

Guards! Guards! Study Guide

Guards! Guards! by Terry Pratchett

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Plot Summary

The city of Ankh-Morpork no longer has a king and is now ruled by a corrupt Patrician. A secret society calls a dragon with the understanding that whoever kills it will be named King and bring a new rule to the kingdom. Things go wrong when the dragon is crowned King of the city and the four members of the Night Watch Guard must keep the new king from eating the citizens.

The secret society known as the Elucidated Brethren of the Ebon Night call the dragon to the city. They want to scare the people to the point that when a hero shows up to kill the dragon he will be crowned the king unconditionally. The leader of the Elucidated Brethren is called the Supreme Grand Master. In reality he is the secretary to the Patrician that controls the city. He believes that he will be able to get a king into the city that will listen to him and do what he commands.

The Night Watch consists of Captain Vimes, Sargent Colon, Corporal Nobbs and the newest member Carrot Ironfoundersson. They are drunkards and thieves with the exception of Carrot who takes everything very literally and feels the need to uphold each law to the fullest. When the dragon first appears they seek the help of someone that breeds swamp dragons which are a smaller pet-like breed of the noble dragons. Her name is Lady Sybil Ramkin. She gives Captain Vimes a swamp dragon of his own. He is a small dragon that was a throwback. He doesn't look right and Lady Ramkin intended to have him put down. Captain Vimes names him Errol. After seeing the larger noble dragon Errol begins to eat odd things and his belly swells continually and he begins to smoke out the ears.

When the larger dragon is summoned to the plaza a young man chosen by the Supreme Grand Master comes and pretends to kill the dragon. The city is ready to have him crowned king when the dragon reappears and kills the king and takes the crown for his own. The dragon makes a decree that one maiden of noble blood will be killed every month to satisfy his hunger. The first one chosen is Lady Ramkin.

Captain Vimes learns that the Patrician's secretary is the one that has been summoning the dragon. Vimes is cast into the dungeon with the Patrician but quickly escapes. Nobbs, Colon and Carrot attempt to kill the dragon with a single lucky arrow but miss. They were trying to save Lady Ramkin from being sacrificed to the dragon. When the dragon attacks them Errol shows up blowing a great flame that he should never have been able to make. The flame continues but doesn't kill the dragon. They are confused until they realize that he is trying to win the dragon as a mate not fight it. The dragon is female.

Wonse is accidentally pushed out the window and the Patrician is back in power. The members of the Watch are given rewards for their services and Lady Ramkin and Vimes decide to see where their relationship will lead. The dragon and Errol are not seen from again and it is not known what happened to them.



Page 1-50

Page 1-50 Summary

The city of Ankh-Morpork no longer has a king and is now ruled by a corrupt Patrician. A secret society calls a dragon with the understanding that whoever kills it will be named King and bring a new rule to the kingdom. Things go wrong when the dragon is crowned King of the city and the four members of the Night Watch Guard must keep the new king from eating the citizens.

There is a library in the city that holds many magical books. The librarian was accidentally transformed into an orangutan. He still watches over the library that is seldom visited.

The dragons haven't been seen by humans for hundreds of years. A secret society called the Elucidated Brethren of the Ebon Night are led by a man called The Supreme Grand Master. He is using the people he has recruited to help he recall a dragon with the expectations that whoever kills it will be the new king. The city has been without a king for years and the Patrician, Lord Vetinari, has corrupted the city. The Supreme Grand Master wants to ensure that whoever is put in charge of the city will be under his control. He has the Brethren gather magical items that they will use to call the dragon.

Captain Vimes, Sargent Colon and Corporal Nobbs are all that is left of the Night Watch of Ankh-Morpork. They do nothing to stop any thief or arrest anyone. Crime is organized and reports to the Patrician on the amounts and where they will steal. There is no unauthorized stealing in the city, and the Patrician is the one who is responsible for organizing the thieves. He was able to organize them by threatening to do harm to them and their families if they didn't cooperate. In return the Patrician gets the order he wants.

In a far away dwarf community a young man named Carrot lives. He comes to the city after leaving his family with the dwarfs. He is not a dwarf himself standing at six foot six but has not been told that he wasn't a dwarf. He is shocked at the news and his father writes the far away city of Ankh-Morpork to ask that his son be given a position in the Night Guard so his son may leave them to be among his own kind. His father tells him that they found him in the forest and all who had been traveling with him had been killed. His dwarf father gives him a sword that had been found among the items left by the bandits that killed Carrot's people. They don't know anything about the sword other than it is not magical.

Carrot gets to the city and reports to a drunken Captain Vimes. Carrot is unaware of how the city is run and first thing he arrests the leader of the thieves guild. The Patrician has a meeting with Vimes to ensure that Carrot will not be arresting anyone else just because they are a thief. The Brethren have managed to get several magical artifacts and are able to summon a small dragon but only for a moment. It kills a man before it



disappears but no one who lives witnesses the phenomenon. As the man dies he talks to Death.

Page 1-50 Analysis

You see early on that Vimes has been worn down. He appears to have cared about his job at one point in time but now spends most of his time drunk. You will find later on in the book that the Night Watch has been down sized and made a joke of purposely. The unrealized potential in Vimes will be a turning point later in the story.

It appears that Carrot is a true innocent. He truly believes in good and evil and tries to right the wrongs as he comes into town. You see that he will follow any order without question. It appears to the reader that many of the people involved in the story either have an agenda in mind to fit their own needs or they are being used. There are not many in the story that will fit the title of a hero. Captain Vimes is a drunkard that seems to be burned out and no longer care; Carrot is naive and is easily manipulated, and the Brethren are all incompetent with the exception of The Supreme Grand Master who wishes to control whoever becomes king. You see that the Patrician wants to have tight control on the city at any cost. He was even willing to legalize crime to an extent as long as he is able to keep control of it.

The librarian is left to be a slight mystery. The reader sees just enough written about him to realize that he will play a significant part in the story later on but are not given any foreshadowing as to what that will be. It appears that there is much that will be tied in together later on in the story that begins by being told as separate incidents. The place that the dragons are kept isn't given a name but later the reader finds out where they come from when they are called. The place is described later in the story.



Page 50-101

Page 50-101 Summary

Captain Vimes and Corporal Colon start out to go find Carrot and Nobbs to ensure that Carrot knows he can't go around arresting people even if they have committed crimes. Nobbs has taken Carrot to a tavern, and when they enter Carrot begins reciting laws that forbid the selling of alcohol after midnight and many other things to the person that is in charge. He then tries to arrest the bartender. A fight ensues but Vimes, Colon and Nobb remain outside waiting to see if Carrot lives or not but not wishing to join the fight. When the fight is over they step inside the tavern to find that Carrot is the only one left standing. They take him out of the tavern before the others begin to wake up knowing they can't jail all of the people there even if they wanted. They find a bottle and begin to drink on the way home as they carry Carrot.

The Supreme Grand Master begins another incantation to recall the dragon to the city at the same time that Vimes and the other Night Watch are stumbling home under the influence of alcohol. The Night Watch have taken a wrong turn and managed to head down a street that houses the worst assassins in the city. This part of the city is called the Shades. Vimes realizes where they are, but before they can flee they realize they are being watched. Before they can do anything to improve their situation they find that the criminals have been turned into charcoal with their outlines cast on the wall behind them. In the dirt Vimes finds the prints of what he believes may be a dragon but they find nothing in the alley.

The Supreme Grand Master is able to feel that the dragon came through but tells the Brethren they haven't completed what they must do. Lord Vetinari was called to the wall to inspect what has happened. He asks Captain Vimes what his opinion is of the shadows that had been etched into the wall and what he thinks of the tracks left on the ground. Vimes explains to him it all points to a dragon, even though he knows that they have been extinct for hundreds of years. The Patrician is upset to hear him talk this way and explains that is impossible and doesn't want any more talk about it. They can't prove what happened to the criminals and the shadows on the wall are not proof of any type, and the prints are some type of duck or animal that came up out of the river onto the streets. He orders Vimes to get rid of the prints and to deal harshly with anyone that suggests it might have been a dragon. Lord Vetinari tells his assistant to have the wall demolished so the etched outlines of the men will be gone.

Lord Vetinari begins to explain to his assistant later on that he has worked very hard to get the city the way it is and has even made sure the Night Watch is incompetent and that Vimes has stayed in charge because he is a drunkard and useless. Vimes does get rid of the tracks in the dirt but he makes a cast of them before they are destroyed. He makes a mental note that this is the first time he has cared that he is being used so obviously or that he has felt a need to conduct his job with diligence. He sets out to find more information on dragons from Lady Ramkin, who breeds swamp dragons, which



are small and kept as pets. He sends Nobbs and Colon off to find out what they can on the streets and leaves Carrot at the Night Watch headquarters in the hopes it will keep him out of trouble.

Nobbs and Colon decide the best way to seem inconspicuous is to go to a tavern and drink. They are drunk and when they stumble out to go to the restroom they see the dragon. Carrot is at the Night Watch when the librarian shows up, but Carrot can't understand him. The Librarian notes that there is a very important book missing and he finally manages to relay to Carrot that a crime has been committed and he must come with him. The librarian is agitated that he can not speak.

Vimes manages to get to Lady Ramkin's house and talks to an apparition, Lord Mountjoy Gayscale Talon thrust III of Ankh. Vimes decides it must be a woman, although he is not sure, but is confused as to what she wants.

Page 50-101 Analysis

Carrot wants desperately to go and uphold the Law. It is obvious he is not going to be easily persuaded that it is alright to let criminals go about doing illegal activities no matter what the Patrician says. You see that he holds a strong belief in the dwarf community and writes his mother letters and asks after the dwarf he had hoped to marry. The reader gets the impression that he will not be permitted to marry her because of her parents or possibly because she suddenly realizes that he is a human and not a dwarf. He continues to write that he loves her.

The reader sees a change take place in Vimes. He is a drunkard and the Patrician has gone out of his way to ensure that crime is a career. You don't know why at this point but you see that he has worked very hard to ensure that the Thieves Guild has an illegitimate business headquarters and that they answer to him. At this point in the story he begins to reveal how much he has intentionally pushed for these things. He seems to fear the thought of a dragon not because it would be a menace to the city but because it would be an aspect that he would be unable to control. You begin to understand that Lord Vetinari is a man that craves power.

It appears that Vimes is intelligent enough to realize that something is going on and he is being manipulated. You see in the story that he is able to realize feelings are returning to him that he hasn't felt in a long time. For the first time you find that he is beginning to act like a law enforcer as he sends his men out to investigate. It seems that Colon and Nobbs don't completely believe Vimes but they are the ones that first see the dragon without being burned to a crisp.

The librarian is fully aware of the significance the missing book has and the reads are led to believe that it may be the book that one of the Brethren stole but readers are not told that at this point in the book. Readers are also not told what the book is other than it is not magical. The librarian appears to be very irritated with Carrot and his inability to understand him. He even makes a mental note of the fact that people seem to



understand dogs but can't understand a mammal that is just one genetic step away from humans. The reader has no clues as to the identity of the Supreme Grand Master but will find later in the story that he is one of the other characters.



Page 101-153

Page 101-153 Summary

Lady Sybil Ramkin introduces Captain Vimes to the swamp dragons that she breeds. They are considerably smaller than the noble dragons and have a tendency to blow up when they try to flame. Vimes shows her the dragon footprint he managed to get from the Shades. She tells him that it looks as if it is in fact from a large dragon but must have been taken from a museum; it is impossible that it is recent because the dragons have been gone for generations.

Meanwhile Carrot arrives at the library with the librarian who is trying to convey the fact that the book that was stolen has the ability to be a very dangerous. He plays a charades game with Carrot. Finally Carrot understands that the name of the book was "The Summoning of Dragons." While this is in progress Lady Ramkin stops laughing about Vimes' dragon print because a giant dragon has appeared overhead and is setting fire to parts of the city. Lady Ramkin makes comments about how amazing the creature looks and the science of flying, which looks impossible. She is the closest thing to an expert that Vimes has and tells him that the dragon won't fly very far because they are territorial. He decides the creature must be living in the city. When they reach the area the dragon had been attacking they realize there are only two places set fire. The dragon is nowhere to be seen.

Later at the Night Watch headquarters Carrot arrives with the librarian and tells the captain that the dragon has been brought to the city by magic and explains about the book. They discuss it but no one knows much about the ancient dragons, and they are unsure of how to go about finding the beast. Elsewhere in the city the Elucidated Brethren begin to get nervous because of the dragon they have released. The Supreme Grand Master continues to manipulate the others lies. He convinces them to call the dragon one last time and that a young lad will appear with a sword he has had made. The sword looks impressive but is not magic. The lad is a distant cousin of the Supreme Grand Master, who feels confident he can control the boy once he is king. The Supreme Grand Master knows that once they have made the new king he won't have to call the dragon anymore or meet with the Elucidated Brethren.

There are heroes that come to look at killing the dragon but decide that the money is not enough. The Night Watch decides that the other books in the library must have known the person that took the summoning book because they didn't make a noise when the theft occurred. They are on top of a building looking for the dragon's lair when they see a large statue unfolding its wings, and they realize the statue is the dragon. Captain Vimes is hurt and taken to Lady Ramkin's house. She dresses his wounds and stays at her house. He is awakened in the night to an angry mob who have come to kill all her swamp dragons because they are so scared of the big one. Vimes manages to scare them off with one of the smaller swamp dragons who is able to produce a flame. Lady Ramkin gives Vimes one of the swamp dragons who is not worth anything because he



is unable to flame or to fly. They eat anything at all and Vimes decides he will see if the small dragon is able to smell the larger one.

Page 101-153 Analysis

At this point the reader will begin to see that the librarian is going to be a very big help concerning the book. You also see it is possible Lady Ramkin and Vimes may be able to develop a relationship but there is no clear indication as to how the captain feels about her. The reader also see a side of Vimes that is compassionate and caring. He comes to Lady Ramkin's aid when the city comes to kill her swamp dragons and he takes the smaller dragon of hers named Goodboy. Goodboy has a lot of things wrong with him, but Vimes begins to care for the little thing. He describes it in such a way that makes one think he finds it ugly but he also feels sorry for the thing. The amount of attention given to the little dragon that nobody wanted leads the reader to believe he will later have a significant role in the book.

Nobbs and Colon don't do much if they don't have to but being with Carrot the reader sees that eventually they will have to start doing more and begin caring about their job. One doesn't yet know the effects Carrot is having but it will soon become evident. Carrot is honest and true and that begins to rub off on the others as the story continues. The reader will see many times in the story where they discuss the fact that it is a million-to-one shot that something will happen. As the story progresses that saying is an indicator of significant occurrences in the plot.

There is a lot of talk about the fact that the dragon has to have a lair and where it comes from. Lady Ramkin continues to discuss the fact that the dragon is built in such a way that it should not be able to fly. This is significant in the story and will be explained later when the reader learns where dragons come from.



Page 153-202

Page 153-202 Summary

Captain Vimes and Lady Ramkin return to the Night Watch headquarters and find that Colon has made the librarian a member of the watch. Vimes is unsure about this but accepts it. They decide to rename Goodboy after Nobbs's brother Errol. They warn Vimes not to call the librarian a monkey because it offends him but as they are explaining this fact to Captain Vimes one of them accidentally says the word.

Meanwhile the Elucidated Brethren are getting their magical items together to call the dragon. The Supreme Grand Master convinces them all that they will need to only call the dragon until they are able to get the new king into the palace. It has become easier for him to call the dragon each time. He can feel the dragon.

After the librarian has thrashed the person that called him a monkey they go to see if they can let Errol sniff out the larger dragon. They head to the Shades where the dragon last touched down to see if it can find where the larger dragon's lair is. When they reached the Shades. Errol doesn't react at all. They head back to the headquarters but as they get there, Errol begins to make noises. The noble dragon was on the roof looking at them. It took notice of Errol and before it could flame was called away by those that control it. They pursue the dragon and find there is a young man in shining armor to fight the dragon. The city is ready to crown the man king without even knowing his name. The man is able to thrust his sword upward into the belly of the dragon and it disappears into a cloud of smoke leaving nothing behind. There is nothing left of the dragon and Vimes looks for proof that it was in fact killed. Once the dragon was killed and the hero named king, Lord Vetinari is locked in the dungeon. He went happily as they took him away.

The dragon had been summoned back to the place it had started from when the Elucidated Brethren had the young man pretend to kill it. The dragon was there now but it had become angry. The dragon had been called enough it remembered a mind that was like a dragon's mind only much smaller. It began the flight back to that mind. Lady Ramkin finds her swamp dragons looking up at the sky and she heads off to the Night Watch headquarters. The librarian knows something isn't right in the city either and sets off into the dangerous library to find what he is looking for in the folds of L-space. While he goes off into the depths of the library Vimes is in the plaza looking at the place the dragon should have been killed. There is nothing there but soon Errol begins to make noises and shake. Vimes realizes the dragon is coming back. Lady Ramkin arrives in her carriage and they start off away from the place the dragon is. It wants the library because the ancient dragons need magic to survive. They are forced to face the dragon, and Vimes has to rescue Lady Ramkin from the dragon.



Captain Vimes and the members of the Night Watch follow the dragon but it makes its way to the secret lair of the Elucidated Brethren. Before they can get out, the dragon flames and kills everyone inside. There were only two members not inside.

Page 153-202 Analysis

You find that a member of the Elucidated Brethren has been killed by a crocodile hiding in a flower bed. The reader sees a foreshadowing at this point in the book that the other members of the secret society may come to a bad end as well. Before the section is over you see they are killed by the dragon.

Lady Ramkin is considered to be of a royal family and the reader gets mixed signals as to what she and Vimes feel for each other, but it does appear there is a mutual attraction that is growing. The reader continues to see how angry Vimes is as he thinks of the things that are happening in his city because of the dragon.

It appears the dragon is aware that he is being called to the city and is more or less controlled. When the dragon faces Vimes and the Night Watch it seems certain that he has ample time to kill them all and is angered that he is called away. Vimes seems to be infuriated by the thought that the city is so willing to take in the man that stood up to the dragon. No one knows his name or where he came from but it appears that the Supreme Grand Master was correct when he told the Elucidated Brethren that they would be happy to have any savior. After the dragon disappears Vimes seems to be the only person in the city who believes it didn't actually die.

When the dragon was sent back it didn't stay gone. It hears a voice and goes to that voice. The reader isn't told outright but the voice he is called to is the Supreme Grand Master's. Realizing that the dragon feeds on magic explains how the creature is able to fly despite its size and the tiny wings. The reader gets an indication that the dragon meant to kill all of the members of the society except the Supreme Grand Master. Extensive explanations are not given but it seems almost like the dragon still needs the Supreme Grand Master.



Page 202-250

Page 202-250 Summary

The two members of the Elucidated Brethren not killed are the Supreme Grand Master and Brother Fingers, who is detained by the Night Watch but later escapes. They learn that he used to work for the University, which explains who stole the book. The librarian finds his way back home to one week ago and finds the book before it was taken. There are rules that keep him from changing history but he is able to read and find out some things about the dragon. He places the book back and follows his trail back to his own time. Vimes and Carrot make their way to the Patrician to tell him that the dragon is back. Vimes is forced to tell his tale to Wonse, who dismisses him and tells him he has been working too hard. Errol begins to eat strange things and acts like he might be sick. Vimes believes he might blow up but knows that there is nothing much that can be done about it.

The city is getting ready to crown the king. Vimes has the Night Watch on top of the roofs. He wants them to be the first to know that the dragon is back. Vimes has a seat to watch the coronation. Vimes keeps looking for the dragon and scares the people sitting next to him when he sees a group of ravens coming at them. Lupine Wonse fires him and takes his badge away. He decides not to fight it and walks away.

Errol continues to eat everything that is left low enough for him to get at, but after he eats he lies in his box and whimpers. The members of the Night Watch are still on a roof watching the city. They find that they are sitting on the dragon itself. It spreads its wings and takes flight. They decide not to tell anyone as they will find out soon enough. Vimes hears the screaming coming from the streets and heads out. The dragon has eaten the newly-crowned king by the time Vimes arrives. He and Lady Ramkin watch the dragon take the crown and pick up Wonse and head into the palace with him. Errol has something going on inside him that tells him he is very thirsty and begins to drink large amounts of oil.

The city had been ready for a celebration after the coronation and continued to celebrate after the dragon had taken the crown. The members of the city discuss the fact that a dragon might make a very good king in fact and everyone seems to agree that it might be a wonderful change. The civic leaders are invited to the palace the next morning. They arrive but are leery of the new king. Wonse looks very drained and pale. He tells each of them that the king will need to eat one person a month to sustain it. The person will be sacrificed to him but doesn't have to be them or members of their families if they cooperate. The dragon can read minds and Wonse can hear the dragon's thoughts in his mind. The dragon also demands to have jewels and gold brought from everyone in the kingdom. The dragon wants gold to lie on. It is not mandatory according to Wonse. The members there are not willing to speak up against the things that are being proposed. When they leave Wonse mouths for help to one of them. They refuse to eat for fear that they are being fattened up.



Page 202-250 Analysis

The reader sees that the dragon has a connection to the Supreme Grand Master and that when the dragon comes into the coronation ceremony he takes Wonse into the castle but doesn't eat him. Wonse is afraid of the dragon but the reader is beginning to see some connection between the two. One doesn't find until later in the story that Wonse is actually the Supreme Grand Master. He called the dragon and wanted to overthrow the Patrician.

Vimes is fired by Wonse and it appears that the two of them have bad feelings towards each other that comes out at this point. If Wonse is the one that called the dragon and set his distant relative up to be the new king, the reader realizes that the dragon still being alive could ruin all his plans. It appears he didn't know enough about the magic to think that the beast could ever make it into their city without being called. The dragon and Wonse seem to be connected. Wonse hated the members of the Elucidated Brethren and seems to be serious in his desire to have them killed. When the dragon returned he did this first.

It appears that while the dragon could hear Wonse's mind, Wonse is unable to tell the dragon is back. Vimes seems to be angry at the thought that the city is willing to take a king and agree to anything that is said just because that person killed the dragon. He doesn't appear to understand why the people act this way and the reader seems him struggling with those around him.



Page 250-300

Page 250-300 Summary

Wonse thinks about running but the dragon can smell his mind. The dragon asks him to explain how things work in the city with men. The dragon doesn't understand how he can be here and eat people and no one will come to stop him. When he questions Wonse about this it is explained that it is human nature to survive and because of that they won't stand up to the dragon because they fear him. The dragon tells him that dragons are supposed to be cruel but they are better than humans because they don't call it morality when they are cruel.

The members of the Night Watch are discussing the fact that Vimes is no longer their captain and that they were going to miss Errol. There is a knock on the door and a couple of members of the palace guard hand them a proclamation to set out in the city that there will be a sacrifice to the dragon. Colon is sure that the city won't stand for it but is forced to put up the notice.

Vimes arrives at Lady Ramkins and gives her Errol. He is odd colors and is so cold to the touch that he burns. She has never seen anything like it before. She and Vimes have an argument and he leaves in a hurry. The Night Watch posts the notice that they need to bring gold and jewels to the palace for the dragon and that there will be one sacrifice a month to the dragon. A man begins to argue stating he has unmarried daughters. The dragon appears and has a conversation with him that no one else can hear. He kills the man and flies off. There are citizens that try to leave but the dragon flames all around the city to the point that no one can escape. He doesn't stop with the attack until people quit the evacuation of Ankh-Morpork.

Colon, Nobbs and Carrot decide they have to try and stop the dragon. Carrot tells them about a spot on a dragon called "voonerables." He tells them that if you hit that spot a dragon will die. Colon has a lucky arrow and they decide that when the dragon comes out to eat the sacrifice they will be able to kill it.

Wonse is looking for the book that he used to summon the dragon. He hopes that if he calls another dragon that the two will fight and perhaps the city will be free. While he is looking for it Vimes comes into the room and produces the book. Wonse tells Vimes that the Lord Vetinari is the one that called the dragon but Vimes has proof that it was Wonse. Wonse has him arrested and sent to the dungeon where Lord Vetinari is being held.

That night Lady Ramkin is awoken and goes to answer the door. Several members of the palace guard are there and ask her to come with them. She refuses but after a struggle she is taken away. One of the palace guard states that the dragon wants to eat her. Vimes finds that Lord Vetinari has trained the rats in the dungeon and they do whatever he asks. Vimes realizes that while the lock was on the outside of the door all



the bolts and bars were on the inside so that you could hole up in the dungeon if need be.

The Night Watch took its place on the roof of a whiskey distillery. Colon claims that his lucky arrow doesn't even have to be aimed because it is sure to hit whatever he wants it to hit. He does some target practicing but is unable to hit anything at which he aims. They look down and see a stagnant pond below and they decide they can jump in it if for some reason they do miss. They decide that million-to-one chances show up when you need them the most and so they should be able to hit the dragon with just one arrow. After further discussion they decide it may be less than a million-to-one chance and decide they need to adjust the odds.

Vimes had made a hole under the mortar near one of the bars in the dungeon. Lord Vetinari offers to help him but Vimes declines his help. The librarian shows up and pulls the bars off and drags Vimes out. As they are sneaking out of the palace they come upon some guards who call the orangutan librarian a monkey. The librarian takes care of one of the guards and they make their way out to where the dragon king is flying.

Page 250-300 Analysis

The reader sees that Wonse believes there is a chance he will be killed but the dragon tells him that he won't be flamed. You are not given a reason why but the dragon seems sure that he needs Wonse. He commands Wonse and it appears Wonse has no control over what he does. The reader sees that Wonse is doing his best to keep the dragon under control but it is easily seen that it is rather futile to do so.

The members of the Night Watch seem almost lost without the captain around. Vimes didn't lead them into heroic battles but they depended on him. The reader sees that they decide to continue what Vimes started and begin to plan the death of the dragon. They cling to the fact that they don't have to be in danger. After the captain is fired they begin to take different steps that they may not have otherwise taken. You see later that they still feel the need to be cautious in the city but are willing to do what it takes to be true Night Watch Guards. They continue to talk about who is going to be sacrificed not knowing that the sacrifice is going to be Lady Ramkin.

The reader sees that when Lady Ramkin and Vimes argue, he seems to care more for her than he lets on. He wants her to watch him go and is angry when she is able to walk away so easily. When she is awakened by someone at the door, she thought it was Vimes and was eager to speak to him. The reader also sees that it appears that Errol continues with his odd eating behaviors and is looking more and more sickly.

Vimes notes while in the dungeon that Lord Vetinari has talent for ruling rats the way he did with the city. The reader gets the impression that something more is going on with Lord Vetinari and it will show itself at the end of the book.



Page 301-355

Page 301-355 Summary

At the Ramkin estate Errol becomes increasingly ill and white smoke rolls from his ears while his stomach makes loud noises. Meanwhile Nobbs and Carrot are helping Colon to increase his chances of hitting the dragon with his lucky arrow. They have him stand on one leg, stick his tongue out, put soot on his face and sing a song. While they are getting ready they see that they are chaining a woman to the rock. After the guards back away from her they realize it is Lady Ramkin. The dragon flies overhead and takes up most of the sky. Colon fires but the single arrow is deflected away. The dragon flies down on them and flames. The flame went through the floor of the distillery and reached a big copper vat that held the whiskey. The chances of them surviving such an explosion were exactly a million-to-one.

Vimes reached the rock unaware that it was Lady Ramkin who was to be sacrificed. He tries to not focus on the fact that his friends had just died in an explosion and tries to free Ramkin while everyone is busy watching the blast. He manages to free her and fight off most of the guards with her help but then the dragon appears out of the blast site. She grabs his hand and they wait to die.

Out of the pond climb Colon and Nobbs. They stand discussing the fact that they don't see Carrot anywhere and are afraid he may have drowned. Carrot is standing behind them. They are happy to see he is alive but then announce that they need to go and finish what they started. They don't want to go and Carrot runs off without them. They finally follow to find that he was waiting around the corner for them and they go to fight the dragon.

Lord Vetinari hears the noise outside and decides it is time to get out of the dungeon. He pulls out a small brick and produces a key that opens the door. Meanwhile at the Ramkin estate Errol has begun to flame and shoots toward the dragon while Vimes and Lady Ramkin watch. The flame was hot but Errol seemed to mainly be circling the dragon king. The members of the Night Watch catch up with Vimes and Lady Ramkin and watch the fight between the two large dragons. They discuss the fact that the fire might not be hot enough. They watch Errol leave and are worried that he has lost.

Vimes states that the chances of Errol winning are a million-to-one. Carrot, Colon and Nobbs are all very excited about this. They see Errol coming back, his flame much hotter than before. As the battle ensues Vimes begins to realize that there may not be a way to kill the dragon. It falls to the ground and the people of the city grab spears, swords and other weapons to finish the creature off as it lies still on the ground. Lady Ramkin refuses to let them kill it. Carrot goes up and arrests the dragon. The towns people begin throwing rocks at the members of the Night Watch and demand the right to kill it. Lady Ramkin threatens the mob and the rocks stop. While the members of the



watch are standing on the rubble, the dragon begins to move. The crowd runs and Errol came back still flaming and exploding.

They are confused because Errol doesn't kill the dragon and lets it get up. Vimes is very worried for a moment that the dragon will kill Errol and win. Lady Ramkin and Vimes exchange a look and realize that Errol is trying to win the dragon. The king dragon that has terrorized the city is actually a female and Errol hasn't been trying to kill her at all.

With Errol and the dragon gone for the moment the members of the Night Watch head to the palace. They place several members of the palace guard under arrest. They find that Wonse is running through the palace and Lord Vetinari is at every door. He has the book and intends to summon another dragon. Wonse confronts Vetinari and calls the guards to put him back in his cell, but when the door crashes open the Night Watch are standing in the doorway. While Carrot was reading Wonse his rights Wonse rushes Lord Vetinari. Vimes stops him with the sword that Carrot was given before he left home. Wonse begins to clutch the summoning book in his hands and mumble to himself. Vimes tells Carrot to throw the book at him and Carrot takes it literally and throws his law book at Wonse.

Wonse steps back after being hit and drops five floors to his death. The Patrician asks Vimes for the sword he is holding and they explain that belongs to Carrot. The Patrician takes an exceptional interest in Carrot after this. The Patrician holds a ceremony for the Night Watch and offers them any reward they want. Colon asks for a raise for the men, a new kettle to replace the one that Errol ate, and a dart board. The Patrician seems almost insulted by the request but Vimes just laughs.

Vimes and the Librarian read in the book that Wonse had that the dragon came from Wonse's imagination. Vimes has the librarian take the book back and put it in a safe place. Vimes goes to Lady Ramkin and they decide that they have a million-to-one chance in making their relationship work. No one is sure what happened to Errol and the dragon.

Page 301-355 Analysis

It appears that after Carrot and the others climb out of the pond they cross the final line and seemingly became proud men that were willing to stand with their heads held high after doing their part to save the city. When they were receiving their thanks from the city they were at attention and tried to be gentlemen worthy of their post.

The reader sees how vital a part Errol played in the story. He had been thought a worthless member of his species. In many respects the Night Watch were considered worthless as well and they all proved to be vital in saving the city. You also find that it appears Lady Ramkin has been determined for some time to make Vimes her intended. He doesn't seem as much in love with her as he seems accepting of the fact that she is a good woman and he can't do better than her. There are many clues to suggest that he does care about her very much.



The reader is left with questions regarding the dragons. The dragon seemed connected to Wonse since it came from his imagination. There is no answer about what happened to the dragon since Wonse was killed. It appears that Lord Vetinari was a very calm man that was capable of planning things out. He knew that Wonse was responsible for trying to overthrow him but was willing to forgive because Wonse still would have been useful in ruling the city.



Characters

Commander Samuel Vimes

Captain Vimes is the leader of the Night Watch. He has done several things in his career that landed him this position as a punishment and has taken to drinking. Although he is a drunk and believes there is no reason to fight crime or arrest criminals, he becomes angry when the dragon begins to take over the city. He fights to make things right for the city and the people that live there. Vimes moves from being a drunk to receiving accolades for his part in saving the city. He acts as if he doesn't care about his job, but when he is fired later he fights to get his job back and continues to work toward ridding the city of the dragon. He has a poor self image but has many redeeming qualities that eventually prove to be the salvation of the city and himself. He even allows himself to consider a relationship at the end of the story.

Lupine Wonse

The secretary to the Patrician, Lord Vetinari. Wonse knew Vimes when they were younger and they dislike each other. He is secretly the Supreme Grand Master and the one that is summoning the dragon to the city. He wants to have a king that will listen to him and all that he says. He is power hungry and hates Vimes. He fires Vimes before the dragon takes over the city. When the dragon leaves, Wonse is confronted by the Patrician who he thought he had locked up. He falls to his death after Vimes tells Carrot to "throw the book at him." When Carrot throws the book at Wonse, who falls backwards and over the edge to his death. The Patrician didn't want Wonse dead but isn't upset about it.

You find out later on that Wonse called the dragon from a place made of fantasy, a type of imagination. The book says that the dragons are made of the darkness inside the person who created it. The dragon that Wonse called was a dragon that represented himself. Wonse had felt a type of captive of the dragon and had even asked for help but it was called out of the recesses of his own mind.

Lord Vetinari

Patrician of the city Ankh-Morpork. Manipulative and corrupt but able to control the elements and people of the city.

Lady Ramkin

Raises swamp dragons for pets. Is the closest thing that they have to a dragon expert and becomes attached to Captain Vimes.



Carrot Ironfoundersson

Raised by dwarfs. He is over six foot tall with a strong sense of right and wrong that he is duty bound to uphold. Has an old rusty sword and a birthmark that is in the shape of a crown.

Librarian

Magically turned into an orangutan many years ago. Helps Vimes and the other members of the Night Watch regain the book that was stolen from the Unseen University Library. The book was about how to call the dragon into their world.

Corporal Nobbs

A member of the Night Watch that is prone to stealing things. He is faithful to his friends in the Night Watch and is looks very ugly.

Sargent Colon

Heavy set and older. He has a lucky arrow with which he attempts to shoot the dragon.

Draco Nobilis

The dragon that is brought into Ankh-Morpork and takes over as king. It is found out later that it is a female and came from Lupine Wonse's imagination.

Cut-Me-Own-Throat Dibbler

Quick to offer a sale on whatever you might need at a promised bargain price . He sells everything from sausages to magic items to protect from dragons.

Death

Shows up whenever someone dies. Never introduces himself and talks only in capital letters.



Objects/Places

Ankh-Morpork

Large city in Discworld. Under control of the Patrician and has been long without a King or rightful ruler.

The Shades

The bad side of town that no one visits without the fear of being murdered. The dragon eats several people here.

The Palace

The Patrician resides here until the dragon takes over. It has a dungeon and secret passages.

Unseen University

School of higher learning in Ankh-Morpork which houses the library with extensive books both magical and non magical. The book that calls the dragon is stolen from the library.

The Summoning Of Dragons

The book stolen from the Unseen University Library. Used by Lupine Wonse and the members of the Elucidated Brethren.

Errol

Swamp dragon given to Vimes by Lady Ramkin. Cannot fly and is thought to be worthless but ultimately saves the city.

The Law and Ordanances Of The City Of Ankh-Morpork

A book given to Carrot before he heads off to join the Night Watch. He learns the book but it is no longer practiced since many of the crimes have been legalized.



Dungeon

The Patrician had it built and a key hidden so he could get out if he was ever locked in. A very comfortable place to be locked up.

Ramtop

Place where the dwarfs live. Carrot was raised here in the mines in the mountains.

Sausage

One of the items that Cut-Me-Own-Throat Dibbler sells on the streets. He suggests it is made from pig type products.

Birthmark

The true king of the city is supposed to have a birthmark that all those of the royal house possess.



Themes

The Desire For Power

The desire for power is a common theme throughout history and is easily identified. This theme takes a different turn when it turns out that the person's desire for power takes the form of a dragon out of his own imagination. Wonse had power. He had the ability to make commands and have them followed to a certain degree and enjoyed the fact that he was able to be in a position above Captain Vimes. He wanted power but didn't desire to be king himself. He talked about the fact that he wanted a king that would be easy to control. His desire for power took shape of the thing he was trying to use. The more he let it out and used it the more it grew in strength until it took over. Later on Wonse has a laugh that is described as being a mad laugh as if he had lost his mind.

The Patrician had power and it seems he doesn't feel he ever lost what he had. He was able to keep a calm demeanor and think things through. He keeps the power but is able to let things flow around him realizing he still has an element of control. Wonse is so desperate to get the power that it ultimately kills him.

Love of Country

The city of Ankh-Morpork is described in such a way that it seems no one could care for it. The Night Watch conduct themselves in a sloppy way and don't enforce laws or take care of the city. It seems they don't care about anything but then the dragon starts coming into the city and takes over. Several times in the story Captain Vimes states that things like that can not be happening in his city. He admits that while the city may not have been perfect, he refuses to let it be taken by the dragon. He suddenly becomes willing to fight for something that before he didn't even act like he enjoyed.

There are several times in the story the Night Watch are more willing to run away rather than run toward a fight or crime, but after they are needed they become proud citizens that are willing to risk their lives to save what they consider to be rightfully theirs. Even the citizens come to the aid of their city in an attempt to kill the dragon at the end when they had before been willing to sacrifice their neighbors to the beast's appetite.

The Need For Love

In the story are two different love themes. The love that goes on between Captain Vimes and Lady Ramkin is one that the reader sees quite clearly, although one is not sure how Vimes feels about Lady Ramkin at times. He doesn't read poetry to her or bring her gifts; however, he is the one that saves her from the rock when the dragon comes to eat her. This story is much more realistic from the aspect that he doesn't fall head over heels in love with her but realizes she is a good woman and he would have a hard time doing much better than she.



The second love story is one that we don't realize is a love story until the end that between Errol and the ragon. All the humans believe Errol is working hard to get ready to fight the dragon, which is why his body is rearranging itself to prepare for a fight. Errol was a throwback that no one wanted but when he was faced with the giant, noble dragon his body became determined to win her over. The others that watched what was happening to Errol didn't realize this but he was willing to put himself through great agony to win her affections and the right to be her mate.



Style

Point of View

The story is written in third person. It is omniscient and reliable but still manages to leave many things to be surprises later in the story. The writer lets you know what the Supreme Grand Master is thinking as well as the members of his secret order, but one is not told that his true identity is Wonse. The point of view is crucial to the story because it is important how each person is dealing with the arrival of the dragon. There is a lot of growth and changes in the main characters. It also helps to know what Lord Vetinari is thinking while in the dungeon. It gives one a clear sense of how he ran the kingdom and what his plans are.

One sees that Lord Vetinari has a key to the dungeon and he begins to explain things about his line of thinking that explain why he went so willingly when they locked him up in the first place. Without the ability to know his thoughts it would have been a mystery about many of the events that he had orchestrated, such as secret passages and putting the key in the cell and making the door the way he had it made. This also comes in handy when you hear the dragons talking. The feelings they have and the thought process leads you to an understanding of how they work that makes the story much more complete in the plot.

Setting

The setting takes place on a mythical world called Discworld in the city of Ankh-Morpork. The city has taverns and houses and a palace where the Patrician lives. The city has no king but has many of the aspects that you would find in a kingdom. There are many magical elements in the city which adds to the plot of the dragon becoming king. Many people in the land have their own way of doing things. You see that the dwarfs are very honest and literal in everything they do. When Carrot goes into the city of Ankh-Morpork, crime has been more or less legalized and one cannot be arrested for most crimes. The way that the citizens act toward each other sets the mood for the sacrifices that begin.

While there are times in the story that the story does take place in other cities such as the dwarf country, most of the story takes place in Ankh-Morpork. You even get a rough idea of what it looks like where the dragons are kept. The place isn't given a name until the end of the story when you find that they are actually kept in the imagination of a person's mind.

Language and Meaning

The majority of the language in the book is modern language. It is very informal and uses slang and words that were invented just for this fantasy world. The language is a



little hard to follow at first. One of the characters is intoxicated at the beginning and the words are misspelled to emphasize the state of mind of the individual. This is effective for the reader but it is not explained why so many words are misspelled and confusing until you have read quite a bit of the gibberish. The language in the story has several places where you need footnotes provided by the author explaining phrases spoken in ancient dwarfish and the people that are unlearned have times when they talk about things that are spelled incorrectly to emphasize the fact that they are uneducated.

Over all the language has a good steady flow that is easy to follow and is indicative in certain situations as to who is talking. When Death speaks, he only uses capital letters and when the dragons are speaking they use italics. The language fits the flow of the story but one has to read to the end of the paragraph, thought and sometimes read the footnote, to realize what the subject is about.

Structure

The story contains 355 pages. It is not broken up into chapters but has breaks in the paragraphs for different sections. There are definitions given in the story for things that a person would need to know such as dwarf language translations as well as dragon terms. There is also a definition section in the back for people and places that show up at different times throughout the Discworld books. It gives a rough idea of the people and places involved, although not all of them show up in each book.

The main plot in the book is how to get rid of the dragon. There are several other subplots going on during the story. Carrot has to come to terms with the fact that he is a human and not a dwarf and find how to fit in. There is also the question of what will happen to Captain Vimes and Lady Ramkin. The city doesn't have a king and hasn't for years, but the writer hints at the fact that Carrot may be the long lost heir. He has the birthmark of a crown and his adopted dwarf parents gave him the sword that broke the other sword made by Wonse. After this happened, the Patrician states he wants to take a special interest in Carrot. They leave this plot open at the end of the book.



Quotes

"Let's say a skion turns up, walks up to the Patrician, says 'What ho, I'm king here's the birthmark as per spec, now bugger off.'" Page 11

"And we will overthrow the cold tyrant and we will usher in a new age of enlightenment and fraternity and humanism and Ankh-Morpork will become a Utopia and people like Brother Plasterer will be roasted over slow fires if I have any say in the matter, which I will." Page 17

"He heard the muffled sounds coming from the nearby alley, slid his leather-bound cosh from his sleeve, waited until the victim was almost turning the corner, sprang out, said 'Oh, shi-' and died." Page 36

"My dear chap, the Watch are a bunch of incompetents commanded by a drunkard. It's taken me years to achieve it." Page 89

"The Librarian gave him the kind of look other people would reserve for people who said things like 'What's so bad about genocide?'" Page 108

"It looked like something some genius of metalwork-one of those little Zen guys who works only by the light of dawn and can beat a club sandwich of folded steels into something with the cutting edge of a scalpel and the stopping-power of a sex-crazed rhinoceros on bad acid-had made then retired in tears because he'd never, ever, do anything so good again." Page 117

"Do you think picking someone up by their ankles and bouncing their head on the floor comes under the heading of Striking a Superior Officer?" Page 163

"You didn't get the chance every day to see someone baked alive in their own armor. It would be something for the children to remember." Page 168

"By the small portable sacrificial altar a tethered billy goat was peacefully chewing the cud and possibly thinking, in Goat: What a lucky billy goat I am, to be given such a good view of the proceedings." Page 226

"The old kings had managed quite well with something on the lines of: 'We hath got the crown, i'faith, and we will kill any whore-son who tries to take it away, by the Lord Harry.'" Page 232

"I think he's trying to make some sort of very hot flame. He wants to challenge the big dragon." Page 261

"Someone out there was about to find that their worst nightmare was a maddened Librarian. With a badge." Page 268



"When you really need them the most,' he said, 'million-to-one chances always crop up.'" Page 292

"Let's be honest: the chances of a dragon the size of Errol beating something that big are a million-to-one." Page 315

"Vimes was vaguely aware of a brilliant blue dress that sparkled in the candlelight, a mass of hair the color of chestnuts, a slightly anxious face that suggested that a whole battalion of skilled painters and decorators had only just dismantled their scaffolding and gone home, and a faint creaking that said underneath it all mere corsetry was being subjected to the kind of tensions more usually found in the hearts of large stars." Page 349



Topics for Discussion

What do you think happened to the noble dragon after Wonse was killed. Why?

Do you think Carrot is the rightful heir to the throne? Why?

The Patrician said that he hoped Carrot would have a long and successful career in the Watch and that he would take a special interest in the career. Why do you think he said this?

At the end of the summoning book it says that the dragon they summon will be one of their own mind. Would it have been possible for Wonse to summon more than one dragon if they both had to come from his imagination? If the first one was power hungry would the second one have had the same desires?

The Patrician tells Vimes that there are not good and bad people, but only bad people that are simply on opposite sides. Do you think he is correct? Why?

Do you believe that the change and the pride the Night Watch have taken on at the end of the book is something that will last or will they fall into the same habits they had before the dragon?

Do you think the citizens would really accept the fact that the dragon was going to eat a person each month just because they were scared? How does this relate to real life situations?

Will Captain Vimes and Lady Ramkin be able to make their relationship work?