irish, madam. St. Paddy's Delight, 1922, from the vineyards of County Cork. Shall we talk?

ÂU CƠ

(already slightly tipsy)
Yes, of course, Irish. Tell me
What you want. You have the flu?
Bleeding gums?

ARTEMIS

My health is perfectly fine, madam.
What I do want is your Book.

The candles blow out dramatically. Silence and stillness falls.

ÂU CƠ

(through a cloud of candle smoke, cautious)
Book?

ARTEMIS

Yes, madam. Your Book.

ÂU CƠ

(extending an arm to relight the nearby candles)
I don't have no Book. You go library, Irish. There, you find all kind of books. Gardening, cooking, aromatherapy. You want healing, you come to me.

ARTEMIS

Healer?! You are no healer. You

are a fairy, a sprite, to be precise.
Living here in filth, forgotten by
your own people, surrounded by
filth and mud. The most worthless
of your kind, certainly, but a fairy
nonetheless.

(he pauses, considering a thought)

Too worthless, in fact. (to himself)

Enraged, Âu Cơ throws back the hat to reveal- A TERRIBLE
CREATURE! Green skin, yellow eyes, and a long, hooked nose.
Even Butler's hand flinches on instinct towards his shoulder
holster. Artemis, however, is totally unflappable.
Âu Cơ leers at Artemis, flexing her long, hideous fingers.

ÂU CƠ

If you know I am a fairy, human,
you will also know that I can take
your life with a snap of my wrist!

ARTEMIS

I doubt it very much. Alcohol and
Fairy folk don't mix. Centuries of
indulgence and here you are, a pale
shadow of your past self, reduced
to performing only the simplest of
magic- curing headaches and warts.
Pathetic.

I can offer you a way out. All I want
is your book.

ÂU CƠ

(the candle flames crackle)
Begone, Mud Boy! I will never help
You!

ARTEMIS

Or anyone else, ever again, madam.
(he points to the empty wine bottle)
With all that HOLY WATER you just
drank, I doubt you'll be alive to
See the next sunrise.

ÂU CƠ

(clutching her throat)
HOLY WATER! You murderer!

ARTEMIS

(blithe)

English pond water doesn't seem so bad now, does it? Now who will help the local airheads clear up their acne?

ÂU CỜ

So, you just came here to kill me, is it? A poor old fairy, minding her business, trying to earn a living.

ARTEMIS

Why no, madam. Far from it.

(pause)

Far from it.

Âu Co's stomach gives an OMINOUS RUMBLE. She squeezes her clammy green hands around it in pain. Artemis's lip twitches as he senses an imminent victory.

ÂU CỜ

(slowly, defeated)

Alright, Mud Boy. I'm listening.

ARTEMIS

Good. In return for the Book, I will give you the antidote. Butler?

Butler holds up a stoppered vial. CLOSE UP of the vial, filled with a bubbling, transparent liquid with a purple swirl inside it.

ARTEMIS (CONT'D)

Water from the spring of Tara- the most magical place on earth.

ÂU CỜ

So, you blackmail me, basically. I'm exactly where I started off.

ARTEMIS

Aha. There's more. This water from Tara not only has healing properties, but restorative ones, too. Not only will it counteract the holy water, but it will further rid your body of all the alcohol you've thrown in over the

centuries. Regenerate your cells.
Return your powers. Basically, you'll
be able to return you to your old life.
You'll be able to join your own people.
You'll be an outcast no more. Imagine that.

(beat)

Imagine that.

Âu Cồ bites her lip. She's interested.

ARTEMIS

Remember, I could easily run off, wait
for you to die, come back later, and
retrieve the Book from your belongings.
I'd find it sooner or later. But I'm
choosing not to.

Âu Cồ considers Artemis for a long time, perplexed and
intrigued, but too overcome by pain to do more. She knows she
has no choice. Slowly, she reaches into the FOLDS of her
shabby robes and pulls out what looks like a GOLDEN MATCHBOX.
She reaches out and hands it to Artemis.

ÂU CỒ

No use to you, Mud Boy. It's in our
language. Gnommish.

The tiny golden book fits comfortably in Artemis's open palm.
He delicately flips it open. We don't see the contents, but we
do see his face light up, both FIGURATIVELY and LITERALLY.
He quickly checks the display of emotion, not wanting to
convey how much this moment means to him.
Meanwhile, Butler had loaded the syringe into a dart gun. Âu
Cồ sits up on her knees, suddenly looking very excited.

ARTEMIS

Time for my part of the
deal, I suppose. But be warned. The
purging process is neither quick nor
pleasant.

ÂU CỒ

(incensed)

Do I look like I care? I want to
fly again! I want to be beautiful
again! I hate this place! And most of

all, I hate all you Mud People! Greedy,
repulsive, the lot of you, thinking
you own the Earth! You think of nobody
except yourselves! In fact, I wish
I could just forget about all of you!

ARTEMIS

Perfect, then.

Immediately, Butler shoots Âu Cơ in the neck with a dart gun. Caught off guard, Âu Cơ collapses on the spot. As she loses consciousness, her gaze finds Artemis. Through her eyes, we see a DUTCH ANGLE SHOT of the impassive boy putting his sunglasses back on and following his bodyguard out the tent. The scene blurs away into a kaleidoscope of technicolours, and arcane symbols swim across the screen. The music swells. Uilleann Pipes. Most of the symbols fade away into blackness, while the last few crystallise to form the titles..

ARTEMIS FOWL