

APPENDIX

Synopsis

Max McDaniels lives a quiet life in the suburbs of Chicago until the day he stumbles upon a mysterious Celtic tapestry depicting the mythic Cattle Raid of Cooley. Now many strange people are interested in Max and his tapestry. His discovery will lead him to Rowan Academy, a secret school where great things await: fantastic creatures, rigorous training, and his very own observatory within a mansion by the sea. But dark things are waiting, too. When Max learns that priceless artworks and gifted children are disappearing from around the globe, he finds himself in the crossfire of an ancient struggle between good and evil. To survive, he'll have to rely on a shadowy network of agents and mystics, the genius of his roommate, and the frightening power awakening within him. Well, this wasn't too bad for a Harry Potter look-alike. It is a sad fact of life that you cannot write a book about someone going to a magical school without treading onto Harry Potter ground. This book was a bit more science-fiction-y and a bit more mythological, but it's still straight-up Harry Potter. The one thing that intrigued me was that Max is not "the savior," but his roommate, David, appears to be. Max is some weird incarnation of an Irish hero, or something. The creatures are interesting, and the classes and activities based around the magic system Neff is setting up are well-developed. I especially liked the soccer field that changes its topography and the virtual reality simulator. Decent worldbuilding, all around. I think this is one series where I really have to read some more, because right now I'm in the "it-has-potential-but-ehhhhh" stage, and I don't want to dismiss it just because it shares similarities with Harry Potter. The pear-shaped boy scurried to the back as the woman's voice cackled and shrieked. "Oh, they're here, they're here! The darlings are here! The door flew open, flattening Miss Awolowo. The children screamed as a panting, gray-skinned woman as short and stout as a pot-bellied stove burst from the kitchen to envelop Jesse in a fierce embrace. Jesse's legs buckled; he fainted in to her arms. Her shiny face looked the children over, grinning hideously to reveal a mouthful of smooth crocodile teeth. Oh, Ndidi! You've outdone yourself. They're wonderful! Oh, they're so wonderful and plump!.