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# Knife

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~~Editor's Choice:~~

~~New Talent~~

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

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Eoin Colfer reinvigorated the world of faery with **Artemis Fowl**, the fairy with attitude and R J Anderson's **Knife** is a heroine in the same irreverent and rebellious mould.

Chosen by the queen to be a hunter, Knife is one of the few faeries allowed to leave the confines of their home (an ancient oak). As she hunts for food (the Oakenfolk are keen on roast squirrel) she has to be alert to danger ? her battle with a predatory crow will have the reader on the edge of their seat. Another danger is posed by contact with humans ? or is it? Knife spies on the humans in their nearby house and is riveted by the unfolding drama within when the son of the household, Paul, is hit by a car and paralysed from the waist down.

Knife's curiosity is also sparked by the very different and feeling way that these humans interact with each other. The Oakenfolk never do anything freely for each other and never say thank you ? if they did they would be indebted forever. Gradually Knife realises how solitary, selfish and lonely life in the Oak has become. How has this happened? Why are the faeries' magic powers so diminished? And why does the queen insist that humans are dangerous?

This novel is both a thriller as we see Knife follow the clues and get to the bottom of things and a novel of ideas (should we value thoughts and feelings?). There is also romance as Knife the faery and Paul the human grow closer. Knife's adventures carry the novel along at a cracking pace and Anderson creates a convincing miniature Oakenworld. The final section of the novel with its reliance on diaries to resolve the mystery creaks a little but Anderson commendably resists the temptation to use faery magic to restore Paul's mobility. Her portrait of a young man in the process of accepting his disability is sensitively done. This is a lively and engrossing debut novel.

Running Order:

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