

# **Eric Study Guide**

**Eric by Terry Pratchett**

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# Plot Summary

Eric, by Terry Pratchett, is the story of a incompetent wizard named Rincewind and a thirteen-year-old boy named Eric. Eric summons a demon but unexpectedly gets Rincewind, who had been trapped in the Underworld after fighting a sourcerer. The two set out on an adventure that eventually will help out the course of the universe and return the Underworld to normal.

There is a large commotion in the city of Ankh-Morpork. Death is summoned to the Unseen University in Ankh-Morpork where he reveals these magical disturbances have been caused by a wizard named Rincewind. Rincewind had been pulled into the Underworld after battling a sourcerer. It had been thought that Rincewind was dead. The wizards decide that they are not concerned with these events despite the trouble that it has caused in the city.

Not too far off from the Unseen University Rincewind awakens to find himself in a room with an odd looking demonologist, a person who calls on the power of demons. The demonologist, Eric, was trying to call forth a demon in order to get his wishes granted. Eric wants to have mastery of the kingdoms of the world, to meet the most beautiful woman who has ever lived and to live forever. Rincewind is unable to convince Eric that he is not a demon and upon snapping his fingers finds that magic is produced. Rincewind is further upset by the fact that Eric is only thirteen.

In Hell, Lord Astfgl, the recently appointed king of the demons, is upset to find that Rincewind is the one that went through when Eric called, since Astfgl's demon Duke Vassenego was supposed to go through and corrupt the boy to their own purposes.

Eric's wishes are granted but each one ends badly and answers the wish fully without giving him anything that he is wanting. Eric and Rincewind end up at the beginning of time and so Eric reproduces the spell that brought Rincewind out, only backwards, taking both of them to Hell. Once in the Underworld they discover that things have been turned backwards by Astfgl, who insists on boring people to death rather than old fashioned torturing. Duke Vassenego is able to trick Astfgl into taking over another position because of Rincewind and Eric's presence in the Underworld. Eric and Rincewind are able to go free by traveling out along the road that is paved with good intentions. The universe has been corrected as well as the Underworld. The demons are happy because they can torture again and the damned souls there are happy because they know that things could always be worse.



# Page 1-54

## Page 1-54 Summary

Eric, by Terry Pratchett, is the story of a incompetent wizard named Rincewind and a thirteen-year-old boy named Eric. Eric summons a demon but unexpectedly gets Rincewind, who had been trapped in the Underworld after fighting a sourcerer. The two set out on an adventure that eventually will help out the course of the universe and return the Underworld to normal.

Death, a skeleton in a black robe responsible for coming and collecting a souls when a person dies, is in his garden attending his bees. Death hears the thoughts of someone who knows they are about to die. Death suddenly realizes who it is but says nothing other than "It's him," (p. 3). In Ankh-Morpork the people are going about their daily lives when there is suddenly a massive surge of magic through the businesses and residences. In the library of the Unseen University, the magical college in Ankh-Morpork, the Librarian, who is an ape, suddenly hears someone screaming and running through the library although there is nothing there. Everywhere this invisible force goes through Ankh-Morpork things are magically changed. The wizards get together, and although it is dangerous, they decide to try the Rite of AshkEnte. This spell is intended to summon Death but is dangerous since Wizards are often old and do not want to attract the attention of Death unnecessarily.

Death arrives and tells the wizards that the magic bursts and yelling has been coming from a wizard named Rincewind. Rincewind was though to very possibly be dead. He had recently done battle with a sourcerer and Rincewind was pulled into the Underworld. Death explains that Rincewind is trying to get back home. The wizards ask if this is possible and Death says it is if there are unusual circumstances but the wizards decide it is not likely and decide to ignore the situation. Death says it would be a million to one chance exactly that Rincewind could get back.

Elsewhere Rincewind opens his eyes and finds he is in an odd room and that a table is talking to him. Upon getting his eyes focused Rincewind discovers the table is not talking to him but someone behind the table. The summoner demands that Rincewind, whom the summoner is convinced is a demon, give him three wishes. He wishes for mastery of the kingdoms of the world, the most beautiful woman in the world and to live forever. Rincewind says that he cannot produce any of those things. The summoner, Eric Thursely, turns out to be a thirteen year old boy. Eric is called downstairs by his mother and Rincewind tries to escape as soon as the boy is out of the room but the demon walls and protections refuse to let him leave. A parrot that looks bad and is unable to fly laughs at Rincewind and tells him that the boy did warn him. The parrot explains that since Rincewind came in the door that demons should have come through then Rincewind is bound by those same rules.



In the city of demons Astfgl, the king of demons, is angry because Eric opened the door and Astfgl's demon, Duke Vassenego, did not go through and no one can tell Astfgl who did go through. Astfgl wants to bend and manipulate Eric to his will because they need smart, self-centered people in Hell. Astfgl goes to his Mirror of Souls and it shows him that the demon that went through is named Rincewind. Although Astfgl does not know a demon named Rincewind, he knows he must be a demon.

Rincewind almost has Eric convinced that he is not a demon when Rincewind's Luggage falls out of thin air. The Luggage has many legs and eats virtually anything. It does not belong to Rincewind but follows him everywhere Rincewind goes. Eric restates his demand and Rincewind says he cannot just snap his fingers as he makes the motion. When Rincewind snaps there is a puff of smoke.

The snap of Rincewind's fingers has given Eric the world. Eric demands a tribute and cautiously Rincewind snaps his fingers again and they are in a jungle forest. They are soon approached by priests of a local tribe called the Tezuman who are expert mathematicians and count victims.

## Page 1-54 Analysis

Death is the first character seen in the story. Although he will be mentioned again his role will be rather small. It seems that most of his effect in the story is to reveal things to the reader that otherwise would not have been known from the view point of Rincewind and Eric. The wizards at the Unseen University will also not be seen again. This is something that will be left unanswered in the book since the Librarian seemed to be concerned with what was happening to Rincewind.

Rincewind is an incompetent wizard and he is shocked by the fact that he can snap his fingers and anything magical happens. It will not be until the last few pages of the book that it is revealed where this magic comes from. It also is not explained if young Eric ever fully realizes that Rincewind is not a demon.

Astfgl and the Underworld are mentioned briefly in the story. It is clear at this point that there is something significant going on in Hell and that it will be pivotal to the story. Later on it will be shown how much of the story is actual based on this place. The characters will even get a chance to go here later on.

Rincewind is a coward in many respects and is known for his keen ability to run away from danger. This will be crucial to both his and Eric's survival as they continue on. Rincewind will also seem to know when things are not right or danger is coming. It will often be too late but the fact that his senses are tuned into this add to his character. Rincewind says he thinks that the Tezuman count victims. In the next part of the book this will be explained and even the history behind this will be looked at. Although the book is humorous and the things in the book are fictional, it will become clear that the author is often making a connection to other books or pieces of history for comedic effect.



# Page 54-101

## Page 54-101 Summary

The Tezuman Empire is known for its craftsmanship, feathers and jade and mass human sacrifices in honor of Quezovercoatl, the Feathered Boa, god of mass human sacrifices. The Tezuman invent the wheel but have very different ideas of how the wheel is supposed to work. As a chariot of the Tezuman approaches, Rincewind finds it odd that it is pulled by llamas and where the wheels should have been there is a man at each axle running. To further Rincewind's surprise, the Tezuman seem to be glad to see him and Eric and they bow. The parrot has climbed to Rincewind's shoulder and is threatening loss of fingers if Rincewind tries to swat the bird away.

Due to language barriers it takes the Tezuman some time to convince Eric and Rincewind to come with them to the pyramid in their city. As they enter the city there are lines of citizens of Tezuman that are cheering Eric and Rincewind. They take Eric and give him piles of jewels and gold. This makes Eric very happy but further worries Rincewind since the Tezuman are not the kind of people that take strangers into their city and lavish gifts upon them for no reason.

After a feast and speeches made by the Tezuman, Rincewind wanders off with the parrot still perched on his shoulder. Rincewind comes to a pyramid and goes inside where he finds a thirty foot statue. Rincewind explains that it is the statue of the Tezuman god, Quezovercoatyl who is half man, half chicken, half jaguar, half serpent, half scorpion and half mad. Rincewind and the parrot turn to go when Rincewind hears the statue ask them to take him with them. Rincewind is stunned by this request until the parrot explains that the voice is not from the statue but from behind it. When Rincewind walks behind the statue he finds a man that is locked in a pit. The man is to be flayed alive to appease the god Quezovercoatyl.

Meanwhile the demon king has been watching Rincewind in his Mirror of Souls. He calls for the god Quezovercoatyl to be brought before him. When Quezovercoatyl gets to the demon king the demon king goes over the events that made Quezovercoatyl the Tezuman's god. Quezovercoatyl found the Tezuman worshipping a small stick and took over one of their priests and drove him insane. Quezovercoatyl convinced them to wage war and take people to the top of a pyramid where they would be sacrificed and occasionally skinned alive. As it turns out, Quezovercoatyl is nothing more than an imp. The king gets on to Quezovercoatyl for provoking the wars and deaths that sent people to the happy hunting ground rather than giving them opportunity to corrupt them and send them to hell. The demon king tells him that he must go and show himself to the Tezuman people and tell them to stop. Quezovercoatyl has never shown himself to the Tezuman other than via dreams and visions and is not happy about this but has no choice.



The man that Rincewind has saved from the pit is named Ponce da Quirm and he and his men were searching for the Fountain of Youth when they were captured by the Tezuman. Ponce da Quirm is the only of the men left, the rest, he explains, got religion, and Rincewind does not have to ask what kind. Quirm says it is a good thing that Rincewind showed up before the Ruler of the World came because the Tezuman have plans for him. Quirm shows Rincewind the prophecy written on the pyramid walls regarding the Ruler of the World. The Ruler of the World looks just like Eric and there is a picture that resembles Rincewind as well with a parrot on his shoulder.

When Rincewind asks why all the jewels and gold, Quirm admits that he is not sure but being ruler of the world Eric is entitled to some respect before they start their list of complaints. Rincewind turns to leave but finds that there is a group of Tezuman behind him with spears. Rincewind, Quirm, and Eric are all tied up. The parrot has managed to make his way to the top of a statue where he is currently safe but refuses to help the others who are tied up. Suddenly there is a commotion in the jungles and animals are struggling to get away. As the animals run out of fear, the Luggage emerges. The Tezuman are all still, watching the strange box with its many legs.

It is at this precise moment that Quezovercoatyl decides to appear at the top of a pyramid. He cups his hands and begins to yell at the people so that they can all hear him. It is not that he does not look as they expected because all the details are exact. The Tezuman are very surprised to see that this god is only six inches tall. No one gets to hear Quezovercoatyl's speech because at that moment he is squished by the luggage. The Tezuman have a problem since their god is a small smear on the pyramid. They watch the luggage for some time waiting for it to do something that they could classify as religious. Rincewind, Eric and Quirm are released. Quirm intends to continue on his search for the Fountain of Youth and Rincewind gives Quirm the parrot to keep him company on his journey despite the parrot's complaints.

That night the Tezuman dismantle their god. They have to think up a way to keep checks and balances in place so that people do not begin questioning the priests. That night new construction begins on the Tezuman's new god who is square with many legs.

The demon king has been watching the goings on and is not necessarily unhappy about how things have turned out but is not happy about it either. The point of the gifts is to make the person feel like they are getting what they want while not giving them what they wanted. Despite the events, the demon king has the feeling that things are not fully under his control.

Rincewind and Eric find themselves someplace that feels like a boat but the rocking motion is all wrong. Rincewind can hear voices and he reaches a place in the dark that he feels certain is a door. They are high above and they find a rope and begin climbing down. Once they are heading down Rincewind looks up to find that they have come out of a great wooden horse and not out of a decent part of the statue. When they reach the ground they are surrounded by men with spears. Rincewind and Erica are asked why there are only two of them in the horse although Rincewind still is confused about where they have been transported too. Eric soon realizes that they are in Tsort and this is the



great wooden horse and the battle that was fought over the fair maiden Elenor who was kidnapped by the Ephibians. Eric becomes excited thinking he will get to meet the most beautiful woman who ever lived.

There is a horrid sound outside the door and Eric and Rincewind are guarded by one soldier while the others go to fight whoever is trying to come through the gate. Soon it is reported that the thing behind the gate is another small wooden thing. Rincewind immediately realizes it is the Luggage. When they find out that the Tsorts are going to let it in, Eric begins to giggle. The guard watching them is soon convinced he needs to go help with the cries that are coming from the gate. Rincewind and Eric take this opportunity to run away.

Rincewind is looking for a way out of the city with Eric crying because he will not get to meet the fair damsel Elenor. Rincewind ignores the child and they find a door and open it. Behind the door is the entire Ephibian army. The battle continues all day. Rincewind and Eric are found and told that the chief of the Ephibian army would like to speak to them.

## Page 54-101 Analysis

Quirm and the parrot have gone in their own direction but will be seen later again in the story. The Fountain of Youth will also be spoken of again in the story although it is never shown. It ultimately will be the death of Quirm and the parrot.

It is important to remember at this point in time that the purpose of the wishes is to grant whatever the person asks for while giving them what they did not want. Elenor will be seen in the next chapter and the humor of the wish will be explained at that point. Despite how things are going, Eric still seems stuck on the idea of getting his wishes. He also seems to still be certain that Rincewind is a demon and will continue to introduce him that way. It appears that Rincewind has given up on the thought of convincing the boy that he is not a demon.

The author has made created a reference with the Ephibians and the Tsorts to the story of the Trojans and the Spartans. The beautiful Elenor that Eric is so excited about meeting is inspired by Helen of Troy. Later in the story when Elenor is met, it will be very comical when taken in context. There are other places in the book as well where the author will take from stories or theories and use those references in a humorous way.

The way that the Luggage is able to travel across great distances, or time, is not explained. At one point in the story Rincewind does say that the Luggage will manage to catch up with them regardless of what they do. Again later Rincewind says that it is because of the material that the Luggage is made out of that it is magical. This is all rather vague and the book does not give much information beyond this.





# Page 101-150

## Page 101-150 Summary

Rincewind and Eric arrive at the chief's tent to hear them discussing battle tactics. The chief does not seem very impressed in seeing them but greets them regardless. The chief is feeding the Luggage sandwiches and Rincewind admits that the Luggage is his, sort of, but that he cannot afford to pay for any damages the thing has inflicted. The chief asks them where they are from and Rincewind decides to tell the truth and says that they are from the future. The chief accepts this answer, much to Rincewind's surprise, and asks if they happen to know the results of any horse races. When the chief asks them why they opened the door, Rincewind decides he will try the truth again and says that they were looking for an escape route. The chief commends them on being very sensible.

The chief asks Eric what he wants to do when he grows up and Eric answers that he wants to be a Eunuch. They are all surprised by this until Eric explains it is because Eunuchs get to work in a Harem. The chief says he will have one of his men sit down to have a talk with Eric about things.

The chief says that his name is Lavaeolus and that many of his men want him to have a word with Rincewind about ruining the war but Lavaeolus is quite happy at the thought of having it over. Lavaeolus leads them to a tunnel and takes them underground. Lavaeolus explains that the tunnel leads into the middle of the citadel. The passage leads to a utility closet and Lavaeolus trips on a mop before reaching the door. They are able to quietly get to a room and Eric begins to whisper to Rincewind that he has just remembered what Lavaeolus is known for. After the war it took Lavaeolus ten years to get home and he was beset by sirens, temptresses and witches and many of his men were turned into animals. When he finally does make it home he has to fight his wife's suitors and his dog recognizes him and dies. Eric says that they could save Lavaeolus from all that misfortune.

A woman comes in the room who is good looking, in an older kind of way, and has several kids behind her. Eric asks who it is and he is told it is Elenor. Eric is aghast that this is the woman that the war has been fought over. Lavaeolus asks her why she did not tell them that she had decided to have several children by the king that kidnapped her and she says she thought that they were enjoying the battle too much. Lavaeolus asks how things go after this and Eric says that the towers of the Tsorts are set on fire. Lavaeolus thinks this is not the best thing to do but does sound like something his men would do. As they get ready to leave, saying goodbye to Elenor, Lavaeolus asks for an oil lamp so he can leave without tripping over another broom.

Once they are out of the tunnel Rincewind and Eric are talking about the fact that it was Rincewind tripping with the oil lamp that burns their towers to the ground. Everyone gets out safely though and Eric decides that history has ironed itself out. Before Lavaeolus



leaves he asks Rincewind to tell him if he needs to go a certain way to get home quickly. He is a little nervous about the boat ride and wants reassurance. Rincewind thinks it over and tells Lavaeolus that he gets home okay and that he is well known for getting home with legends written about it. This puts Lavaeolus at ease. He knows that going around thinking up new things angers the gods who are by definition traditionalists. The giant horse has worried him some but figures that if Rincewind says it is safe then he will get on the boat. After Lavaeolus is gone Eric points out that Lavaeolus translates into Rinser of Winds. Rincewind asks if that is an ancestor of his but Eric is not sure. Rincewind snaps his fingers again.

Astfgl has been watching and wonders what happens to Lavaeolus. Demons and gods have time happen all at once for them but do not know everything and so just have to pick events to watch. The demon king is upset because he feels that Eric is changing and become less self-centered and more likable. He is also worried that Rincewind and Eric may have changed history.

Rincewind and Eric are in black nothingness. They can communicate but there is no sound. They are not falling but there is nothing under them or around them, no light of any kind. Rincewind asks what it is called that you have when you have nothing and everything has been used up. Eric tells Rincewind that it is called the bill. Rincewind concedes that this is a good name and that they are floating around in absolute bill. Rincewind and Eric are discussing the matter when they come face to face with a little rat-faced man who tells them that the place is nowhere yet.

Astfgl has lost Eric and Rincewind and happens to run into Death. Aftsgl asks if Death has seen Eric or Rincewind. Death says "The Wizard?" (p. 132) in reference to Rincewind. Astfgl becomes infuriated not having realized before now that it is a human working with Eric. Astfgl hurries back to his realm.

The little rat-faced man is talking to Rincewind and Eric about creating things. The rat-faced man is the creator and he explains to them how he creates things and how much skill it takes. Although he is not THE Creator, just the creator, like one creator out of many. He creates an egg sandwich for Rincewind but Eric warns Rincewind that if this being is the creator then the egg sandwich is a religious relic. Rincewind looks in the sandwich and says that there is no mayonnaise and asks if it still counts as a religious relic if there is no mayonnaise.

Rincewind and Eric are still floating when suddenly the little man creates the world. With gravity in play Rincewind and Eric begin plummeting towards the planet. They try to ask for help but the little man cannot hear them. The little man refuses to make the ground soft because it would be breaking the creating rules. About the time they should be hitting the ground they suddenly land without any damage. The little man says he changed velocities and positions and is then gone before they can say anything else.

Alone now at the beginning of time with no one else around, Eric asks why they are there. Rincewind explains that Eric had wished that he could live forever and this is how the wish interpreted the request. Instead of being immortal it takes him through time so



that he can live for ever. Eric is very upset and demands that they be taken away but Rincewind snaps his fingers and tells Eric that he has used up his three wishes already. Rincewind takes note of the items that he has with him that he might be able to use. He has a half-eaten egg sandwich, which he throws away, himself, and Eric. He looks at Eric and has thought of a plan.

## Page 101-150 Analysis

The plan that Rincewind has thought of is not revealed at this point. The fact that Rincewind has drawn in the sand at this point in the story is a piece of foreshadowing as to what he will have Eric do. Rincewind actually is known for his lack of wizarding ability despite the fact that he is a wizard. Eric, however, will show great promise with his abilities. The egg sandwich, which is a minuscule thing, will have more to play in the story in the next little bit. The fact that it is missing mayonnaise will also be mentioned again.

It is not clear why Rincewind tells Lavaeolus that he will make it home alright. Later Rincewind will meet up with Lavaeolus and have to explain himself. Even at this point in time it is not explained if they are family relations in any respect. It could be that Rincewind did not tell Lavaeolus about his troubles while he is heading home because he is worried about changing history. Rincewind does not seem the type to be worried about those things though. There is no indication of the reason behind his motives.

Death has been seen briefly again in the story. This is the last time he will appear. His part in the story ties pieces together.

The demon king has been following Rincewind and Eric for sometime. There has been no appearance of anyone else that appears to be working behind the scene. At the beginning of the story it was explained that there are those that would like to overthrow the king. Much of this will be pulled into the plot in the next part of the book. The king will be shown to be little more than a puppet himself in the story line. It is unclear how much of the story has been working as a result of the fact that the king is not in control.



# Page 150-197

## Page 150-197 Summary

Astfgl appears on the beach and finds magical circles that have been drawn but no one is there. There are also smaller footprints that run back and forth over the beach frantically, as if looking for something, and then vanish. Astfgl swears and then vanishes. Further down the beach there is a half eaten egg sandwich that is rolling in the tide. Thousands of bacteria are beginning to attack it and make plans for evolution. It is noted here that life could have been a lot different if there had only been mayonnaise.

Eric and Rincewind find themselves in front of a door with a sign over it that reads "You Don't Have To Be 'Damned' to Work Here, But It Helps!!!" (p. 152). Behind them the magic circles of Eric's spell are beginning to fade. Rincewind was hoping that they would be taken back to Ankh but Eric explains that they should be happy to be anywhere since you are not supposed to be able to run magic circles in reverse. Rincewind realizes that they are most likely in Hell although Eric does not seem to be upset by this.

They decide to knock on the door and find a rather disgusting creature answering it with a name tag that says "My name is Urglefloggah, Spawn of the Pit and Loathly Guardian of the Dread Portal: How May I Help You?" The creature tries to recite its lines that run along the lines of welcoming people to their stay here for eternity but keeps switching over to his bit about cowering in fear of mortal beings. Rincewind tells him that they are not dead and Urglefloggah laughs and says it would not be smart for live people to come down because of what would be done with them. Rincewind and Eric, thinking quickly, begin to talk about how sad it is that management cannot let people know what is going on. Before long, Urglefloggah is telling about how horrible his job is and Rincewind is promising to do everything he can to fix the work environment. Eric and Rincewind calmly walk away until they hear a noise signifying that Urglefloggah has just figured out he has been had and then they break into a run.

As they walk along through Hell they notice that it is different than they thought. It is hot but not that hot and there are no fires or furnaces to burn you for eternity. Under Astfgl's reign Hell has begun a new policy of how things go. Everywhere Rincewind and Eric go they find demons and other creatures wearing name tags urging people to have a nice day and the like. There is a man chained to a wall with a bird above him. The bird is supposed to come down and eat out the man's liver everyday but it has been changed and the bird comes down everyday and talks about his hernia operation. Another group of people are being forced to sit through vacation photos. The demons are just as upset at this change and hate it all.

Rincewind realizes that the enjoyable part of boredom is knowing that something worse could always be happening and that you compare boredom to that thing and it makes



boredom seem better. There is nothing other than boredom here and so it is the greatest kind of torture for all, demons included. Rincewind and Eric are trying to figure a way to get out when they run into a familiar voice. It is Quirm and the parrot.

Astfgl has demons looking for Rincewind and Eric but no one has been able to find them. Duke Vassenego tries to explain that they have searched everywhere but Astfgl accuses Vassenego of plotting against him and says that he will be obeyed. Vassenego is able to control his anger. Astfgl says the demon that let Rincewind and Eric in is to be disassembled. Vassenego tries to warn Astfgl that the portal will not be guarded any longer but the king is in a rage and demands it be done.

The Luggage arrives at the portal. The door to the portal had been around long enough that it has a form of consciousness and realized the dangers of standing in the way of the Luggage. As the Luggage rears itself to attack, the door opens quickly to let the thing through.

There is a large treadmill that does not power anything and has squeaky bearings intended to show the people that there are more pointless things to do with their time. It is here that Eric and Rincewind are hiding and no one has though anyone would want to be here and so have not looked. Quirm is explaining the bright side to being dead and Rincewind comments on the fact that he did not think they admitted animals into Hell although he could see why in the parrot's case they made an exception. Quirm says they did find the Fountain of Youth but much to his dismay you need to boil it before drinking.

They are discussing the fact that there is no way out when a familiar voice behind Rincewind says that there is a way out. They turn to see Lavaeolus behind them. He is bitter about not being warned about the ten years before he could get home but shows them the back way out, up the side of a cliff a great distance away. Suddenly while they are walking they notice it is getting a lot faster. Eric turns around to see the Luggage on the back of the treadmill has gotten on and is trying to catch up with them.

The Luggage manages to run the treadmill fast enough that the squeaky bearings in the treadmill give way and the luggage goes pummeling down into other parts of the city of the damned, destroying things as he goes. Lavaeolus notes that if you had something that would go into battle before you like the luggage that was covered in armor, then you would be able to win wars much more quickly and get back home quicker.

Lord Vessengo is rallying the other demons to his side. They are unsure about getting rid of Astfgl but Vessengo asks them how much more of the paperwork and moral boosting meetings they can stand and the demons quickly decide to unite. Vessengo is quite pleased with how useful Rincewind has been and how humorous it is that Rincewind thought it was his own fingers that were granting wishes.

Rincewind and Eric are pulling themselves from the wreckage when they are grabbed by Astfgl who is so angry that he has become calm in appearance all except for the drool at the corner of his mouth. He grabs each of them and pulls them to a public place



where they will be punished. Before Astfgl can act, Vessenego arrives telling the king of demons what a wonderful job he has done and they have all decided to promote Astfgl to Supreme Life President of Hell. Astfgl is quickly taken in by the charade put on by the other demons and whisked away to his new office where there is important paperwork to be done. Rincewind and Eric manage to escape while they are busy.

The three wishes have succeeded in making many people happy. The Tezumen are happy; although they have killed their priests and have no religion, they were now atheists who can kill as many people as they like but sleep in before they do it. The Tsorts and the Ephebe are happy because with their war over they can begin the planning of the next war. The people of Hell are happier because they know that things can get much worse and the demon lords are happy. The Luggage may have been happy. It attacks several of the demons and chased some into their own boiling pits. The creator of the universe is happy because he is experimenting with new snowflakes.

Rincewind and Eric are happy because they can see sky. They do not know when or where they will come out but they look at the stones that they are stepping on as they get closer to the top and notice that each step says something like "I Meant It For The Best," and "For The Sake Of The Children." Rincewind explains that this is the road to Hell and these are the good intentions used to pave it.

Even President Astfgl is happy sitting in his new office. He talks into the horn to get the attention of the workers below but there is no answer. He is not concerned yet, there is a lot of paperwork to do.

## Page 150-197 Analysis

Rincewind and Eric have some talent between the two of them. Although there is no indication that they get back to their own time, it seems certain that they will be alright no matter where they end up and possibly will have the capabilities to get back home. Vessenego confirms at the end of the story that it was him who had been directing much of what was going on in regards to Rincewind and Eric. He is even humored by the fact that Rincewind seems to believe it is his ability that is granting the wishes. Since there is so little of Vessenego seen during the story there is no way to absolutely know how much of it had been planned by Vessenego. The Tezuman tribe had a picture of Eric and Rincewind on their wall and seemed to be more or less expecting them. It appears that Vessenego very well could have had a hand in this matter.

Vessenego is a demon and as a demon is not truly among friends at any point in time. He has worked very hard to gain the role he wants. It is shown as soon as he gets the role he wants that he begins to become paranoid and realize that others are plotting against him. There is no reason to think he is wrong at this point since the demons seems to constantly be thinking in that direction. Astfgl is responsible for his own downfall in more ways than one, even without Vessenego's help. It was Astfgl's decision to try and bring Eric to their world to use him as a tool for Hell. It was also Astfgl who allowed his emotions to overtake him in more than one area. His emotions getting the



better of him lead to the door to the Underworld being unguarded when Astfgl announces that the door keeper be disassembled. That is what allows the Luggage in to help Rincewind.

Lavaeolus seems to be upset when he first encounters Rincewind and Eric because they did not warn him about his voyage home. Eric is quick to point out that it is because of the fear of disrupting history that they did not say anything. Although this is the explanation that Eric gives at this point in time, it is unclear if that is the truth of the matter or not. In spite of the fact that Lavaeolus is angry, he is willing to help Rincewind and Eric and show them the way out. It is not clear why Vessenego is willing to let them go or why he refuses to help him. It is possible that he does not have the power to help them but the fact that he releases them is not explained either.





# Characters

## Rincewind

Rincewind is a most incompetent wizard. He seemingly has no magical talent and is a coward by all accounts. He is quite proud of the fact that he can run away from any situation and that he can beg for mercy in several languages. Rincewind is one of the main characters of the book, although it does not appear that he changes much until the end of the story. Rincewind was disgusted by anyone who could find the silver lining in situations. He changes over the course of the story enough that while they are finally leaving the city of the damned, Rincewind is able to realize that things could be worse. This is a large step for this character.

Rincewind lived at the Unseen University before he was trapped into the Underworld. When the wizards learn about him being trapped, none of them are concerned about his safety or trying to get him out in any respect, except for the librarian. While this reveals some about the wizards it also says a lot about Rincewind's character. Rincewind seems to play some type of hero in this story although it is almost accidental. He is willing to use his head and is often very smart and resourceful. Despite this he wants nothing to do with being the one responsible for helping or fixing anything. It appears that he would have gladly left Eric with the Tezuman earlier in the story.

## Eric Thursley

Eric is the young boy that manages to summon Rincewind. Eric had meant to summon a demon but got Rincewind instead. Although Eric is very smart he is still only thirteen years old. It will be hard to detect the changes that take place in this character. When the story begins, the king of demons wants Eric to come and be his servant but as the story continues the king gets more and more upset because Eric is obviously changing. The king points out that Eric is much more likable now than when he first conjured Rincewind.

There are a lot of things that Eric does that highlight his youth and lack of experience in life. When asked what he wants to do with his life he says he wants to be a Eunuch. This is because they get to work in a harem. No one has explained to the boy what a eunuch is or why you do not want to be one, even if you do get to work in a harem. He will be the main focus of the story in many respects although he is not a hero and he is not one who necessarily needs saving anymore than any other character.

## Astfgl

Astfgl is the king of the demons. He wants Eric to come and work for them in hell since Eric is self-centered and humans can be much more cruel than demons. Astfgl is outsmarted by Duke Vesseneo and given the presumably fake title of Supreme Life





President of Hell. Astfgl has made everyone hate him by making boredom the new torture and doing away with flaming pits and disembowelment.

## Duke Vessenego

Duke Vessenego is the old demon that the king of demons picked to go through and turn Eric to their side. Vessenego had managed to manipulate events to the point that it is Rincewind that goes through the portal to Eric and then grants the wishes through Rincewind. Vessenego is able to trick the demon king and is able to take the throne for his own.

## Ponce da Quirm

Quirm is the name of the captive that Rincewind rescues in the Tezuman village. Quirm was going to be flayed alive. He finds the Fountain of Youth but dies because he does not know to boil the water before drinking. He always looks at the silver lining of every situation.

## Lavaeolus

Lavaeolus is thought to perhaps be Rincewind's ancestor. He is the leader of the Epebian army. After the war Lavaeolus heads home and although it is only two hundred miles away it takes him ten years to get home because he has made the gods angry.

## Elenor

Elenor is said to be the most beautiful woman in the world. It is she that the war between the Tsorts and the Epebians is fought over. Eric bursts into tears when he realizes that she looks like his mother and is not a fair maiden. She has several children.

## Librarian

The Librarian at the Unseen University is an ape. He is the only one at the University who wants to help Rincewind. He used to be a human but had been turned into an ape and refuses to be turned back.

## Quezovercoatyl

Quezovercoatyl is the being that the Tezuman serve. They have made a thirty foot statue to him believing him to be a god. When he appears to them they are surprised



because he is a six inch imp. He is squished by the Luggage that follows Rincewind around.

## **The Creator**

The creator is not The Creator, but is one of the creators. He has a rat face and makes an egg sandwich for Rincewind. He experiments with snowflakes.

## **Urglefloggah**

Urglefloggah is the guardian of the dread portal. It is him that Rincewind and Eric first run into when they enter Hell. Urglefloggah is ordered to be disassembled because he let the two living men past. He is wearing a name tag that says "How May I Help You?"



# Objects/Places

## Discworld

Discworld is the planet that sits on the back of four large elephants who stand on the back of a large turtle named A'tuin. It is on this mythical planet that the story takes place.

## Ankh-Morpork

The city where the Unseen University is located. Although this city is only seen once in the story it is the place that Rincewind constantly talks about and wants to get back to.

## Luggage

The Luggage follows Rincewind around everywhere he goes. Although it is rather small, it has the ability to eat items, creatures and people much larger than itself. It is unknown why it chooses to follow Rincewind around. It smashes the imp Quezovercoatyl.

## Egg Sandwich

Rincewind asks for an egg sandwich from the creator and is given one with no mayonnaise. After eating half the sandwich he throws it into the ocean at the beginning of time. It is here that bacteria begins to feed on the sandwich and think of evolution. Life might have been notably different if there had been mayonnaise.

## Mirror of Souls

Mirror of Souls is the magical mirror on Astfgl's wall. It has consciousness and can talk. It shows Astfgl everything that is going on although it is not all knowing.

## Treadmill

The treadmill is the thing that Rincewind and Eric hide on while in Hell. They are on this thing when the Luggage finds them. The squeaky bearings in the treadmill shoot them across the city to their escape route.

## The Road to Hell

The road to Hell is the route which Rincewind and Eric take to escape. They are a little surprised to find it is paved in stone and the stone is etched with words. Each step says



something different such as "For The Sake Of The Children," or "I Meant It For The Best." Rincewind explains that these are good intentions.

## **Parrot**

The parrot is a nasty looking creature that hates Rincewind. It cannot fly and Rincewind gives it to Quirm when they part after leaving the Tezuman. The parrot is seen again in Hell and Rincewind says he is not surprised that they made an exception for this animal.

## **Pandemonium**

Pandemonium is the city of Hell. The area is often referred to in other ways but this is the actual name of the city. It is here that Astfgl reigns and that Rincewind and Eric are transported.

## **Wooden Horse**

Rincewind transports them here only to discover they are in the middle of a battle. The exit hole on the horse is said to be in the most undignified place. The Tsorts said they knew the horse was a rouse when they noticed air holes in it.



# Themes

## Desire for Power

There are many different ploys for power in the story although the one character that does not seem to want to have any power is Rincewind, arguably the main character. When Eric is first introduced into the story he wants quite a bit of power. He tells Rincewind that he wants three wishes. The first of these wishes is to have the kingdoms of the world. It does not take long for this wish to go wrong but the desire for this power is easily seen.

The other examples of power in the story are shown primarily by the demons. Astfgl has power but it is clear early on that he knows that power can be taken away. He is fighting a battle with those around him and as the story progresses it becomes clear that he is losing control of himself and those around him. As he begins to lose this control he will try harder and harder to hold onto the power until he grabs at it so tightly that it is his tight grasp that loses him the last of the power he has.

Duke Vessenego is a character that is not seen much in the story. He has a desire for power, Astfgl's power, although it is not known to anyone in the story the effect that Vessenego has on the events until later in the story.

## Tradition

There is a lot of talk about tradition in the story. Lavaeolus is damned by the gods because of his new age thinking. The wooden horse is thinking outside of the box and Lavaeolus explains that anything that goes against tradition is frowned upon. The book further explains about the war tactics used and how it is wrong to do anything other than straightforward battle. Strategy is said to have no place in wars. It could be this reason that Lavaeolus is in Hell in the end of the story.

Demons, much like gods, are traditionalist. That is a lot of the reason that Astfgl's new ideas are causing so much unhappiness. The demons are not happy with the new torture methods but it also appears that they want their old routines back just as much as anything. Tradition gets brought up time and time again throughout the story. The view of tradition in the story seems to be put into a negative light, as if tradition keeps people from thinking and evolving; it is a theme that is readily seen.

## Happiness

The story begins with the happiness of Eric as the focus. Although he is asking for things that are superficial and the story focuses on the fact that he is a spoiled brat, it is clear that it is his happiness that is being concentrated on, at least from Eric's own point of view. There is very little that makes Rincewind happy other than staying alive and



free from any type of danger or harm. Eric's idea of happiness seems to change as the story continues and evolves.

The three wishes that are given at the beginning of the story Astfgl says are intended to give the wisher exactly what he asks for while not giving him what he wants. Despite this at the end of the story it says that wishes are meant to make the most people happy. The Tezuman tribe are happy because they have decided to kill all their priests and take up atheism. This allows them to kill as many people as they like but now they can sleep in before they do it. The Tsorts and the Ephibians are happy because with the war over they can start planning a new war, and even the demon lords are happy, although it is hinted at that this happiness may not endure. Even Astfgl, who loses the role of king of demons is happy, apparently due to the fact that he does not realize he has lost his control and power. The image of control and power seem to suffice for him since he has been given the fictitious title of Supreme Life President of Hell.

# Style

## Point of View

The story is written in the present tense in third person. The character viewpoint of the story switches throughout the telling with the main focus being Rincewind although Astfgl, Death, the Librarian, and many others will be the focus at times. Some will only have a paragraph while others will be reoccurring. The point of view will be limited to the character being seen. The information given will be based on that character's point of view and knowledge.

There is a lot of dialogue throughout the book where there is more than one character but information is also given through exposition and sometimes in footnotes. The point of view keeps the reader knowledgeable about the events that are taking place in regards to the other characters and the plots that eventually tie them all together. There are little pieces of foreshadowing throughout the story and the point of view is used to give brief insight into much of the plot.

## Setting

The story is set in a mythical place on the planet called Discworld. Discworld is a flat planet that sits on the back of four great elephants that stand on the back of a giant turtle named A'tuin. The people and things in Discworld are just as unique as the planet and filled with magic that controls much of the daily life. The main characters of the book are Rincewind and Eric. Rincewind is an incompetent wizard who is accidentally summoned by Eric. Although Rincewind is from a city called Ankh-Morpork and speaks a lot about getting back there, the city is only seen once in the story. The rest of the book is set in different places and times throughout history, including before time even began. Eric and Rincewind are able to watch the creator make the planet.

The demons in the story will primarily be from the city of Pandemonium. Rincewind and Eric will make a brief appearance there in the story. After the story is almost at an end it becomes apparent that the point of the story was to put the city of Pandemonium and the rest of Hell back to the way it should be. Rincewind and Eric will also travel to the jungle and to a city where they watch a battle involving a large wooden horse between the Tsorts and Ephibians over a beautiful woman Elenor. Each setting is given a small description but most often it is the characters' comments on a place that give the reader an idea of what things look like.

Most of the story will focus on Eric and Rincewind. It is hard to tell a big difference in the characters as they go along but the changes that happen will be pointed out. For instance, Astfgl is worried that Eric is becoming likable. In the case of Rincewind it seems that the proof of his change comes at the end of the book when he realizes



things could be much worse. This shows a large change in Rincewind because at the beginning of the book he is intolerant of anyone who wants to see the silver lining.

## Language and Meaning

The language in the story is very informal and easy to understand, although there are some words that are slang or words that have been created just for the mythical Discworld. These words are very easy to understand when taken in context. Often there are words or phrases, or the way something is written, that is unique to specific characters. The parrot in the story says "wassoname" in virtually every sentence. The parrot explains that this is because it has a very limited vocabulary. When Death appears he only uses capital letters to speak and there are no quotation marks around his phrases. There are characters in the story that are italicized but this is usually because of a situation or change in speech.

Many of the situations in the stories point to real life situations in an attempt to make light of them. There is a search for the Fountain of Youth, talk of finding a Succubus, how unprofessional a big bang is when creating something, and how the road to Hell is paved, literally, with good intentions. This is all meant to be lighthearted humor and the author seems to leave no subject alone in his writings.

## Structure

The story contains 197 pages and is not divided into chapters. There are double spaces between paragraphs when the author switches character point of view or when the characters travel to a new place or time. The story is part of the Discworld series and so there may be references made to things that have happened in past stories. The author includes footnotes in the story to explain these events, such as how the librarian came to be an ape, and how Rincewind came to be in the Underworld.

There is a map in the book, presumably of Discworld, that says that there are no maps, as well as a guide to important people found in the Discworld series. These people do not all show up in this story, however there is a description of Death, Rincewind, the Librarian, the Luggage, The Great A'tuin, as well as the Unseen University and Ankh-Morpork. While much of the information found in the back of the book does not pertain to "Eric," it does build on the Discworld series. In addition to this there is a list of Discworld books in the back of the book with information about the author. It is possible that there will be a lot that the reader does not immediately catch without a prior knowledge of the Discworld series.





## Quotes

"Death fancied that he heard, very briefly, the sound of running feet and a voice saying, no, a voice thinking ohshitohshit, I'm gonna die I'm gonna die I'm gonna DIE!" p. 2.

"No enemies had ever taken Ankh-Morpork. Well, technically they had, quite often; the city welcomed free-spending barbarian invaders, but somehow the puzzled raiders always found, after a few days, that they didn't own their own horses anymore, and within a couple of months they were just another minority group with its own graffiti and food shops," pp. 4-5.

"'Are we talking about the wizard Rincewind? The one with the—' the Bursar gave a shudder—'horrible Luggage on legs? But he got blown up when there was all that business with the sourcerer, didn't he?' INTO THE DUNGEON DIMENSIONS. AND NOW HE IS TRYING TO GET BACK HOME," p. 15.

"I command you-thee, I mean-to, ah, grant me three wishes. Yes. I want mastery of the kingdoms of the world, I want to meet the most beautiful woman who has ever lived, and I want to live forever," p. 23.

"Hell needed horribly bright, self-centered people like Eric. They were much better at being nasty than demons could ever manage," p. 37.

"'It's their god.' 'Get away?' 'No, really. It's Quezoercoatl. Half man, half chicken, half jaguar, half serpent, half scorpion and half mad.' The parrot's beak moved as it worked this out. 'That makes a wosname total of three homicidal maniacs,' it said," p. 63.

"You happened to find the Tezumen one day and decided, I think I recall your words correctly, that they were 'a bunch of Stone-Age no-hopers sitting around in a swamp being no trouble to anyone,' am I right? Whereupon you entered the mind of one of their high priests—I believe at that time they worshipped a small stick-drove him insane and inspired the tribes to unite, terrorize their neighbors and bring forth upon the continent a new nation dedicated to the proposition that all men should be taken to the top of ceremonial pyramids and be chopped up with stone knives," pp. 67-68.

"After all, the whole point of the wish business was to see to it that what the client got was exactly what he asked for and exactly what he didn't really want," pp. 83-84.

"'Oh.' Rincewind looked at the man's face. Ten years, he thought. And all kinds of weird stuff with winged wosnames and sea-monsters. On the other hand, would it do him any good to know? 'You get home okay,' he said. 'You're well-known for it, in fact. There's whole legends about you going home,'" p. 123.

"It's what you get when there's nothing left and everything's been used up.' 'Yes. I think it's called the bill,' said Eric. Rincewind gave this some thought. It sounded about right.



'Okay,' he said. 'The bill. That's where we are. Floating in absolute bill. Total, complete, rock-hard bill,'" p. 128.

"Many people think it should have been a hydrogen molecule, but this is against the observed facts. Everyone who has found a hitherto unknown egg-whisk jamming an innocent kitchen drawer knows that raw matter is continually flowing into the universe in fairly developed forms, popping into existence normally in ashtrays, vases and glove compartments. It chooses its shape to allay suspicion, and common manifestations are paperclips, the pins out of shirt packaging, the little keys for central heating radiators, marbles, bits of crayon, mysterious sections of herb-chopping devices and old Kate Bush albums," p. 134.

"He had: item, one half-eaten egg and cress sandwich. No help there. He threw it away. He had: item, himself. He drew a tick in the sand. He wasn't certain what use he could be, but he could come back to that later. He had: item, Eric. Thirteen-year-old demonologist and acne attack ground zero. That seemed to be about it," p. 150.

"' I don't know what he done,' it said, 'but when I first come here his punishment was to be chained to that rock and every day an eagle would come down and peck his liver out. Bit of an old favorite that one.' 'It doesn't look as though it's attacking him now,' said Rincewind. 'Nah. That's all changed. Now it flies down every day and tells him about its hernia operation. Now it's effective, I'll grant you,' said the demon sadly, 'but it's not what I'd call torture,'" pp. 166-167.

"Expressions twitched as the lords made up their minds like a row of dominoes falling over. There were some things on which even they were united. No more policy statements, no more consultative documents, no more morale-boosting messages to all staff. This was Hell, but you had to draw the line somewhere," pp. 184-185.



## Topics for Discussion

Is Lavaeolus an ancestor of Rincewind? Explain your answer.

Does the fact that the Luggage responds to Lavaeolus affect your answer?

Astfgl is worried that Eric is changing over the course of the story and becoming "likable." Is there any indication to the reader that this is happening other than the demon king's realization? Explain.

It says at the end of the story that the demon lords are happy. Is there any indication that this statement is true or false?

If true, is there any indication that it will, or will not, last long?

Describe Eric's personality. What is it about Eric that makes him believe conjuring a demon and demanding gifts is a good idea?

From what is known about Rincewind, why is it that none of the wizards at the Unseen University care that he is trying to get out of the Underworld? What does this reveal about Rincewind? About the wizards?

What role does Death play in the story? Explain how the story would have been different if he had not been involved.

Why does the author chose to stop the story without revealing the end destination of Rincewind and Eric?

Does it change the story if they never get home or if they are there immediately when they leave? How?

Discuss fear. Is it fear that makes Rincewind retreat from the signs of danger and to think so quickly on his feet, such as when he was talking with Urglefloggah, the one that guards the dread portal? Explain how fear can make him act in more than one way. If you believe it is not fear, explain what it is and how it is different from fear.