

Lords and Ladies: A Novel of Discworld Study Guide

**Lords and Ladies: A Novel of Discworld by Terry
Pratchett**

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Plot Summary

Granny Weatherwax, Nanny Ogg, and Magrat Garlick, the three witches of Lancre, return home after time abroad to discover that the countryside is being plagued by an outbreak of crop circles. Granny and Nanny suspect that it is the actions of a sinister race of elves seeking to break through into Lancre from their own world. With Magrat's wedding to King Verence looming, the three witches must protect the town from invasion by the Lords and the Ladies

Granny, Nanny, and Magrat, the witches of Lancre, return to their home kingdom after several months abroad. Magrat learns that her married to King Verence, the former Jester, is to take place on Midsummer night. After an argument with Granny, Magrat quits witchcraft and moves into the castle to prepare for her coronation.

Meanwhile, mysterious crop circle have been appearing in the fields around Lancre. Granny knows that this portends an attempt by the wicked race of elf and their sinister Queen to break through into the Discworld at a portal on a nearby hill. The circular portal is surrounded by iron slabs called the Dancers, placed there to keep the elves out. Elves despise iron. Granny learns that while they were away, a group of young girls lead by one Diamanda have been dabbling in witchcraft and holding rituals near the circle. Granny confronts Diamanda, leading to a duel between the two women which Granny wins.

In the aftermath of her defeat, Diamanda visits the stones, where Granny intercepts her and warns her that talking about the elves near the stones allows them to gain greater access to the world. Diamanda runs into the stones and Granny follows. They are met by a party of elves, led by the elf Queen. The Queen orders them killed and Granny and Diamanda flee toward the portal. Diamanda is pierced with an arrow and Granny drags her through the portal, along with a single elf warrior that manages to follow them through. On the other side they are rescued by Nanny, who uses iron to subdue the elf.

With Diamanda healing and confined to the castle, Granny and Nanny are hopeful that the elves will not be able to get a further foothold in the world. But, after the Lancre Morris Men foolishly hold a play near the Dancers, the elves gain a strong enough foothold to invade. The battle begins, and only a coordinated intervention by the three witches leading to a face off between the Queen and Granny and a battle-clad Magrat can save the day.

Granny Weatherwax is seemingly killed in the fight, but she has made special arrangements for that eventuality. Nanny unravels the secret of Granny's fake death and Granny is revived just in time for the wedding and coronation.



Pages 1-26

Pages 1-26 Summary

The three Lancre witches, Esme Weatherwax, Gytha Ogg and Magrat Garlick are returning home after brief tour of the Rim. Magrat is undecided about her relationship with Verence, the former court jester and new king of Lancre.

The action begins with a flashback. A young woman runs through the Lancre hills, with a young man chasing her. She outruns the man and finds herself at a circle of stones. A woman in red appears in the center of the stones and invites the girl in, but the girl is skeptical and asks who the woman is and why she cannot leave the stones.

Now in the present day, Jason Ogg, Lancre's blacksmith, who can shoe any animal, has a special visitor arrive with a late night job. Jason knows the rules and shoes the black horse without asking questions. Outside, in a nearby field, something unseen flattens a circle of corn.

Esme "Granny" Weatherwax, Gytha "Nanny" Odd and Magrat Garlick, the witches of Lancre, arrive home from their trip abroad. Magrat goes to see Verence, expecting a resumption of their awkward relationship, and perhaps a proposal. But Verence has been educating himself being king, and he acts as if the wedding is a fait accompli. It will take place on Midsummer Day. He is showing her a field of an experimental bean crop he is attempting to grown when a flattened circle appears in it.

The three witches meet to discuss the crop circles. Granny and Gytha clearly know what is causing the circles. They talk vaguely about the Dancers and begin making plans about what to do. Magrat, furious that they are being so circumspect, argues with Granny. The fight culminates in Magrat telling them she'd rather be queen than be a witch. Granny demands Magrat hand over her broom. Magrat does and storms off.

Hunter William Scrope tracks a stag into the foothills above Lancre, where he sees the animal disappear into the old circle of stones known as the Dancers. As soon as the animal disappears, William sees a flash of white and then something pierces his heart and he falls over dead.

Pages 1-26 Analysis

The young woman in the flashback is Esme Weatherwax, and the telling recounts her first encounter with the elf Queen. Esme is not identified explicitly, but clues from the text lead to the conclusion. The identity of the young suitor who cannot catch her is a mystery, though it will later be revealed that it is Mustrum Ridcully.

In the Discworld series, Death is a regular character, and appears in many of the books. By convention, his dialogue is rendered in capital letters in a different typeset from the



other text. From this convention, it can be inferred that Death is Jason Ogg's midnight client. The arrangement goes back generations. One later learns that the Ogg's, Nanny's family, have been in the area for so long that the local dialect was once known as Oggish.

Granny, Nanny, and Magrat's adventures abroad are told of in the Discworld book *Witches Abroad*. The incidents of that book do not factor into *Lords and Ladies*. Granny and Nanny are both elderly women and elder witches and they have shared the young Magrat's apprenticeship. Granny is not especially easy to get along with, and she has clashed frequently with the young Magrat, who is not nearly as powerful as Granny. Granny frequently refers to Magrat as a "wet hen."

One later learns that William Scrope's assassin is a unicorn that swapped places with the stag when the stag ventured into the circle. The unicorn will from now on act as an assassin for the elf Queen.



Pages 27-52

Pages 27-52 Summary

Magrat moves into the castle. She places much of her witching gear in a large sack and throws it into the Lancre River. Granny and Nanny visit the Dancers and discover the body of William Scrope. Granny can sense that whatever killed him is still about, and they both can see that the area around the Dancers is well trodden.

In the elfin world, the elf hunter Lankin returns to his queen with a dead stag, telling her that her pet successfully made it through the circle.

At the Unseen University, Archchancellor Ridcully receives an invitation to the Lancre wedding. He decides to go, remembering his time spent as a youth in Lancre and anticipating that there will be some good hunting and fishing. He decides to take as traveling companions, the epileptic Bursar, the young mathematician wizard Stibbons, and the University Library, who, through some previous accident, is now, in body, an orangutan.

While Magrat is learning how to be a queen, and finding the duties very dull, Granny checks up on her bees and finds them in a state of agitation. Nanny visits her son Jason and learns that a group of young girls, lead by Lucy Tockley, who is now calling herself Diamanda, have been playing at being witches. Nanny tells him that they have been visiting the Dancers, which is dangerous because the stones keep out the Lords and the Ladies, the elves. Jason tells her he thought that elves were supposed to be nice. Nanny tells him that humans have short memories.

Nanny visits Granny's cottage and finds the old woman stretched out in a bed, in a dead trance. In Granny's hand is a card Nanny has seen many times which reads, "I ATE'NT DEAD!" Nanny knows that Granny is burrowing, and she leaves her be.

Pages 27-52 Analysis

Verence has been attacking the job of being king with abandon. He has been studying statecraft, domestic planning, animal husbandry, agriculture, art, and history. His behavior seems eccentric to the people of Lancre, as the kingdom has always run itself. But, Verence is a kindly man, and is well liked. The castle itself has only a few servants, the old cook, Millie Chillum, Magrat's handmaid, Mrs. Scorbic, who manages the gardens, Mr. Brooks, the beekeeper, and Jason Ogg, who is the captain of the guard, the guard, the herald, the official messenger, the postman, the janitor, and the sole member of Lancre's standing army.

The Unseen University educates all wizards on the Discworld. Its location is unknown to all but wizards, and it is concealed by magic. The Bursar's epilepsy has been particularly bad lately, and he is in almost a continual state of confusion, talking to



people who are not there about matters that are mysterious. The librarian's mind is still intact after his transformation into an orangutan, but his speaking vocabulary has been reduced to the single monosyllable "Ook."

Jason Ogg's opinion of elves is common in Lancre. Granny tells Nanny that one of the reasons she did not want to inform Magrat of the situation was because the younger woman would also have this mistaken view of elves. This proves true, as when Magrat does find out what is occurring, she cannot understand why the other two witches are intent on stopping it.

"Burrowing" is animal possession. Granny is particularly good at it, but it leaves her in a non-communicative state. Because of a past understanding resulting from this, she employs the now well-used note. This device proves critical in the book's climax, and so is introduced to the reader now.



Pages 53-76

Pages 53-76 Summary

Granny and Nanny confront Diamanda, who is instructing her band of young girls in the reading of cards. The confrontation leads to a trial, a test of power between Diamanda and Granny, which will take place at noon the next day. After they leave, Granny and Nanny both comment on the power they can feel in Diamanda, but Granny thinks that it might have been conferred upon her. Granny returns home, plagued by a persistent premonition of death. She works on her will. That night, she sees the unicorn in her garden. She warns it away, telling it to relay a message to its mistress. Stay away from Lancre.

The next day finds Magrat increasingly bored with the duties of a queen, which seem to involve little more than dressing uncomfortably and fainting in between giving orders to have this window curtailed and that hall carpeted. Shawn Ogg informs her of the duel about to take place in the town square, and she heads off to watch.

Magrat arrives at the town square to find the duel in progress. It is a staring contest. Inside a protective circle that Nanny Ogg has drawn in the dirt, the two women sit on chairs, their heads flung back, staring at the sun. Nanny explains that the first to look away loses. Both Nanny and Magrat can tell from her posture that Granny is wavering. One of Nanny's grandchildren darts into the circle, falls down, and begins to cry. Granny, taking her eyes off the sun, picks the child up and hands him back to Nanny. Diamanda feels that she has won, but the townspeople decide that Granny is the winner, because interrupting a foolish act to help a crying child shows wisdom. Magrat pulls Nanny aside and accuses her of cheating, saying that she saw Nanny surreptitiously wave a bag of sweets at the child from across the circle. Nanny replies that "natural actions is natural."

Jason Ogg and the Lancre Morris Men, Lancre's all male volunteer performing arts group, discuss the play they will be putting on for the upcoming wedding.

Pages 53-76 Analysis

Diamanda, despite her apparently power, is, to Granny's eyes, engaging in a lot of foolishness. She, like Magrat, seems to believe that the power of magic comes from the jewelry you wear, the cards you turn, and the stars you consult. She considers Granny a fraud whose "magic" is nothing by psychology. Later, at the duel, Nanny provides a good example of her and her friend Esme's contempt for formal norms in witchcraft. She meets with the young girls of Diamanda's group before the duel to arrange conditions. They agree that a circle of safety must be created. Nanny immediately walks around the town square, toeing a circle in the sand. The girls are aghast, saying that it must be made more formally, with ceremony, and runes, and sacred objects. Nanny tells them



that that is a lot of nonsense, and that the power of the circle comes from the witch who draws it.

Both Granny and Nanny are uneducated, and malapropisms, misspellings and other poor grammar litter their speech and their writing. Pratchett employed this to great comic effect in the previous novel, *Witches Abroad*, when he added French malapropisms to the mix. This standing joke continues in *Lords and Ladies* with Nanny making the occasional inaccurate reference to a French word or phrase and adding "that's foreign for..."

The Lancre Morris Men, whose maintain is more along the lines of drunken dancing, have never put on a play before. They are perplexed by the fact that some of them will have to dress up as women. They are embarrassed at the idea of rehearsing this in public, and are already brainstorming on out of the way locations in which to practice. This foreshadows their eventual uses of the Dancer.



Pages 76-98

Pages 76-98 Summary

The wizards are en route to Lancre from the Unseen University. The Librarian is irritated by the fact that he must pretend to be a pet, and is now sporting a collar with the name 'PONGO' written on it. Ridcully tells them all about the summers he spent in Lancre in his youth, and about a young girl with golden hair. The coach is stopped by a dwarf who tells them that he has been robbed and is now, he is very sorry to say, robbing them. The wizards invite him into the carriage and offer him a ride instead. He tells him that he is Giamo Casanunda, and gives them his business card which identifies him as a master swordsman and the second greatest lover in the land.

Magrat tours the castle with Millie in tow, deciding upon decorations for the wedding, which is also to be her coronation. Bored, she slips away from the flighty maid and wanders into the grounds where she meets the falconer Hodgesaargh, who is still trying to get the royal birds to stop attacking his face every time he handles them, and the beekeeper Mr. Brooks. Mr. Brooks tells Magrat about the cycle of the hive and how the hive cannot contain two queens. Normally, when a new queen is bred, the old one will leave the hive, taking a portion of the bees with her, her swarm, to begin a new hive. But, when the weather is bad, and the old queen cannot leave, they two fight to the death, for there cannot be more than one bee in a hive.

Nanny visits Granny's cottage with three of Diamanda's former apprentices in tow. The girls tell her that they want to be witches. Granny stands back, as if testing them, and tells them to knock her hat off. None of them can do it. Granny tells Nanny to do it and Nanny picks up a stick from the ground, walks over to Granny and knocks the hat off. When Granny tells them they failed and to go home, the girls protest. They tell Granny that this is exactly what Diamanda meant when she said that Granny's magic was just psychology. Granny then has Nanny hold her own hat up and Granny blasts it into pieces. The girls leave.

Diamanda, furious at the injustice of the trial, walks up to the Dancers in the darkness. Nanny Ogg, uneasy in her cabin, wraps an iron pry bar in a sling of linen and walks out into the night.

Pages 76-98 Analysis

The girl with the golden hair that Ridcully refers to is Granny Weatherwax. The details of their relationship are being doled out slowly to the reader. Giamo Casanunda, the second greatest lover in the world, made an appearance in the previous book, *Witches Abroad*, where he attempted to seduce Nanny Ogg. His romantic skills are presented as ironic as dwarfs are not considered particularly sexually dynamic and even have trouble discovering which of each other is male and female.



Magrat is appalled at Mr. Brooks's description of a bee hive. She always considered the activity of beekeeping to be peaceful and pastoral, and is disturbed to hear that it depends on such violence. This is an example of a reoccurring trait of Magrat, which is that she has a great hope that the world is beautiful and mystical and is often disappointed when she discovers the soggy reality. It is one of the reasons why Granny and Nanny refer to her as a "wet hen." The story of the bee queens is touched upon later when Magrat, the would-be new queen, grapples with the elf queen.

The hat test is typical of the witching styles of Granny Weatherwax and Nanny Ogg. In witching, they place more emphasis on presence of mind, action, and what they call "headology." But this does not mean, as the young girls learn, that they lack demonstrable magical power.



Pages 99-124

Pages 99-124 Summary

Granny confronts Diamanda at the Dancers, telling the younger woman that she knows she made a deal with the Queen. Granny warns Diamanda that continuing to aid the elf Queen will put her up against Granny, who will not hesitate to do what is necessary to protect Lancre. Diamanda runs into the circle and disappears. Granny rushes in after her.

Granny finds herself in a snowy wood. She races after the young woman who is plowing through the snow toward a group of elves on horseback. Diamanda approaches the group and falls to her knees before the elf Queen. The Queen seems to recognize Granny, and commands her to kneel as this is her kingdom. Granny refuses. The Queen rides away with half the company, but not before commanding those that remain to kill the intruders. Granny begs and plays possum with the elf warriors, but then starts them by knocking two down. She grabs Diamanda and the two set off at a run toward the stones. The elves are on horseback, and would easily catch up, but Granny burrows into the mind of the lead horse and causes it to panic, knocking the riders down. When she returns full to her running body, she is closer to the stones. But Diamanda lies on the ground behind her, an arrow shaft protruding from her shoulder. Granny picks the girl up and tries to carry them both through the stones.

One of the elves grabs Granny's ankle as she tumbles through the portal. The elf travels through with them, but is quickly subdued by Nanny, who arrives wielding the pry bar. Diamanda is alive, but her life signs are faint. Nanny and Granny take Diamanda and the unconscious elf to the castle, hoping the Magrat, who has studied more about herbs, will know of a way to treat the poison that the elves use on their arrows. Magrat decides to treat the wound with a poultice of moldy bread. Diamanda's life signs stabilize, but she remains unconscious. Granny warns that she must not be left alone.

While Magrat and Nanny are attending to Diamanda, Granny takes Verence into the dungeons to show him the captive elf. She explains about the Dancers, the elves, and the danger that they pose. Verence notices that Granny seems confused about where she is and what she is doing.

Pages 99-124 Analysis

During their argument, Diamanda taunts Granny by calling to the elves several times. She, like most other people in the town, is under the mistaken impression that elves are fascinating, fun-loving creatures. Granny tells her that naming the elves is dangerous, especially so near the stones. They come when called. This will prove true later, when the elves finally invade the town.



The reason Granny is able to momentarily get the upper hand on the elves warriors is because they are not usually content to simply kill, but must make an entertainment of it. This sadistic weakness crops up again and again during the invasion. Granny says in this way, elves are like cats. Cats are furry and soft, and loving to humans, and this cloaks the fact that they are such devilish murderers to so many other creatures. Elves likewise are beautiful and enchanting, qualities which decisive humans into not seeing, or not remembering their murderous wickedness.

Magrat's moldy bread poultice is a humorous allusion to the natural antibiotic Penicillin, which is cultivated from mold. King Verence, like his future Queen, is under the impression that elves are good, and is surprised by Granny's warning. He is also surprised that the elf she shows him is far from beautiful. Granny says that this because the elf is behind iron and cannot properly project a glamour. A glamour is a kind of magical disguise. It functions in two ways. First, it acts as a literal disguise, shrouding the user in a different form. Second, it has a powerful psychological effect on the mind. Elves use their glammers not only to convince humans of their striking beauty and grace, but to infect humans with a feeling of unworthiness and awe.



Pages 125-150

Pages 125-150 Summary

After having some trouble picking a location to rehearse in peace, the Lancre Morris Men decide to use the old circle of stones up on the hill. Jason is uneasy about this decision, as his mother Nanny Ogg has often warned him about the stones. The other men assure him that their use of the stones is harmless. They will not be attempting any witchcraft or dancing around in nothing but their skins like Diamanda had the other young girls doing. The rehearsal turns into a drinking party and the men spend the night near the stones. The men wake up hung over the next day. As they are leaving, Jason Ogg thinks he hears faint voices coming from the circle.

Granny Weatherwax senses a breach between the two worlds, but she is becoming increasingly disoriented. She has to leave little notes for herself to remind her about what she is supposed to be doing.

The coach carrying the wizard from the Unseen University is stopped at the Lancre River Bridge by a troll, who demands payment. The troll mistakenly calls the Librarian a monkey. The Librarian throws the troll into the river. The coach proceeds and soon arrives outside Lancre Castle, where it is met by Shawn Ogg, who is more interested in the bag of mail that the coach is carrying. The king, who has been expecting a book to arrive, races out to the coach and meets the wizards. Shawn Ogg opens the package to the king, who is mortified by embarrassment until he learns that it is the wrong book. Verence thought he had ordered a book on 'marital' arts, the woodcuts from which both he and Magrat were eager to consult for their wedding night. Instead, the book was on 'martial' arts, and Shawn Ogg, the only member of the standing army, thus assumed it was for him. He walks off with the book, eager to begin learning chops, throws, and holds.

Pages 125-150 Analysis

It is not simply their presence at the stones that causes the Lancre Morris Men to accidentally allow the Queen greater access to the minds of the Lancre people, and in particular, back into the mind of Diamanda. It is the fact that they are discussing their play, which is a fantastic comedy whose description is very similar to *A Midsummer Night's dream*, a play by Shakespeare that involves the faerie or elves. Their numerous drunken slips of 'elves' and 'lords and ladies' and 'fair folk' act as a call to the elves.

The description of Granny Weatherwax's dementia makes it clear that it is not simply a result of old age or fatigue. She is seeing into many possible universes, what Ponder Stibbons, the young mathematical wizard traveling with Ridcully calls the "continuiniunum" or sometimes the "continuiniunium." Granny suspects that the elf Queen is trying to confuse her, but this is not the case.



Verence and Magrat are both sexually inexperienced. Their interest in a book to help them on their wedding night is typical of both their personalities, Magrat, who has read more books on magic than Granny and Nanny put together even though she is an inferior witch to both, and Verence, who is reading everything on being a king to play a role he, the lowly court jester, was never meant to play.



Pages 151-175

Pages 151-175 Summary

It is the day before the wedding. Magrat checks on Diamanda and finds that the bed the young woman is sleeping on is surrounded by a circle of iron bars wrapped in sheets. Shawn tells her that it was done at Granny's instructions. Magrat, still angry with Granny and mad at her presumption to give orders in the castle, has the iron removed. Magrat still believes Granny and Nanny are mistaken about the nature of elves. At Granny's insistence, Verence has not revealed to Magrat that there is an elf imprisoned in the basement.

While trying to find Verence, Magrat investigates her future husband's room and finds that he still sleep on the floor by the door, like a jester. Among his things she finds a folded up note. She reads it and her cheeks flush with fury and embarrassment.

The castle is abuzz. Guests have arrived from far and wide for the wedding and the Lancre Morris Men's play entertainment is set to occur at sundown. Casanunda meets Nanny Ogg in the castle and they make a date for the evening. Ridcully spots Granny and approaches her. Without asking her permission, he teleports them to the Lancre River Bridge, which is the very location that he proposed to her and was turned down so many years ago. They talk for awhile, and the conversation turns to Ponder Stibbons and his parallel universes. Granny has an epiphany about what is happening to her. She asks Ridcully to teleport them back, but he tells her he wouldn't have the strength to do it again for some time. Granny sets off for the town at a brisk walk, and the two of them discuss the danger of the stones and the crop circles. The unicorn steps out onto the road before them.

Magrat has locked herself in her room and refuses to come out. She is packing. Nanny tries to induce her to come out, but gives up and leaves for her date with Casanunda. The rest of the guests file out of the castle and up the hill to the stones, where the men have decided to have their play.

Granny and Ridcully back away from the advancing assassin unicorn. Granny tells Ridcully that she cannot get into the unicorn's mind because the Queen is already there. They back onto the bridge and leap into the river below to escape the beast.

During the play, the Librarian notices that it has begun to snow around the circle of stones. He soon sees that those around him seem hypnotized.

Pages 151-175 Analysis

The elves despise iron. They cannot abide its touch and iron weapons are particularly dangerous to them. The Dancers themselves were made by the dwarfs out of Thunderbolt iron, a particularly strong form of iron cooled from a molten form. This



makeup gives the stones a magnetic property which Stibbons will later notice and attempt to investigate. The circle itself is a weak area, a near breach between two different worlds, which may be penetrated by magic.

The text of the note that Magrat finds will not be revealed until the end of the book. It is a letter from Granny Weatherwax, sent to Verence while the witches were abroad. It tells the new king to have the wedding preparations in full swing when they return because Magrat does not know her heart and will dither if the marriage is not presented to her as a *fait accompli*. Magrat, who was from the beginning curious about how Verence knew when they would be returning, is furious at Granny for her manipulation. At this point, she intends to leave Lancre altogether.

Nanny Ogg and Casanunda are an interesting match. She is an older woman of generous proportions with only one tooth left in her head, and he is a 3'9" dwarven Casanova. When she points out that she is old enough to be her mother, he corrects her by telling her that his mother is over 300. He declines to answer when she asks how old he is.

The Librarian is not fascinated by the elfish magic. Pratchett writes that monkeys and apes never felt the allure of a tiger's beauty because they were always fixed on its teeth.



Pages 175-198

Pages 175-198 Summary

Magrat, now alone in the castle except for Shawn Ogg, Diamanda, and the elf prisoner, tries on her wedding dress. Diamanda, alone in her room, awakens and walks off into the castle. Shawn Ogg hears noises coming from the dungeon and decides to investigate. He discovers Diamanda in the dungeons. She has released the elf warrior, and she tries to get Shawn to remove his iron cowl so that he can hear the elf speak properly. Shawn flees.

Granny and Ridcully swim to shore downriver and Granny tries to get her bearing for the walk through the woods back to Lancre. Granny gets lost in the forest and they are quickly surrounded by elves. Ridcully says he's strong enough to transport one of them back to the castle. She tells him to teleport himself, which he does, thinking he bring back reinforcements. Granny gives herself up to the elves.

Magrat hears singing in the castle and leaves her room to investigate. She meets up with Shawn Ogg, who informs her about the elf and Diamanda. He also mentions that everyone is late coming back from the entertainment. They agree that Shawn will attempt to flee the castle to get help. He locks Magrat in her own bedroom so that she will not be tempted by the elves to open the door.

After awhile, Magrat hears sounds of fighting and of screaming. Her door is opened by three elves, but Magrat is already out the window and climbing up the vines on the castle wall to another window. Magrat bars the door of the new room. The elves invite her out to dance and play. Eventually one of them forces the door. Magrat ambushes it and knocks it down the shaft below the garderobe. Magrat runs through the castle, evading the elves. She eventually finds herself in the portrait hall, where paintings of past kings and queens line the walls.

Magrat finds herself fascinated by the portrait of Queen Ynci the Short-Tempered, a severe, but beautiful queen whose portrait shows her in full battle armor. Magrat makes her way to the kitchen, where finds Nanny Ogg's incorrigible cat Greebo. She picks up the cat and fights off another elf, barring herself in yet another room, which turns out to be the armory. Magrat finds Queen Ynci armor, including her breastplate and winged helm, untouched under a thick layer of dust.

Pages 175-198 Analysis

Shawn Ogg's iron cowl keeps him from hearing the elf's voice. This ability of iron headgear to impede the enchantment of the elves is exploited later by Magrat. It is unclear when Magrat realized that she had been wrong about elves. Her first meeting with an elf was when they broke into her door and invited her to come dance and play. Perhaps it was the sinister act of breaking into her bedchamber coupled with her foul



mood that immunized Magrat and allowed her to discern their true nature. But the shift in her mind is permanent, and for the rest of the story she will fight the elves fiercely.

The garderobe is explained in the text as a closet built out of wood that hangs out from the castle wall and is connected to a long shaft. It allows the room's royal occupant to relieve him or herself into the pit below. The pit is cleaned out regularly and the contents buried by the castle's service worker (Shawn Ogg). The closet is hung with fine garments because it is said that the air wafting up from below discourages moths.

Greebo played a prominent role in the previous book, *Witches Abroad*. He is the worst kind of terrorizing cat, capable of attacking and humiliating almost anything from wolves, to stags, to people.

The armory of Castle Lancre is not extensive. It is a small room filled mostly with crossbows for defending the castle walls from a small attack. What little armor there is besides Queen Ynci's old suit is already in use by the Lancre army (Shawn Ogg).



Pages 199-225

Pages 199-225 Summary

Shawn Ogg fails to make it out of the castle. The elves take him to the armory door and tell him to bid the lady to come out. One of the elves peeks in through the keyhole and keels over from a crossbow dart to the eye. Magrat opens the door with a box labeled 'candles.' She gives the box to one of the remaining elves, who takes it reflexively. She feigns terror and in a quavering voice reminds the elves that they promised not to harm her. They tell her they lied to her, and one of them attempts to stab her through the back of her dress with a stone dagger. The dagger is miraculously turned. The second elf opens the box Magrat gave him and Greebo springs out of it and begins slashing away at his face. Magrat produces a battle ax and kills the two remaining elves. She pulls Greebo off the last and begins interrogating him about what happened to the rest of her people. He tells her that her king belongs to the Queen now and he will tell her nothing. She claps the elf in irons and leaves it in the dungeons. Shawn tells her that the elves stabbed Diamanda in the kitchen and that he does not know whether she survived.

They find Diamanda sprawled out in the kitchen. She is once again in a coma. Magrat does what she can for the woman, and then tells Shawn that she is going out to look for help. She intends to briefly search the village and then make for the mountains where she hopes to rally the dwarfs and trolls to return to Lancre and fight the elves. She takes one of the elf's horses and rides into town. She spies Carter the Weaver placing a bowl of milk out on his porch and retreating inside. She pounds on his door and eventually convinces him to open it. He tells her that the play was attacked and that he managed to get away. He has returned to protect his family from the elves, and hopes the bowl of milk will appease them. Magrat leaves, kicking the bowl aside as she does.

In the woods around the Dancer, Jason Ogg is attempting to rally the scattered members of the Lancre Miller Men so that they can escape. The hill is packed with elves, who have put up battle tents near the Dancers. Jason and his troop begin to dance their way down the hill, hoping to keep the elves from attacking by entertaining them, but the elves close in around them. Jason has the men turn the dance into a coordinated fight to defend themselves.

Nanny and Casanunda push aside debris blocking the fireplace in the town inn. They took refuge there while the elves ransacked the inn. Nanny says that she knows where to find someone that hates the Queen even more than Granny does. They retrieve Nanny's broom from her cottage and then visit Jason Ogg's workshop, where Nanny takes an iron crowbar and a horseshoe made from a special iron that Jason uses only for the horse of his secret client. Then, despite Casanunda's fear of heights, the two mount Nanny's broom and fly into the hills. Three elves, riding yarrow stalks, attempt to intercept them, but Casanunda fends them off with the iron crowbar.



They arrive at the Long Man, three burial mounds in the shape of male genitalia. Nanny has Casanunda use the crowbar to break into the crypt and the two go inside.

Pages 199-225 Analysis

Magrat is at the moment exceptionally focused following her moment of inspiration beneath the portrait of Queen Ynci. Her determination will waver when she fails to find help and must contemplate the impossibility of assaulting the elves alone. When she is interrogating the remaining elf, she threatens it with a very ironic torture. She tells the elf that if it does not help her she will arm it for battle, meaning that she will dress it in iron armor. The elf is terrified by this prospect, telling her that it would be like being buried below the earth.

The dance that Jason has his men perform is called the Stick and Bucket dance. Though it is never described, it is suggested that the dance is obscene. Jason himself has said that they will never do the dance in public again after one particularly embarrassing performance.

The elves have enchanted the entrances to their world to strip and destroy by magic any piece of iron that crosses over. When Granny ran through the stones to try to save Diamanda, the iron nails in her hobnail boots vanished. The iron that Jason Ogg uses to shoe Death's charge appears to be exempt from this restriction. Nanny's future use of the horseshoe she takes from Jason's shop depends on this.

Casanunda notices that the inscriptions by the seal of the Long Man burial mounds mention that the mounds contain the ancestors of the Oggs. Nanny confirms this, and tells him that her family has been in Lancre for a long long time. Nanny says that Granny does not like to fly over the Long Man because of its lewd shape. Granny is in general contemptuous of anything sexual, and got upset with Magrat for informing her of the metaphorical nature of brooms and why witches ride them the way that they do.



Pages 226-249

Pages 226-249 Summary

Nanny and Casanunda delve deep into the crypt, which opens into the Lancre caves. There they find an archway made of two stones similar in nature to the stones that make up the Dancers. Nanny tells Casanunda to leave the crowbar outside and the two step in. The inside is like a sauna, and Casanunda can tell that they are no longer underground by in a long, dark tent. Shapes move about on the edge of his vision and he is sure that they are surrounded. Nanny walks up to a large reclined figure, the Long Man, who is described as an anthropomorphic stag, with a full rack of antlers. She tells him that the Queen is making mischief in Lancre and that he must make an appearance to balance things out. When he asks her why he should allow her to leave his world, she produces the iron horseshoe and threatens him with it. She tells him if he does not help cowl the Queen, that she will have Long Man dug up with iron shovels. After they have left, Casanunda asks why the Long Man hates the Queen so much, and Nanny tells him that it is because he is her husband. The Long Man is the elf king.

Magrat is intercepted on the road by three elves. One of them is the Queen's chief lieutenant, Lord Lankin. He tells her that there are arrows trained on her, but the elves are ambushed and subdued by the Librarian. Stibbons and the Bursar step out of the trees. They tell Magrat what happened at the play, and how the Librarian broke the enchantment on them by punching them, and then carried them away. Magrat describes Granny and Nanny to Stibbons, and asks if they were at the play. Stibbons says that they were not. He says the elves have had the stones pushed down. Magrat tells them that she intends to go up to the Dancers and fight to get her king back. Stibbons tries to dissuade her, but she sets off and, reluctantly, the wizards follow.

Ridcully appears in the castle, which is now filled with people who scattered when the play was attacked. Shawn Ogg is trying to organize them and motivate them for the defense of Lancre. He attempts to rouse them with a speech about honor and glory. Nanny then stands up and tells them that they either stand up and face the elves or they face her. This is all the motivation the crowd needs.

Granny is tied to the back of the Queen's horse. The elves are breaking camp, preparing to proceed in force into Lancre and lay siege to the castle. Verence is beside the Queen, entranced. The Queen intends to marry him and gain dominion over the land. She knows that Magrat is approaching in full battle gear.

Pages 226-249 Analysis

At one point during his conversation with Nanny Ogg, the Long Man stands up. He is well over three meters tall and nude. Casanunda notices that his superhuman height is matched by a superhuman endowment. The concept of male prowess being linked to



goats, stags, and horses goes back to ancient times. The licentious god Pan was thought to be goat legged, and the race of creatures known as centaurs, the half men half horse warrior philosophers of the forest were said to have mesmerizing powers over human women, particularly because of their large genitalia.

Stibbons tells Magrat that the elves enrage the Librarian because they "smell wrong" to him. The Librarian, while still in mind a man, displays some tendencies toward apish behavior. Magrat is far from confident as she approaches the elf tents. She has resigned herself to her fate and is marching toward death.

The only weapon in sufficient enough supply to arm the new Lancre ragtag army is the crossbow, which, after the first volley, is practically useless on the field of battle because of the length of time it takes to rewind the bow for another shot. Still, the citizens respect and fear Nanny Ogg enough to fight.



Pages 250-281

Pages 250-281 Summary

The elves finish breaking camp. As the Queen rides by Magrat, she tells her warriors to kill her. All of a sudden, Shawn Ogg and the new Lancre army rush through the trees and toward the elfin host. The Queen then projects a glamour that washes over the humans and they stop in their tracks. Magrat can feel the enchantment invade her mind, telling her that she was a barbarian for intending to attack something so beautiful and so much more virtuous than her.

Granny, the only one seemingly unaffected, baits the Queen into untying her. The two of them face off. They exchange psychic blows that are felt by everyone present. The Queen seems amazed at Granny's power. As the duel intensifies, Granny calls out to Nanny, telling her to look into the box in Granny's cottage, and that she'll know what to do from there. Granny slaps the Queen. The Queen orders her warriors to fill Granny full of crossbow darts, but the elves seem unable to comply. Granny slaps the elf Queen again, but this time the Queen strikes back with a psychic blow so strong that it knocks everyone present, elves and humans, to the ground. As if on cue, all of the bees in all of the hives around Lancre abandon their combs, form a swarm headed by 150 queens, and head toward the Dancers.

Granny is on her knees before the Queen. She turns her face toward Magrat and suddenly Magrat hears Granny's voice in her head. She asks Magrat if she is ready to be Queen. Magrat then feels the enchantment lift and her mind refocuses. The bees arrive and swarm only Granny, covering her from head to toe as she falls over. Magrat swings her battleaxe at the elf Queen, but the Queen catches her wrist. Magrat kicks the Queen in the shin and then tackles her, pinning the elf beneath iron. Magrat's iron helmet rolls off and the Queen again attempts to break into her mind. Magrat lashes out, remembering what Mr. Brooks said about queen bees. A hive can have only one. She strikes the Queen repeatedly, and, finding her axe, prepares to make the killing blow.

At that moment, the enchantment lifts, and the spectral form of the Long Man appears. He approach the Queen as Magrat backs off. The Long Man offers the Queen his hand and asks for a meeting. She reaches for it.

Everyone awakens on the hilltop. The elves are gone. Ridcully kneels before the prostrate form of Granny Weatherwax, now abandoned by the swarm of bees, and pronounces her dead. Granny is taken to the castle, while Stibbon, the Librarian and the Bursar work to set the Dancers in place once more.

Nanny and Magrat go to Granny's cottage and uncover the box. Inside they find a collection of papers. There is a small envelope address to Nanny which says on the outside 'Gytha Ogg open this NOWE!' There is a larger bundle of papers that is Granny's last will and testament, the envelope for which marks Granny's date of death



as Midsummer night. And there is a stack of old letters address to Granny from an unknown hand. Magrat tells Nanny about the letter that Granny sent to Verence. Nanny asks Magrat if she wants to marry Verence. When Magrat says that she does, Nanny tells her to go look at Granny's woodpile. A confused Magrat does so and returns to report that the woodpile is high. Nanny says that the state of the cottage seems to suggest that Granny had some doubts about her impending death. Nanny opens the small envelope addressed to her. Inside she finds the small, well-used card reading 'I ATE'NT DEAD!'

Nanny races out of the cottage, telling Magrat to bring the sugar bowl. They go to the castle, where Granny's body has been placed in one of the bedchambers. Ridcully and Verence meet them. Nanny is upset that the windows are all closed. She takes candelabra and hurls it through the biggest window. Immediately, a swarm of bees enters the room and alights on Granny, who comes to. Nanny pours the bowl of sugar on the table for the bees. Granny asks if she has missed the wedding, and when she finds out that she hasn't, she orders it to proceed.

Magrat and Verence are married and Magrat is crowned Queen of Lancre. Walking home from the ceremony, Granny and Nanny talk about the new Queen. They have not had the

heart to tell her that Queen Ynci is a fictitious figure made up by a previous king who felt the royal history of Lancre lacked flavor. The unicorn leaps out onto the road before them. Granny subdues the creature and, taking a strand of hair from her head, she lassos the beast and pulls it into town, and to Jason Ogg's smithy. She tells Jason to shoe the beast. Jason tells her that he is afraid the iron will kill the creature, and he is unwilling to kill. Granny has her silver tea set melted down and used to make the horseshoes. Jason shoes the unicorn and Granny lets it run back into the forest, telling Nanny that the shoes won't last long, but that the creature will be free of the influence of the Queen for one thousand years.

Pages 250-281 Analysis

Before Granny comes to, Nanny Ogg tells those waiting that Granny will be bragging about this for a long time. Earlier, when describing how Granny possesses animals in a feat witches call "burrowing," Pratchett describes how difficult it would be to possess a swarm of bees, who have one mind that is spread out over a varying distance. After possessing a rabbit, Granny had set out an offering for the creature. Burrowing was something of an invasion, but Granny believed that it created an obligation, a debt to the animal. Nanny knew this, and thus had Magrat bring the bowl of sugar. When Granny awakens, she tells Nanny that the bees must be given something and Nanny is ready with the sugar. This particular form of teamwork is common between the two. It is usually Granny that attempts the complicated piece of powerful magic in any situation. But Nanny, as if reading her friend's mind, is always there at the perfect time with the right item or action to finish the work.



The note that Granny uses while burrowing, which was set up earlier, appears again. A careful reader will have no trouble preempting Nanny's realization.

While helping to reposition the Dancer, Stibbon discovers their curious ability to pull other metal objects toward them. He cannot explain the phenomenon. This of course is magnetism, but most of the cultures on the Discworld, including even the students of the prestigious Unseen University, have not made such scientific advancement. Throughout the series, Pratchett refers to modern science with great frequency. But, the way in which his characters understand or attempt to understand such things is always nuanced for humorous ends.



Characters

Esme (Granny) Weatherwax

Granny Weatherwax is the eldest witch in Lancre, and is far and away the most powerful. She is tall and lean, spry for her age, with long gray hair that she keeps tied in a tight bun beneath her witch's hat.

Granny is kind but far from sweet-natured. She is difficult to get along with and has an acerbic manner. She is prudish and skeptical of anything fancy. Uneducated, her speech is littered with bad grammar and her spelling is atrocious. She is brilliant, more than a little wise, and a prototypical lateral thinker.

When she was a young woman, and aspiring witch, Esme investigated the Dancer and ended up meeting the elf Queen. She turned down the elf Queen's offer of power, a test that the other young witch, Diamanda would later fail. Around that same time, Esme was being courted by Mustrum Ridcully, a young wizard who would later become the Archchancellor of the Unseen University. Esme turned down his proposal of marriage to pursue her interest in witchcraft.

Gytha (Nanny) Ogg

Nanny Ogg is the second eldest witch of Lancre and the matron of the vast Ogg family. Riotous and funny-loving, plump and passionate, she is, aside from being a witch, everything that Granny Weatherwax is not. When Nanny Ogg walks into a room, no matter how dire the situation, the first thing she does is check to see if there is a buffet.

Nanny is agreeable and unflappable. She often acts to mitigate fights between others, most often between intractable Granny Weatherwax and young Magrat Garlick. Unlike the other two witches, she is an experienced woman with an extensive family, including many grandchildren. She teases Granny about her sexual prudishness and she has already made several attempts to offer Magrat advice for her upcoming wedding night. Indeed, Nanny tells Magrat that her first rule of witchcraft is "always get the young man's name and address."

Nanny is also fearless and a font of practical wisdom, two things that most endear her to her best friend Granny Weatherwax. Nanny is a generously proportioned older woman with ruddy complexion and one remaining tooth which she uses fearlessly in her gustatory pursuits.

Magrat Garlick

Magrat is a young witch who has for several years served as apprentice to the two elder Lancre witches, Granny Weatherwax and Nanny Ogg. Magrat is small and thin, with



hardly any bust, and a thicket of fly-away crinkly hair that is always seeming hell-bent on entrapping every leaf and twig it can. She is intensely curious about witchcraft, and takes a more academic approach to it than her two elders. She has read more books on witchcraft and herbal lore than Granny and Nanny combined, and she owns many articles of official magical paraphernalia, silver knives, jewelry, etc., almost all of which do not work. She has learned from Granny and Nanny that in almost all cases, a simple butter knife from the kitchen drawer will outperform the fanciest ceremonial magical dagger. This knowledge is no comfort to Magrat, who maintains a hopeful belief, naïve yet somehow noble, that the world is a magical and mystical place. She is consequently in an almost constant state of disappointment with reality.

Magrat is engaged to the former jester and who is now King of Lancre, Verence. Magrat is indecisive and, as Granny Weatherwax puts it, "doesn't know her own heart," and she has allowed the relationship to founder because she cannot bring herself to decide upon a course of action.

Jason Ogg

Jason is Nanny Ogg's eldest and the village blacksmith. Jason faithfully keeps the business arrangement passed down the male line of his family, blacksmiths and farriers all. A mysterious and apparently long-lived stranger of unknown origin appears occasionally in the dead of night and asks that his horse be shod with a special iron, which he supplies. The arrangement is that Jason completes the task and the man grants him through some magical artifice the ability to shod any animal, no matter how unwilling or enraged.

The Long Man

The Long Man is the name given to the king of the Elves by Nanny Ogg's ancestors. The king himself is an impressive figure, impossibly tall, with the legs and the antlers of a stag.

Mustrum Ridcully

Ridcully is the Archchancellor of the Unseen University, where the Discworld's wizards are trained. He is a thoughtful but awkward old man. In his youth, he courted Esme Weatherwax, but she turned down his proposal for marriage.

Lord Lankin

The wicked chief lieutenant of the elven Queen.



Ponder Stibbons

Stibbons is a young wizard obsessed with the workings of the universe. He is a cross between a scientist and a wizard, and is particularly obsessed with cosmology and parallel universes.

Lucy Tockley (Diamanda)

Diamanda is the leader of a group of young Lancre girls who are curious about witchcraft. After drawing the attention of the elf Queen by hanging around the Dancers, Diamanda falls for the Queen's deception, and the Queen begins working through her to try to get at Lancre.

Giamo Casanunda

Casanunda is an adventuresome, and insatiable dwarf. He has been a hired swordsman, a bandit, and a stepladder repair man. He is also, as his business card indicates, the second greatest lover in the land. He is sweet on Nanny Ogg.

Millie Chillum

Vapid and superficial, Millie Chillum is Magrat's new handmaid in Castle Lancre, and she is making every effort to help her new mistress be a proper Queen.

Hodgesaargh

The rather unsuccessful royal falconer, Hodgesaargh gives it his all, not to mention many little bits of his skin, each day in his attempt to train the unruly royal birds.

Mr. Brooks

The beekeeper of Castle Lancre does not stand on ceremony for anyone, even the king and queen. He has a rather callous view toward life, partly inspired by his intimate knowledge of the grisly business that goes on in the hives of bees.

Shawn Ogg

Nanny Ogg's enthusiastic youngest son is the only member of the Lancre Royal Guard. At understaffed Castle Lancre, he is also the herald, the postman, the janitor, the dungeon master, and the army.



King Verence

Verence is the almost bastard son of the former king, and he was put on the throne mostly by the effort of the witches, though they will insist that witches do not meddle in politics. Before he became king, Verence was his almost father's jester, and he still behaves much like a servant, sleeping on the floor instead of his lush bed, and asking for his citizen's opinions instead of ruling by fiat.

Greebo

Greebo is Nanny Ogg's vicious, murderous, libidinous, sadistic, fluffy and lovable cat.

The Bursar

One of the wizards that accompanies Ridcully and Stibbons to the wedding in Lancre, the Bursar is a young epileptic who spends much of his time spouting non sequiturs and carrying on lively conversations with trees.

The Librarian

The Librarian is a wizard transfigured by a freak accident into an orangutan. His mind is still that of a man, and he retains his love of books and research, but he also exhibits many apelike tendencies and can only communicate with the monosyllable "Ook!"



Objects/Places

Octarine

Octarine is an extra color on the Discworld color spectrum. Only visible to those attuned to magic, like wizards and witches, octarine is the color of magic, and most magical acts produce it.

Lancre

Lancre is a hubward kingdom of forested hills. The principle town, also called Lancre, is ancient and was probably founded by the ancestors of the Ogg family. It is generally a peaceful kingdom, as its thicket hillsides make for poor settlement and agriculture.

The Dancers

The Dancers are a set of three large stones forming a circle atop a hill near the town of Lancre. The stones were made by the dwarfs out of molten Thunderbolt iron and are wards against incursion by the iron-fearing Lords and Ladies.

The Long Man

The name of the ancient burial mounds of the Ogg family. There are three mounds, which together form the shape of the male genitalia. The mounds also give access to the extensive series of caves under Lancre and to the portal to the world of the elf king.

Queen Ynci's Battle Armor

The armor, which includes a breastplate and a winged helmet, was never used in battle and was only constructed to support the myth of the fictitious queen.

The Lancre Morris Men

A performance society of Lancre Men led by Jason Ogg, which mainly specializes in clowning around and wasting time drinking.

Burrowing

Burrowing is the forcible possession of an animal by a witch. Granny Weatherwax is particularly good at burrowing, though it leaves her body in a state easily mistakable for death.



Granny Weatherwax's Note

Granny Weatherwax has been mistaken for dead before when she was burrowing. Though she would normally be of the opinion that people should mind their own business and leave her alone and she will inform them when she intends to die, she decided, in this case, to compromise. Now, when she burrows, Granny clutches a note that reads, 'I ATE'NT DEAD!'

Castle Lancre

The sprawling home of the Lancre royal family is ridiculously over-sized for the kingdom that it represents. It is made up of a series of haphazardly expanded wings, and its many turrets and towers are all of disparate sizes and styles. Some of the castle, including not a few of its towers and turrets, is in constant danger of sliding off into the cliff that abuts one side.

The Unseen University

The grand home of the Discworld wizards is probably a vast campus, probably somewhere on, above, or below the Discworld and it might or might not be beautiful. If you want to know where to find it and what it looks like inside, ask a wizard. You will find them all inside the Unseen University.

The Stick and Bucket Dance

A lewd dance, never fully described, performed once by the Lancre Morris Men. Subsequently banned by the Morris Men leader Jason Ogg, the dance was revised and turned into an attack by the group during the invasion of the elves.



Themes

Practical Versus Mystical, the Magic of Granny Weatherwax

Though she is capable of stupendous feats of magic, from telepathy, animal possession, large scale illusions and delusion, and outright incendiary offense, Granny Weatherwax prefers a practical approach to magic. She wears no fancy occult jewelry, does not own a deck of cards, and has barely cracked a book about magical practice. When judging the action of other witches, especially young witches like Magrat Garlick, she places higher value on clear-headedness and action than on magical prestidigitation. If one needs to knock down an enemy, one could certainly expend a lot of magical energy conjuring a localized air disturbance to do the trick. But why not simply place one's foot behind the enemy's legs and give him or her a strong push? If one is asked to knock a witch's hat off, as Granny asks the young witch aspirants to attempt, one could expend a great deal of concentration and energy to blast the hat to pieces with octarine magic. Or one could simply take a stick and knock the hat off. Why invest a great deal of energy and time to place a proper curse upon an immoral farmer when you can simply tell the farmer that you have cursed him? He is bound to be miserable simply having to live with the unrelenting fear of when the jaws of death will close around him, and he will probably do himself as much harm in the meantime as any real curse could manage.

The young witches Diamanda and Magrat Garlick find themselves exasperated by Granny's "headology" and ignorance of formal magic. Diamanda at first labors under the misapprehension that Granny in fact does no magic at all, but instead uses psychology to manipulate and bully the people of the town. Magrat knows that Granny is powerfully magical, and has seen her perform great feats of octarine magic, yet she is exasperated by Granny's ignorance and seemingly willful contempt for formal magic. Why use a ceremonial silver knife that you had to send away and pay twenty in gold for, when you can simply grab a butter knife from the kitchen?

Judging a Book by its Cover

When attempting to head off the elf invasion, one of the biggest hurdles before Granny and Nanny is the almost universal misconception that the elves are virtuous and fun-loving creatures. This delusion is partly due to culture. The stories that have been passed down about the elves have been expurgated of everything negative about the race. A belief that, for instance, the elves are fun-loving is partly true. The elves are fun-loving. But, the full truth is that what elves find fun is torturing and killing others. Somehow, over the many years since they last roamed the land, the memory of the elves has been cleaned of all negatives.



There is another reason why the elves have such an undeserving positive representation. The elves use glamours and psychological manipulation to appear beautiful and compelling to humans who look upon them. This disguise helps to conceal their true nature. Granny Weatherwax draws a parallel to cats. Cats are, with their human masters, affectionate and soft. This impression infects the human view of cats, so that we forget that, to many other creatures that slither, crawl, hop, and fly, cats are vicious killers that for some reason take special pleasure in torturing their victims before the kill. Throughout the invasion, the elves behave very much in this manner, taunting and torturing.

The Humor of Terry Pratchett

Humor is a central theme in every book of the Discworld series. No matter how complicated and compelling the storyline, no matter how much thrilling action or heart-tugging romance there is, humor infuses every moment. *Lords and Ladies* is no different. Pratchett employs all manner of humor, from bawdy to scientific. A paragraph many contain a cryptic joke about mathematics or particle physics and, just a sentence later, a line from a song about how hedgehogs alone of all animals are free from the fear of buggery (this song is one of Nanny Ogg's favorites).

As the people of Lancre, the witches included, are in general uneducated and uncultured, Pratchett makes frequent use of malapropisms, and his delightful rendering of the speech and writing of the witches makes listening to these characters speak a humorous experience whether they are telling jokes or not.

Pratchett also makes frequent use of the humorous footnote. Sometimes these asides are full paragraphs with extra information about a topic, but they always contain a joke. He also nests footnotes to comic effect. An example:

"*Lancre was one of the biggest kingdoms. It could actually afford a standing army.*"

And the footnotes for the line:

"* Shawn Ogg **"

"** Except when he was lying down."

Some but not all of the humor depends upon a certain level of education in history, art, physics, and other fields. This is definitely humor for the informed, but Pratchett keeps it from becoming pretentious by injecting it with a touch of visceral scatology and a more than a little whimsical stupidity.

Style

Point of View

The narrative is written in third person omniscient. The point of view shifts about rapidly, sometimes cutting to another character in a complete different location for a paragraph or even, in some cases, a single sentence, before cutting back. Even during longer scenes, the viewpoint is rarely fixed upon one character and often drifts around to each character in the scene to provide a fresh perspective. Pratchett uses this mercurial narration to pack each scene with jokes told from the point of view and sensibilities of the various characters, as well as to describe humorously the reactions of other characters to this behavior.

The author will also frequently break into the flow as the narrator, sometimes describing physical processes that are not witnessed by the characters, the appearance of a crop circle in an empty field, a humors description of some point of the mechanics of the Discworld, etc. In several cases, he will jump to many characters in quick succession in order to describe a large-scale event or to delve into the mindset of a mob.

Setting

The story takes place almost entirely in the kingdom of Lancre. Lancre is a hubward kingdom. To explain this geographic concept, it is necessary to briefly describe the physical makeup of the Discworld. Unlike other worlds in the universe, which all share a roughly spherical form, the Discworld is a world constructed as if on a dare. The Discworld is not round, but is instead a disc, complete with edges, that rides on the backs of four celestial elephants, who themselves stand on the back of A'tuin, the great celestial turtle, who swims through the stars. The disc is not flat, but is convex, and thus its center, the hub, sits high above the world and the lands on the disc slope downward to the rim. Hubward lands are thus typically rugged and mountainous. The hub itself is capped with a range of vertiginous, snow-decked mountains.

Lancre is a hilly kingdom, thick with forests and run through by the rapid Lancre River. The ground is rocky and pitted, and there is little open area for farming. The eponymous capital of the kingdom is a small town with a close-knit population. There is only one store and one inn. Lancre Castle, on the edge of town, is the home of the king, and is ungodly in its sprawling size, at least for a castle to represent such a small kingdom. The castle is in many ways similar to the famous Castle Gormenghast, from the novels by Mervyn Peake, and in fact, Pratchett makes this comparison specifically at least once.



Language and Meaning

The actual vocabulary level in the book is general at high school level, but Pratchett employs a great deal of in some cases complicated wordplay for comic effect. Nanny Ogg makes frequent malapropisms in the French language. In most cases these involve French words and phrases that many readers will have heard before, but in some cases it seems unlikely that anyone who has not studied French will understand or get the joke.

Pratchett also makes frequent use of scientific language. However, because the level of scientific understanding on the Discworld is what we would describe as pre-Enlightenment, or at least on the cusp of Enlightenment, Pratchett usually eschews the use of modern technical scientific terms and instead has his characters coin new terms or phrases to describe phenomena that they do not quite understand. Still, in order to get many of the joke, Pratchett assumes that his readers are familiar with the actual scientific concepts.

Granny Weatherwax and Nanny Ogg both speak and write in a delightful, uncouth manner that is both hilarious and endearing. Pratchett accomplishes this by peppering their dialogue with dubious grammar, faulty conjugation and malapropisms. Their writings are a mess of misspellings, and abound in extra e's and doubled consonants.

Structure

The book is almost deliberately unstructured. None of the Discworld novels contains the typical divisions of books, chapters, or sections. The narrative takes off from page one and proceeds without a significant break to the end. Scene shifts are announced by a small padding of white space.

Pratchett makes frequent use of footnotes, sometimes nested, but they do not typically represent an actual interruption in the narrative. They are generally jokes that are placed in footnote to heighten their comic effect.

The story can be broken into three parts. The first part details the return of the witches and their discovery of the recent incursions of the elves in Lancre. The major event in the first part is the split between Magrat Garlick and Granny Weatherwax, which divides the forces of the witches. The second part concerns Granny and, to some extent Nanny's attempts to prevent an invasion. This begins with the witch's duel between Granny and the usurping young witch Diamanda, and ends with the Lancre Morris Men's staging of a play near the Dancers, the act that finally weakens the connection between the two worlds enough to allow the elves to invade. The third and final part tells of the invasion of the elves. It highlights the sea change of Magrat Garlick, from waffling ennui to battle queen, and culminates in the confrontation of the elf Queen by Granny Weatherwax and Magrat, Granny's death and resurrection, and the wedding of Verence and Magrat. The final scenes of the book, involving the taming of the unicorn by Granny Weatherwax, functions in many ways as an epilogue to the story.



Quotes

"You could be a great witch. You could be anything. Anything you want. Come into the circle. Let me show you."

The girl takes a few steps forward, and then hesitates. There is something about the woman's tone. The smile is pleasant and friendly, but there is something in the voice—desperate, too urgent, too hungry."

p. 5

"On the other hand Magrat was, at the core, far more practical than most people believed who saw no further than her vague smile and collection of more than three hundred pieces of occult jewelry, none of which worked."

p. 19

"Magrat woke up.

And knew she wasn't a witch anymore. The feeling just crept over her, as part of the normal stock-taking that any body automatically does in the first seconds of emergence from the pit of dreams: arms: 2, legs: 2, existential dread: 58%, randomized guilt: 94%, witchcraft level: 00.00."

p. 37.

"The Lords and Ladies are trying to find a way,' said Granny. 'And there's something else. Something's already come through. Some kind of animal from the other side. Scrope chased a deer into the circle and the thing must have been there, and they always used to say something can come through if something goes the other way—"

p. 53

"And other things were happening. Her memory seemed to be playing up. Perhaps this is what happened. Perhaps you just drained away toward the end, like old Nanny Gripes, who ended up putting the cat on the stove and the kettle out for the night."

p. 62

"It wasn't that Ridcully was stupid. Truly stupid wizards have the life expectancy of a glass hammer. He had quite a powerful intellect, but it was powerful like a locomotive, and ran on rails and was therefore almost impossible to steer."

p. 83

"There weren't many witches now. Not proper witches. More of a problem, though, was that people didn't seem to be able to remember what it was like with the elves around. Life was certainly more interesting then, but usually because it was shorter. And it was more colorful, if you liked the color of blood. It got so people didn't even dare talk openly about the bastards.

You said: The Shining Ones. You said: The Fair Folk. And you spat, and you touched iron. But generations later, you forgot about the spitting and the iron, and you forgot why you used those names for them, and you remembered only that they were beautiful."

p. 97



"Granny's attention snapped back, and her voice lost its distant quality. 'Hah! Flowers and suchlike. Dancing about with yer drawers on. Mucking about with cards and bits of string. And it worked, I expect. She gave you power, for a while. Oh, she must have laughed. And then there is less power and more price. And then no power, and you're payin' every day. They always take more than they give.'" p. 99

"Jason blinked. He was certain he'd dreamed. He could remember dreaming. But he couldn't remember what the dream had been about. But there was still the feeling in his head of voices talking to him, but too far away to be heard." p. 148

"Just when she needed all her self reliance, she couldn't rely on her mind. She could sense the probing of the Queen—she could remember the feel of that mind, from all those decades ago. And she seemed to have her usual skill at Borrowing. But herself—if she didn't leave little notes for herself, she'd be totally at sea." p. 150

"A circle is a door half open. It doesn't need much to open it up all the way. Even belief'll do it. That's why they put the Dancers up, years ago." p. 166

"It wasn't as if her own mind was tranquil. But now at least she knew she was sane. When the walls between the universes are thin, when the parallel strands of If bunch together to pass through the Now, then certain things leak across. Tiny signals, perhaps, but audible to a receiver skilled enough. In her head were the faint, insistent thoughts of a thousand Esme Weatherwaxes." p. 185

"Magrat was halfway down the road to the square when the adrenaline wore off and her past life caught up with her. She looked down at the armor, and the horse, and though: I'm out of my mind. It was that bloody letter. And I was frightened. I thought I'd show everyone what I'm made of. And now they'll probably find out: I'm made of lots of tubes and greeny purple wobbly bits." p. 209

"Um. We were all present at an interdimensional rip,' said Ponder. 'Caused by belief. The play was the last little thing that opened it up. There must have been a very delicate area of instability very close. It's hard to describe, but if you had a rubber sheet and some lead weights I could demonstrate—'" p. 236

"Go back, said Granny. 'You call yourself some kind of goddess and you know nothing, madam, nothing. What don't die can't live. What don't live can't change. What don't change can't learn. The smallest creature that dies in the grass knows more than you. You're right. I'm older. You've lived longer than me but I'm older than you. And better'n



you. And, madam, that ain't hard."
p. 253

"She's going to swank about this for weeks,' said Nanny. 'No one's ever done it with bees. Their mind's everywhere, see? Not just in one bee. In the whole swarm."
p. 264



Topics for Discussion

Describe Granny Weatherwax's practical approach to magic. Is there any contradiction between what she tells others and what she practices herself?

How does the appearance the elves fool others into misunderstanding their nature? Give examples from the book of characters who overcame this misconception.

Describe some of the many ways the Pratchett infuses his narrative with humor. Give examples from the book.

How does Pratchett use footnotes to comic effect? Highlight some examples of this from the text.

Examine the relationship between obstinate Granny Weatherwax and "wet hen" Magrat Garlick.

Describe the act of Borrowing and discuss the morality of it. Does Granny Weatherwax's insistence on payment of the debt that it creates make sense?

Nanny Ogg often aids Granny Weatherwax by performing one small timely act to facilitate or complete Granny's feats of magic. Give some examples from the text.

Examine the close personal relationship of the seemingly polar opposites Granny Weatherwax and Nanny Ogg.

The Lords and the Ladies contains many characters who are trying to be what they or not, or who are making efforts to become something else. Give some examples of this. Are the characters successful?