



2007

Airman

Donna Cardon

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Cardon, Donna (2007) "Airman," *Children's Book and Media Review*: Vol. 28 : Iss. 5 , Article 6.
Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cbmr/vol28/iss5/6>

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Colfer, Eoin. *Airman*. Hyperion, 2008. ISBN 9781423107507. \$17.99. 412 p.

Reviewer: Donna Cardon

Reading Level: Young adult

Rating: Dependable

Genre: Historical fiction; Adventure stories;

Subject: Flying machines--Juvenile fiction; Saltee Islands (Ireland)--History--19th century--

Juvenile fiction; Prisoners--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

Conor is a boy who lives on the Saltee Islands, a small sovereign kingdom off the coast of Ireland, during the late 1900s. His life is pretty good: his tutor is a scientist who shares his fascination with flight and his best friend is the princess. That all ends suddenly when the evil captain of the guard kills the king and sends Conor to work in the diamond mines that serve as the island's prison. While in prison Conor continues his study of flight. He finally uses his flying machines to escape from prison and rescue his parents and the princess from the evil captain. What Colfer has created in this novel here is historical science fiction. Conor achieves powered flight a decade before the Wright Brothers.

Colfer struggles a little with the setting which is not historically based. While the Saltee Islands really do exist they never have been populated as described in the story. The plot, although predictable in places, is fast passed and interesting. One of the fun things in the story is seeing the gadgets Conor invents. The character of Conor is not quite as endearing as Colfer's popular *Artemis Fowl* (*Artemis Fowl*, Puffin 2002) but the reader sees him grow and mature during the story. The other characters are fleshed out just enough for the reader to care what happens to them. All in all this is a solid choice for readers, particularly boys, who like historical action/adventure.

Volume 28, no. 5 (May/June 2008)