

The Light Fantastic Study Guide

The Light Fantastic by Terry Pratchett

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Plot Summary

The Light Fantastic is the second book in Terry Pratchett's Disc World fantasy series. It follows the adventures of the failed wizard, Rincewind, and his tourist friend, Twoflower. Rincewind has the eighth spell from the famous Octavo book stuck in his head. Unfortunately, the wizards need the spell to save the world from destruction.

In the Unseen University in Ankh-Morpork, wizards gather around a cellar door watching the Octavo coming alive. The book is trying to break free from its padlocks and chains. Finally, it manages to release a blue light that shoots up to the top of the building. The Wizards follow the light outside and watch it disappear over the edge of the world. At the same time, Twoflower and Rincewind are trying to leave the world, but the force of the Octavo send them tumbling back to the Disc.

In the Unseen University, the head wizard, Galder, calls up Death and asks him what is happening. Death explains that Rincewind has the eighth spell of the Octavo book in his head, and if the spells are not together by Hogswatch, the spells will destroy the disc. Galder sends wizards into the Skund Forest to find Rincewind. Meanwhile, the wizard Trymon goes to the library and takes out the book "The Pyramid of Tshut," which will help him find the spell. He knows whoever finds the spell has the potential to be very powerful.

The Wizards find Rincewind in a barley sugar cottage and try to grab him. Fortunately, Rincewind and Twoflower find a broomstick and fly off to safety. While they are in the air, they see a red star. It frightens Rincewind so much that he directs the broomstick back towards the Disc. However, instead of the ground, they land on a flying rock. The person on the rock says they are heading for a stone circle. Back at the Unseen University, Trymon enlists the help of an astrologer to find the whereabouts of Rincewind. The astrologer says he is among Druids. At the stone circle, the Druids conduct a ceremony, and Rincewind hears a voice in his head saying he must safeguard the eighth spell.

The Druids have tied a woman to a stone in order to sacrifice her. Just as Twoflower is protesting about the barbarity of it, a man puts his hand over Rincewind's mouth and tells him to rescue the girl or Rincewind will die. Rincewind and Twoflower go to help the girl, but the Druids attack them; a sickle strikes Twoflower across the head. However, they all manage to escape, with Rinceflower carrying Twoflower and the rescued girl carrying the old man. Back at the Unseen University, Trymon has taken over as head Wizard. He calls a meeting and tells the wizards he has hired a hero to track down Rincewind.

Rincewind takes a green potion, which takes him to Death's house. In Death's house, he finds Twoflower and escapes. Before he goes back into the world, he has a meeting with the Octavo. The other spells tell him the Wizards are trying to get the eighth spell back. When he gets back to his other companions, Bethan and Cohen, have become very close.



Rincewind, Twoflower, Cohen and Bethan ride to a pine forest, where they decide to camp for the night. While the others prepare something to eat, Rincewind goes in search of onions. Instead of onions, he meets trolls. They tell him they have heard of him in troll legend and they must help him. The trolls and Rincewind go back to the opening where the others were, but everyone has disappeared. The Trolls suggest they enlist the help of Old Granddad up in the cliffs. When they get to the cliffs, they see that the female hero, Herrena, and her men have captured the other three and lit a fire inside Old Granddad's mouth, thinking it is a cave. Old Granddad wakes up, and Rincewind is able to save his friends.

Rincewind tells Twoflower that Cohen is barmy, and they must split up from him. Unfortunately, Herrena captures Twoflower and Rincewind and starts to take them back to the wizards. They come to a river where a ferryman offers to take them across. Herrena is suspicious because he is not the normal ferryman. Realizing the game is up, the ferryman reveals himself as Cohen and saves Rincewind and Twoflower. Cohen tells them he is getting married to Bethan, and they need to find a priest. At a village, Cohen goes off to look for a wedding ring, while Rincewind, Twoflower and Bethan wait for him. Moments later, villagers with red stars painted on their foreheads, ambush them and try to kill Rincewind. Rincewind manages to use the eighth spell and they escape into a magical shop.

Cohen finds a jewelery shop run by a Dwarf called Lackjaw. Lackjaw is making a wedding ring when villagers ambush his shop. Cohen beats them up and he and Lackjaw make their escape. Meanwhile in the magical shop, Rincewind asks the shopkeeper if the shopkeeper can take them back to Ankh-Morpork. The shopkeeper says yes. When they arrive in Ankh-Morpork, they join a huge crowd of people making their way towards the Unseen University.

Rincewind, Bethan and Twoflower find a way into the University and head towards the cellar and the Octavo book. When they get there, they find Trymon has already taken the book and is heading towards the Art Tower. When the three characters get to the Art Tower, Trymon has already said the seven spells and is on his way to becoming the most powerful wizard in the world. Rincewind climbs the Art Tower, but Trymon attacks him with a blue thunderbolt. Rincewind tries to call on his spell for help, but it is too frightened to come out.

Rincewind attacks Trymon. Initially he is winning, but Trymon turns into a monster with tentacles and talons. Just in time, Twoflower appears with a sword and kills the monster. Rincewind falls over the edge of the Art Tower but manages to grab hold of an overhanging stone. Cohen appears with some wizards and they help him back up. Rincewind then reads the spells to save the world, but nothing happens. As the town folk move in to kill Rincewind, Bethan realizes he has mispronounced one of the words. Bethan, Rincewind and Twoflower take turns to say the mispronounced word, but Twoflower is the one who says it correctly. With the world saved, Twoflower leaves for home and Rincewind decides to retrain as a wizard.



P. 1-28

P. 1-28 Summary

The sun is rising and a new day has begun on the Discworld. Four giant elephants carry the world on their backs, and an even bigger turtle called A'Tuin carries the elephants. The turtle wanders slowly to a destination unknown to everyone but himself. Philosophers would like to know where he is going and are unhappy they may never find out. However, the author states they will know very soon, and when they do, they will wish they never did.

In the distance, the spaceship, the Potent Voyager, spins uncontrollably back towards the Discworld. On board the ship is Discworld's first and probably last tourist, Twoflower. Above the ship and also tumbling back to the world is the Wizard Rincewind. He is dressed in a spacesuit but has forgotten his helmet. The narrator says they were both leaving for very good reasons, but it will take too long to explain.

The scene moves to the cellar of the Unseen University, described as the Disc's Premier College of Magic. In the room is a tatty book held together by chains and padlocks. Something strange is happening to the book. The pages are beginning to crinkle and a blue light is spilling from between them. The Supreme Grand Conjuror of the Order of the Silver Star, Galder, approaches the half dozen wizards watching from outside the door and asks what is happening. When he sees the book and the sparkling air it is now creating, he knows something is very wrong. The narrator says the book is called the "Octavo" and was left behind by a mysterious sect. Not long before, a student had opened the book without permission, and this is probably the reason why the eight spells are so restless.

The book breaks its padlocks and a stream of light hits the ceiling and disappears. Galder tells everyone to follow him into the upper cellars. When they get there, the book has turned the floor into purple newts, the library books into pineapple custard and the librarian into an orangutan. The light continues upwards, through the kitchen and into the Great Hall. Here something even stranger happens. A detailed picture of the universe appears inside the light, and the shape expands, moving over the wizards and taking over the whole room. Galder orders his wizards to the roof.

Outside, Galder flies up the tower of Arts. At the top of the building, he can see the light rushing towards the edge of the world. The Wizard Trymon states it is a change spell, which can change the world. Galder takes a cigarette from his pocket, lights up and wonders if any of the Gods owe him a favor.

Meanwhile, Rincewind is hanging upside down in a tree. While he hangs, a spell rushes to his head and it is revealed to the readers that he was the student who opened the spell book. Rincewind manages to release himself from the tree and land safely on the ground. Unfortunately, an acorn lands on his hands and the tree says "serves you right."



Trees are not known to talk in Discworld, and it takes Rincewind a few moments to realize where that the voice came from the tree. The narrator says this moment marks the beginning of a Tree Religion.

Twoflower has landed a few miles away from his friend. He is surprised he is back on Discworld, but the narrator describes him as the kind of tourist who takes everything in stride. The only thing Twoflower is worried about is the whereabouts of his Luggage. At the same time, he knows his Luggage is intelligent enough to look after itself. A while later, Twoflower, followed by his walking Luggage, finds Rincewind walking through the woods. Rincewind is unhappy that Twoflower has found him.

P. 1-28 Analysis

In this first part, Pratchett establishes the fantasy environment of the Discworld. The world sits upon four elephants and the giant turtle, the Great A'tuin, carries the elephants on his shell. The idea of a turtle carrying elephants and a world on its back is so strange, it immediately introduces the colorful and tongue-in-cheek tone that continues throughout the novel. The language accentuates this tone, particularly similes such as "the caress of a gentle lover" and "like golden syrup" that describe the dawning of a new day. Occasionally Pratchett purposely overuses similes. For example, he uses three similes in a row to describe the slow movement of the Great A'tuin. These similes are clichés and foreshadow Pratchett's subsequent use of generic conventions to parody the fantasy genre.

While describing the world, Pratchett also gets straight into the narrative, which the reader will quickly recognize as an adventure fantasy. The first line describes the sun rising so slowly it is not worth the effort, fitting in with the subsequent description of the slow-moving turtle, but also immediately creating a foreboding atmosphere of a world that knows it is on its last legs, so to speak. A page later, Pratchett foreshadows a potential tragedy by saying the world will know exactly where the turtle is going in a few months time.

Pratchett then introduces the two main characters Rincewind and Twoflower, explaining their relationship and the main features of their characters. This no nonsense style is an important element of the novel and one of which Pratchett makes the reader aware. For example, he says he could explain more about why the two characters have jumped off the edge, but it has no real relevance. Instead, he moves on to what he describes as events that are more important.



P.29 - 58

P.29 - 58 Summary

Rincewind and Twoflower sit under a tree, sheltering from the rain. Both of them are hungry, and Twoflower asks if the red mushrooms across from them are edible. Rincewind goes to look at them and decides they are no good to eat because they have doors and windows.

At the Unseen University, the Wizards gather in the Great Hall. The narrator describes how the senior wizards have to be careful of the wizards below them as they are constantly trying to kill each other in order to achieve a higher rank. It is said a wizard gives up on life when he stops looking for shards of glass in his meals. Galder stands at the front of the Octogram speaking the final words of a spell. When he finishes, Death appears holding cubes of cheese in his hand, annoyed they have disturbed him from a party. Galder asks Death what is happening with the spells. Death says the spells are looking for their eighth brother, which is currently inside Rincewind's head. If the spells are not together by Hogswatch Night, the spells will destroy the Disc.

When the wizards go, Trymon goes into the library. He asks the librarian for a copy of "The Pyramid of Tshut." The librarian finds him a copy and hands it to him. Trymon is not impressed. He is asking if there are any more books about the pyramid when he hears footsteps approach. The narrator states Trymon is prepared for such moments and hands the librarian a banana.

In the Forest of Skund, Rincewind and Twoflower argue about a man sitting on a mushroom. The man is a gnome called Swires. He approaches the two men and says he knows a place where they can get food. Rincewind does not trust people who live in mushrooms, but he is hungry and decides to follow him. The Gnome leads them to a cottage made entirely out of confectionery.

Trymon visits Galder in his lab. The other wizards have gone to Skund Forest to look for the spell, and Trymon can barely conceal his contempt for that Galder did not go. Galder mentions that there is no copy of the Pyramid of Tshut in the library. In reply, Trymon says Galder should punish the librarian for not doing his job. The narrator then tells the reader Trymon took the book because whoever finds the eighth spell will be amply rewarded.

P.29 - 58 Analysis

Pratchett manages to combine his descriptive passages with parody, as well constantly moving the narrative forward. He begins this section with Rincewind and Twoflower looking for food to eat. Twoflower suggests they eat the mushrooms, but Rincewind says you cannot eat mushrooms with doors and windows. They approach a man, who is sitting on one of the mushrooms, and he takes them to a barley sugar cottage, where



they can eat all the furnishings. This parodies fairy tales such as Hansel and Gretel. Pratchett pushes the joke further by showing Twoflower as the naïve tourist. He has read all about such fairy tales at home, but to the other characters, such mythology is everyday life, and they cannot understand why it excites Twoflower so much. At the end of the section, Pratchett uses another generic cliché when Twoflower and Rincewind fly off on a witch's broom.

Unlike usual fairytales, Pratchett does not differentiate between good and evil. He notes the Wizards are always trying to kill each other to rise to a higher position, and for them it is just part of life. In this respect Trymon's dirty tactics are just part of a game they play, and if it wasn't him, it would be another wizard. While Trymon is talking to Galder, he tries to kill him and Galder not only manages to foil him, but does so with a smile, saying Trymon needs to be quicker than that to catch Galder out.



P.59-87

P.59-87 Summary

The wizards wait by the barley sugar cottage to ambush Rincewind. Inside the cottage Rincewind, Twoflower and Swires prepare for bed. They have arguments about elves. Twoflower thinks they are wise, mythical creatures, but Swires and Rindwind tell him he must have obtained his information from fairy tales. Suddenly, they hear a noise from outside and frightened, they climb into a cupboard just before the wizards enter the house. Rincewind comes out to see what they want and the wizards all run after him. Rincewind climbs up the stairs, where he finds a broomstick a witch had left behind. Twoflower and Rincewind climb onto the stick and fly away. An arrow shoots past them, enters the house, strikes Twoflower's Luggage and the Luggage disappears.

In the sky, Rincewind and Twoflower see what the narrator describes as the future, a red star in a circle of blackness. It looks so foreboding that Rincewind screams and points the broomstick back towards the ground. Meanwhile, Galder calls back the arrow he sent out to catch Rincewind, but all he gets is Twoflower's Luggage.

Rincewind and Twoflower find themselves stranded on a flying rock. Rincewind smells food and when he searches around, he sees a druid cooking bacon. The druid thinks they are trespassers and frightened, he drops the bacon. Rincewind tells him they are not trying to steal the rock, but to land back on the Discworld. The Druid, Belafon, claims he is a computer hardware consultant and the rock is his computer. Upon questioning, Belafon says the rock can tell what time of year it is, though does not know exactly how. Twoflower offers to lend him his almanac so he can find out, but Rincewind pulls him to one side. He tells Twoflower such information could give Belafon culture shock, and you do not want that to happen to someone flying a thousand ton rock.

Rincewind and Twoflower arrive at a stone circle. Druids gather around and bang at rocks with hammers, listening to the vibrations. Rincewind knows something is wrong and wonders if it has anything to do with the ugly red star he saw in the sky. A strange voice answers his question. The voice tells Rincewind that the spell in his head is very important and he must safeguard it.

Back at the Unseen University, Trymon has enlisted the help of the Astrologer. They work out that the Disk World is rushing towards the red star. When they collide, the Discworld will be destroyed. In order for the world to survive the catastrophe, they have to find Rincewind and rejoin the eighth spell with the others in the Octavo. The problem is they cannot find Rincewind. Trymon decides the best thing to do is read Rincewind's astrology chart, which should say his exact current location. Armed with Rincewind's place and date of birth the Astrologer finds out he is somewhere with Druids.



P.59-87 Analysis

Though the world is not immediately recognizable, Pratchett draws some superficial similarities that serve to satirize reality. In this section, Rincewind and Twoflower land on a flying rock. The driver of the rock claims he is a computer hardware consultant and the rock is his computer. The rock lands in a stone circle reminiscent of Stonehenge. At the end of the section, Trymon enlists the help of an astrologer to find Rincewind, and he reads out a horoscope similar to a newspaper horoscope. These similarities work to show that fantasy without references to our own world would not make sense and also, by putting everyday things in a fantasy setting, he shows them up as ridiculous.

In this section, Rincewind sees the red star for the first time. Arguably, the star is the evil element of the novel. The reader knows this because while Pratchett describes most things as highly colorful and full of personality, the red star is surrounded by a mass of blackness. Unlike his usual humorous metaphors, Pratchett describes the star like "the glitter in the eye socket of a rabid mink. It was small horrible and uncompromising." With such a lack of traditional good and bad characteristics, the star links the Discworld to reality and in particular environmental problems.



Page 87-115

Page 87-115 Summary

The druids are about to conduct a ceremony, but despite Twoflower's protests, Rincewind wants to leave and go back home. He puts on his gown and steps off the rock. Unfortunately, the rock is still high off the ground and he lands heavily, falling unconscious. He awakes to Twoflower asking how many fingers Twoflower is holding up, but Rincewind pushes him away and says all he wants to know is how to get home. Twoflower insists they stay and watch what he thinks is an ethnic ceremony. Rincewind reminds him that Druids are priests, and therefore the ceremony is likely to be rather bloody. This goes against Twoflower's idea of priests in his own world, but Rincewind points to a woman tied to a rock that the Druids are going to sacrifice.

Suddenly a hand goes across Rincewind's mouth and tells him not make a sound or he is dead. The man puts a knife into Rincewind's hands and tells him to rescue the girl. While the Druids argue, Rincewind and Twoflower walk over towards the girl and cut off the ropes that bind her to the rock. However, the girl is not happy. She wanted to die so she could get out of the Discworld and live a pleasant afterlife. She is describing this other world when a Druid approaches them from behind and swings his sickle at Rincewind. Rincewind ducks out of the way, but the sickle strikes Twoflower and he passes out. In retaliation, Rincewind kicks the Druid in the kneecap and the old man that had earlier given him the knife, finishes the job by killing the Druid with his sword. They leave with Rincewind carrying Twoflower and the rescued girl carrying the Old Man.

At the Old Man's house, they meet an old woman, who offers to read tarot cards to check on the fate of Twoflower. The narrator comments that wizards do not trust women's magic and see magic as a man's world; however, Rincewind disregards his initial doubts, and she read the cards. She pulls out death, and Rincewind asks if that means Twoflower is going to die. In reply, she gives him some green potion. Again, Rincewind is apprehensive, but the old man persuades him to drink it. The potion throws him in the air, and when he lands, he can see a figure dwindling in the firelight.

Back in the Unseen University, Trymon gathers all the Wizards. He has now taken over from Galder and is changing the running of the university. He has burnt Galder's things, including magical artifacts and replaced them with practical furnishings, including low leather chairs. Trymon has organized the gathering as if it is business meeting, placing an agenda in front of each Wizard. Trymon tells them that so far they have been unsuccessful in finding Rincewind, and Galder has taken it upon himself to hire a hero to track him down. The wizards are horrified because warriors and wizards hate each other, but Trymon insists his way is the only way.



Page 87-115 Analysis

Despite the book being full of references to mythology, Pratchett presents very little in this book as mystical. Earlier in the novel, he explains the gods as something very real and nothing anyone believes in. For example, when Galder sees the red star, he wonders if the gods owe him any favors. In fact, that is the point. Figures seen as untouchable and omnipresent are, in reality, in this world tangible things with feelings. Even Death appears before the Wizards with cocktail sticks in his hand annoyed they have interrupted him from his party. In this section, Rincewind tries to save the girl who the Druids want to sacrifice, but finds she does not want him to save her because she is looking forward to her afterlife. To Rincewind, this is neither a ridiculous or morbid statement, but one that within the Discworld makes complete sense. It is actually Twoflower's ideas that relate more to reality that he sees as ridiculous. Twoflower says priests are good people, but Rincewind states that in the Discworld, they are actually bloodthirsty.

However, the Priests are not necessarily evil or bad; in fact, in this section the reader sees a world where the afterlife is a concrete fact; murder is not the crime it is in reality because there are no repercussions. Again, the star is the evil presence because if it destroys the world, it destroys the potential of an afterlife as well. The one character the reader can see as bad is Trymon. Interestingly, Trymon is the only Discworld character that is close to being a normal person. In this section, he takes over Galder's position as head wizard, replaces all traditional furniture for low leather chairs, calls a meeting and sets an agenda, almost as if he is trying to establish a business. In other words, Pratchett is saying conformity and lack of imagination is the bane of society. Characterizing Trymon's business-like attitude as a bad thing foreshadows his later attempt at trying to take over the world.



P.115-143

P.115-143 Summary

The potion has sent Rincewind to another world. He walks down a path towards a small black cottage, the Luggage following closely and nervously behind. The house is much bigger on the inside and its size bothers Rincewind. He is passing the stairwell when someone taps him on the shoulder. It is a young woman called Ysabell. She tells Rincewind he is in the House of Death, and she is Death's adopted daughter. If he wants, she can take him to her father, who has a few friends over. Rincewind reluctantly agrees.

Inside Death's study, Twoflower is showing Death and a few of his friends how to play Bridge. As soon as Rincewind sees him, he drags him out of the room and they make their escape. However, halfway down the corridor, Twoflower decides to take some pictures. He is in the middle of photographing the clock, when Ysabell comes up to them. She says her father would not like them leaving like this and anyway she needs someone to talk to who's not dead. Rincewind says they need to go, but Ysabell threatens them with a scythe. Quickly, Rincewind knocks out Twoflower, throws him over his shoulder and runs. Death and his horseman follow, but Rincewind jumps down a bright red hole.

The Octavo summons Rincewind. They tell Rincewind that the wizard's are looking for him because he has the eighth spell in his head. They say when they find him they will ask him to read all eight spells together, which will prevent the Disc from colliding with the red star. It is important to keep the spell from the wizards because if they read the spells too soon it could result in disastrous consequences.

Twoflower and Rincewind arrive back at the fireside with Bethan and Cohen. Twoflower asks about his adventures, and Rincewind says he was hallucinating, though Twoflower asks why everything smells of horses. In the morning, the four of them move on. Rincewind notices Cohen has combed his beard and asks him if he is trying to impress Bethan. He says that he and Bethan have fallen for each other. Meanwhile, Twoflower tells Bethan all he knows about Cohen's past heroic acts.

P.115-143 Analysis

In this section, Rincewind arrives at Death's house to save Twoflower. However, when he gets to Death's study Twoflower is showing Death, Pestilence, War and Conquest how to play Bridge. Yet again, Pratchett links something from our own world with badness. Here it is not necessarily the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse who are bad, but the game itself, which the reader may guess from previous section could corrupt the characters. In fact, Pratchett has created a world that runs on traditional values. As soon

as someone such as Trymon comes in and tries to introduce modern innovations, the world loses its color and heads towards the red star.

Pratchett tries to parody everything possible within the fantasy genre. First of all there is Cohen the Barbarian, a play on the pulp character Conan the Barbarian. The difference is that Cohen is in his 70's with no teeth and a bad back. In this section, Twoflower takes out his camera to take a photograph of Death's clock and instead of the usual flash, a small demon comes out the box and paints the object. This is reminiscent of such television programs as the Flintstones. Near the end of the section, the spells take Rincewind into the Octavo to talk, reminiscent of shows such as Mork and Mindy.



Page 144-172

Page 144-172 Summary

The four friends arrive in a pine forest and decide to camp for the night. Rincewind worries about the rumors he heard about trolls eating people, but Cohen says that is a fallacy and that trolls have problems digesting humans. As the other set up a fire, Rincewind goes in search of some onions to go with the horse jerky they have. Not knowing where to find onions, he asks the forest where they are. Something tells him there are some growing by a yew tree, and Rincewind asks if it is a tree talking. The voice says trees cannot talk and that he is a rock. Rincewind thinks the rock is probably a troll because trolls turn to rock during daylight hours. As the last of the daylight disappears, Rincewind realizes he is surrounded by a great deal of talking rocks.

Back at the camp, they wonder why Rincewind is taking so long. Cohen says he should be okay because he is a wizard, but Twoflower tells them he cannot do any magic. The conversation moves to Cohen's teeth. Twoflower tells him he should wear false teeth like his, which will rid him of his lisp. Twoflower is just pulling some teeth from his bag when something strikes him on the head.

Rincewind watches as all around him trolls appear and then change back to rocks. The rock Rincewind is sitting on says he must be the Rincewind from legend. He says they heard when the red star appears that a man called Rincewind will come looking for onions and that they should help him. They escort Rincewind back to the camp, but everyone is gone. Drops of blood are the only evidence of any human presence. They find a trail leading up towards the cliffs, and one of the trolls says Old Granddad lives up there.

The hero Herrena captures Twoflower, Bethen and Cohen. Herrena and her other soldiers begin to see troll shapes and decide to move up into the cliffs and light a fire in the entrance of a cave. In the cave, Twoflower kindly asks if they can be untied. Herrena immediately points her sword at his chest and asks if he is the one they call Rincewind. He tells him Rincewind went to get onions, but Herrena decides he will come and find them anyway. In the meantime, she wants Twoflower's Luggage open. Twoflower says the Luggage opens on its own, and if it is in a locked mood, it will stay locked. One of Herrena's helpers threatens him with a knife and the Luggage opens, displaying a box of gold. When one of Herrena's soldiers walks towards the box, the floor of the cave moves.

Rincewind suddenly appears in the entrance, floating up from the darkness. He tells Herrena they are in grave danger because they have lit their fire on the tongue of a troll. The floor again moves, and it becomes apparent they are in Old Granddad's mouth. Having spent centuries asleep, he is finally waking up. Herrena makes her way out of the cave, but her two soldiers Weem and Gancia stay. Gancia wants to get the gold



from Luggage. He steps forward to take it and the Luggage gobbles him up. The Luggage looks threateningly at Weem and he unties Twoflower, Cohen and Bethan.

Page 144-172 Analysis

The four characters are now getting to know each other, understanding their individual roles within the group. Cohen is the brave and worldly warrior; Rincewind is the unconfident, failed wizard; Twoflower is the naïve tourist, and Bethan is the loyal and servile girl. Pratchett shows their individual importance when the characters talk about trolls. Cohen says he can smell trolls in the air, which immediately puts fear into Rincewind. Twoflower says trolls are good people, but Rincewind says he has obviously read this in fairy tales because trolls in Discworld eat people. Cohen says that it is not true and actually, trolls find people difficult to digest. He goes on to talk about their diamond teeth, resulting in the only comment from Bethan, which is "Why?"

It seems Rincewind is the only character really trying to find himself. Through most of the early parts of the novel, he is defensive and fearful of everything. At the beginning of the book, he does not want to find Twoflower again and in the early parts, he hardly tolerates Twoflower's presence. His relationship with Cohen and Bethan is not much better and at one point, he actually escapes from them. Yet through the course of the book, he realizes how much he needs people and that there is little to fear when the red star is about to destroy the planet anyway. In this section, the reader can see Rincewind's confidence is growing. He talks about trolls eating people, but he still goes off on his own to find onions. Trolls soon surround him, but they recognize him as the legendary Rincewind, building both his trust and confidence.



Page 172-200

Page 172-200 Summary

Cohen, Bethan, Twoflower and Luggage climb down Old Granddad and reunite with Rincewind. Back in the forest, they decide they need to find their horses because the horses are carrying all the food. Cohen says there is plenty of food in the forest, but what really takes his interest is the gold he saw earlier in the Luggage. He fights to get the Luggage open but to no avail. Eventually Rincewind takes Twoflower aside. He says he thinks Cohen has gone "barmy," and it would be better if they went off on their own

Rincewind and Twoflower find the horses, snack on some horse jerky and ride off. Twoflower begins to feel guilty about leaving Cohen and Bethan behind and thinks they should go back. After a short argument, Rincewind rides off alone. A while later he is back with the warrior Herrena. Herrena and her men tie up both Rincewind and Twoflower and set off. The Luggage follows them and occasionally sits in their path trying to entice the soldiers with gold. Herrena knows it is a trap and rides around it. They reach a river and the boatman tells them he can take only two horses across at a time. Herrena says he is not the usual boatman and the man lisps that the regular boatman is having the day off. His voice makes Twoflower laugh and Herrena immediately understands she has walked into a trap. The boatman reveals himself as Cohen, and Herrena pulls out her sword, telling her men to kill Twoflower and Rincewind while she deals with the old man. However, at the same time Luggage appears from the water and her men run away in fright. Cohen gets the better of Herrena, but as he pulls back his sword, his back goes out. Herrena is just about to kill the disabled Cohen when Bethan creeps up from behind and knocks her out with a branch.

Cohen tells Rincewind he is going to marry Bethan. Rincewind questions the decision, as Cohen is over 50 years older than his fiancé; however, Cohen says he is sure she is strong enough to cope with him. They go to a town to find a priest, but the area looks empty with red stars painted on the doors. Eventually they find the inhabitants taking part in a ceremony, each one with a red star painted on his or her forehead. One of them says Rincewind is a wizard and they must kill him. This wakes up the eighth spell, and for the first time in his life, Rincewind manages to use magic. With the people now scared, Bethan, Rincewind and Twoflower make their escape. Unfortunately, they come to a dead end and Rincewind passes out. Just as the towns people are closing in on them, they disappear and find themselves in a shop.

Page 172-200 Analysis

The turning point in the four characters' relationship is when Rincewind heads off on his own, reasoning that Cohen is barmy. Rincewind seems to have a problem with trusting people, but luckily, Cohen seems to realize this and ends up rescuing them at a river.

This reinforces the characters' relationships, and at the river, and for the rest of the book, the characters rely on each other heavily. At the river, Cohen attacks Herrena, but unfortunately, his back goes out. Just as Herrena is about to strike the fatal blow, Bethan knocks her out from behind. Meanwhile, Herrena has ordered her men to kill the bound Rincewind and Twoflower; however, Luggage appears from the water and eats all the men. Twoflower's importance to the group is the control he has over Luggage. In this section, Cohen tries to get the gold that he earlier saw inside Luggage, and it results in a scuffle between Luggage and Cohen. Only Twoflower's word prevents Luggage from eating Cohen. At the end of the section, Rincewind finally manages to cast a spell as the towns folk close in to kill them.



Page 201-208

Page 201-208 Summary

Cohen is in a shop having a ring made for Bethan. The jeweler is a dwarf called Lackjaw. He tells Cohen about the Star people and how it is hard trying to develop his business with them trying to destroy his shop. The shop door opens and three members of the Star people enter. Cohen knows they are trouble and he successfully, though a little sneakily, beats them up and runs from the shop. The Star people follow him, but Cohen is too quick. In a cul de sac, he comes across Luggage. Cohen asks Luggage for help and it crashes through a wall, into a storeroom.

Twoflower, Rincewind and Bethan are in a shop. While they look around, a silver ball comes down from the ceiling and looks at them suspiciously through a big eye. Moments later, a small man appears behind the counter. He is upset that they do not have any money to buy anything, but admits it is a magic shop, similar to where Twoflower bought Luggage. Rincewind wakes up and starts saying some uncharacteristically profound things. He admits it is the spell talking, which is trying to take over his mind. Rincewind says the spell wants him to go to Ankh Morpork, his hometown, and he asks the shopkeeper if he can take them there in his magic shop.

They arrive in Ankh-Morpork. Bethan worries about Cohen and whether the Disc will collide with the red star. Twoflower says everything will be okay and Bethan wonders how he can be so confident. Twoflower says that Rincewind is not scared, and usually he is scared of everything, so therefore there is nothing to worry about. They hear the sound of chanting and suddenly a crowd of people appear, and they have no choice but to join them.

Page 201-208 Analysis

The only main character that has not really become one of the team is Luggage. He does help, but only because he has a need to save his master, Twoflower. Finally, in this section Cohen persuades Luggage to help him find Bethan, saying they are both looking for someone they love. Interestingly when Cohen and Lackjaw first come to Luggage, Lackjaw thinks Cohen is mad talking to it. His surprise turns to shock when Luggage grows legs and charges through a brick wall. It is strange that in a world run by magic, everyone finds Luggage so surprising. Basically, Pratchett is saying that anything can seem weird if you are not used to it. He foreshadowed this earlier when Rincewind and Twoflower are flying to the Stone circle on a rock. Twoflower tries to show the driver of the rock a book from back home, but Rincewind holds him back saying it will be too much of a culture shock.

Cohen and Bethan decided to get married in the previous section, and here they go to a village looking for a wedding ring and a priest. Things do not go according to plan and



they lose each other. In terms of the fantasy genre, this is logical. Cohen is a hero, and therefore it is only proper that he has to find and save his love. The happy and romantic ending is already in place because the reader can guess as soon they reunite they will marry. The joke, of course, is that Cohen is more than fifty years older than Bethan and usually she saves him.



Page 229-257

Page 229-257 Summary

Back at the Unseen University, Trymon leads the Wizards into the cellars and to the Octavo book. He is looking forward to having the book in his hands, as he knows it will give him great power. In the Octavo room, the book moves around, scaring the other wizards. Trymon says it is okay as long as they do not touch it. He pulls a scroll from his pocket and reads out a spell.

Bethan, Rincewind and Twoflower follow the crowd to the University. Rincewind knows he must get rid of the spell, and the University is the only place where he can do so. At the University, the crowds disperse and begin looting shops. The three heroes, however, stay by a stone wall that guards the University. Rincewind asks Bethan and Twoflower to find some knives. They question him, but Rincewind is insistent and they bring back a whole bunch of knives. Rincewind then works away at the mortar, loosening some bricks. He tells Twoflower this is how the wizards used to escape into town for a few drinks. Before long, they are climbing through a hole in the wall and into the University grounds.

Trymon and the Wizards nervously unlock the Octavo with their seven keys. Trymon then orders his men upstairs to the Great Hall. He carries the book, but he can feel it changing shape, trying to get him to release it. Fortunately for Trymon he has spent hours in the University's mind gym and can cope with such hallucinations.

Rincewind, Bethan and Twoflower walk down to the lower cellars and to the room containing the Octavo. However, Trymon has locked some wizards in there and they cannot get in. Rincewind tells everyone to keep away from the door, and using the spell in his head, he manages to unlock the bolt. They all run outside to the Tower Arts, where a big crowd has gathered. At the top of the tower, Trymon stands with light and monsters circling above him. The wizards says it is too late, that Trymon has already opened the demon gateway, but Bethan makes the point that they are going to die anyway so they may as well try to stop Trymon. Rincewind reluctantly agrees, and, along with Twoflower and the other wizards, he climbs the stairs of the Art Tower. When they get to the top, Trymon has finished saying the seven spells. He turns to Rincewind with dark holes having replaced his eyes and tells him to give him the eighth spell. He attacks Rincewind with blue fire bolts, and Rincewind calls on his spell for help. Unfortunately, it stays at the back of his mind, trembling and too frightened to come out.

Page 229-257 Analysis

In this section, the reader sees how Trymon's modern methods have changed the structure of the Unseen University. Whereas before the Wizards often tried to get one over on each other, Trymon now runs the University through fear, everything being done



on his say so. Pratchett foreshadowed this in the meeting when he tells the Wizards he has hired Herrena to find Rincewind.

In this section, he locks all the wizards that disagree with him in the cellar and takes his friends up to the Art Tower to release the power of the Octavo. Such leadership is akin to a dictatorship and his character reflects what the reader expects from such a leader. He is single-minded, clever and willing to do things that no one else would dare. At this point, this makes him the one truly frightening character in the book. Yet, the reader has to wonder why he is bothering when the world is heading towards destruction. In this regard, there is a lot left unsaid. For example, Trymon takes a book out of the University library that apparently holds all the clues to what he is doing, but the reader never finds out what these things are. Again, this is Pratchett playing with the fantasy genre. Often fantasy is overwrought with even the smallest detail over explained. At the beginning, Pratchett says to tell the reason why Rincewind jumped off the edge of the world would take weeks, Pratchett he is going to skip it and go straight into the narrative. Occasionally this lack of explanation can be confusing. For example, the reader can only guess that Luggage swallows Galder. Similarly characters such as Lackjaw, Swires, the Trolls and Belafon disappear from the narrative without any explanation.



Page 258-285

Page 258-285 Summary

The spell's refusal to come out angers Rincewind and he dives at Trymon, attacking him with all his might. Luckily, Trymon is not physically strong and to his surprise, Rincewind finds himself winning. Suddenly, the two wizards find themselves in an amphitheater, surrounded by an audience of nightmarish monsters. Trymon has grown tentacles and talons, but Rincewind has no choice but to continue fighting. After a long struggle, they return to the Art Tower, where Twoflower swings a sword, missing Rincewind by inches and killing the monster. Moments later, he hears Rincewind's voice, asking him to help him. He is hanging over the edge of the tower, gripping an overhanging stone. Twoflower puts his arm out to help his friend, but he is not strong enough to pull him up. Rincewind is on the verge of falling to his death when Cohen and the Wizards run up the stairs and help Twoflower pull Rincewind to safety.

Rincewind grabs the Octavo and starts to read from the book. At the same time, the Star people run up the steps and try to get at him. Cohen pulls out his sword, looks at them menacingly and they back away. However, when Rincewind finishes reading, nothing happens and the crowd becomes restless. They are threatening to throw him from the tower when Bethan calls to them from behind. She says she thinks Rincewind probably pronounced a word incorrectly. Rincewind points out the word he was not sure about and Rincewind, Bethan and Twoflower take turns pronouncing it properly. Finally, Twoflower says the right word, and the spell leaves Rincewind's mind; color illuminates the sky, and the book snaps and locks shut. A crowd runs towards the book, but Luggage opens his lid and the Octavo jumps in. Rincewind tells Twoflower that when they open Luggage, it will contain only Twoflower's laundry.

At the end of the book, Twoflower pays a ship to take him home. Before he leaves, he gives Rincewind his gold, which he tells him to give to Cohen and Bethan. Twoflower tells Rincewind he can have Luggage. Remembering Luggage's previous dislike for him, he is a little doubtful, but Twoflower reassures him that the Luggage will always befriend its owner.

Page 258-285 Analysis

As the book comes to its climax, Pratchett's colorful style and use of parody comes into its own. First, Trymon asks Rincewind to give him the eighth spell. When he refuses, he says he is Rincewind's superior as the wizards voted him in as Supreme Head of all the Orders. Rincewind looks at the other wizards who Trymon has turned to stone, and Trymon says it was all very democratic, parodying his own role as an evil dictator. In reply, Rincewind says he preferred the old traditions because the dead at least got a vote. This line continues the theme of there being a tangible link between life and death, both of which Trymon will destroy if is not stopped. The proceeding fight between the



two wizards is cliché upon cliché. Trymon shoots blue thunderbolts from his finger and then when that does not work, he changes into a monster with tentacles and talons, and they disappear to an amphitheater. Given what he faces, it is interesting that Rincewind does so well with his traditional fighting methods of kicking and biting. In fact, tradition finally wins through, when, despite all Trymon's showiness, Twoflower kills him with one swipe of his sword.



Characters

Rincewind

Rincewind is the main character of the novel. He lives in the city of Ankh-Morpork and is training as a wizard at the Unseen University. As a student, he opened the Octavo book and the eighth spell entered his head, destroying the other spells he had learned. From then on, he had no chance to succeed as a wizard and ended up failing miserably. Once thrown out of the University, he meets the tourist Twoflower and shows him around the world for what is said to be a large sum of money.

At the beginning of the book, Rincewind jumps off the edge of the world with his friend Twoflower. The narrator never explains why he jumps off the end of the world, but the reader can presume it is because he no longer wants to live with the eighth spell in his head. However, the Octavo sends him back to Discworld, and he lands upside down in a tree.

Once he is back in the Discworld, it becomes apparent to Rincewind, people see him as the savior of the world. Only by releasing the eighth spell back into the Octavo will the world not collide into the red star. His name has even been written in legend. When he meets the trolls, they ask if he is the famous Rincewind from troll legend.

Initially, though, Rincewind wants nothing more than to lead a quiet life. He spends a lot of time wanting to go back to his hometown and at the beginning of the book tries to deny his attachment to Twoflower, who he sees as strange. In fact, Rincewind does not have the confidence you would expect from a hero, and he shows this by distancing himself from people who make him feel like a failure. Twoflower is the first example, but Rincewind also leaves his friend Cohen the Barbarian behind when he decides Cohen is gone barmy. Fortunately for Rincewind, the characters see through this and never give up on him. When he leaves Cohen the Barbarian, and Herrena captures Rincewind, Cohen dresses up as a ferryman and saves him.

As the story continues and Rincewind realizes his importance to the world, he becomes increasingly confident. By the final section, he has tamed the eighth spell, using it first to frighten some townsfolk and then to open the cellar door. At the end, he confronts Trymon, even though the wizard has transformed into a monster. Rincewind defeats Trymon, but not on his own. Throughout the book, he gradually learns how to be a team player, and, though still reluctant to accept help, he allows Twoflower up to the Art Tower with him. Twoflower kills Trymon and then reads the right word in the spell book to release the eighth spell. At the end of the book, Rincewind has developed enough confidence to re-enroll as a wizard.



Twoflower

Twoflower is a rich tourist, who hires Rincewind as his guide. The narrator does not say where Twoflower is from, but it is from another world altogether. At the beginning of the book, he is flying home on a spaceship when the Octavo sends him tumbling back to the Discworld.

Pratchett paints Twoflower as a typical tourist. He has a camera that he uses at the most inopportune times, most notably when Twoflower and Rincewind are trying to escape from Death's house. This does not always endear him to other characters, Rincewind in particular, who sees him as exceptionally naïve. Whether he is naïve or clever is sometimes questionable. He takes most of his ideas about Discworld and Mythology in general from books, which have no basis in reality. Furthermore, he thinks everything is like his own world. For example when Twoflower and Rincewind are at a Stone Circle, Rincewind has to convince Twoflower that the priests in Discworld are not good people. However, when Herrena ties Twoflower, and Cohen the Barbarian and Bethan up, Twoflower asks Herrena if she can untie him. Cohen thinks he is being stupid, but his question angers Herrena, who points a sword at his chest. This, in turn, angers the loyal Luggage, who ends up helping to save them.

Unlike his friend Rincewind, Twoflower can be very brave, but only because he both wants to have a hand in saving the world and sees good in everyone. For example, when Death captures Twoflower, he ends up showing Death how to play bridge. Sometimes his bravery can cause him problems such as when a Druid strikes him down and almost kills him. Yet, Twoflower never lets this get him down and at the end, he is the person that kills Trymon, saves Rincewind and reads the spell correctly.

Luggage

Luggage is a magical suitcase that Twoflower bought in a magical shop in his own world. It has legs and a mind of its own. Luggage is exceptionally loyal and follows Twoflower everywhere, even going out of its way to find him when they separate. Often he saves the three characters from precarious situations. For example when Herrena captures Cohen, Bethan and Rincewind, Luggage entices Herrena's men with gold and then eats them up. At the end of the book, Luggage swallows the Octavo, so no more evil hands can get to it.

Trymon

Trymon is the evil wizard who needs the spells in the Octavo to become the most powerful wizard in the world. Pratchett paints him as a clever man with a strong mind. When Luggage eats Galder, he takes over his position as the chief wizard and changes the Unseen University from a traditional institute to a more modern and business-like establishment. He knows by doing this, he can gain the power he needs to become the dictator of the Discworld. At the end, Trymon locks all the wizards who are against him



in the lower cellar and goes up to the Art Tower to read the spells in the Octavo. Fortunately, Rincewind and Twoflower are on hand to destroy him.

Cohen the Barbarian

Cohen is one of Discworld's foremost heroes. However, in the novel he is now in his seventies and not quite the warrior he once was. Nevertheless, he has enough left to save Rincewind and Twoflower on a number of occasions and often by fighting dirty. Cohen falls in love with the much younger Bethan, and they decide to get married.

Bethan

Bethan is the young woman the Druids want to sacrifice at their ceremony. When Rincewind tries to save her, she is not best pleased, saying she was looking forward to entering the afterworld. However, she becomes an important character, and she is the one who realizes Rincewind pronounces one of the spells incorrectly. Bethan falls in love with the much older Cohen, and they decide to get married.

Galder

Galder is the head wizard at the beginning of the book. He is a staunch traditionalist and in this regard, he is the Trymon's rival. Trymon tries to kill him, but he is always too quick, and it takes Luggage to swallow Galder for Trymon to take over the University.

Herrena

Trymon hires the warrior Herrena to find Rincewind. Pratchett paints her as a beautiful woman but with the need to be something else other than a secretary or a housewife.

Kwartz

Kwartz is a troll Rincewind meets in the forest while collecting onions. Kwartz tells Rincewind that the Troll legend states he must help him out and takes him to his Old Granddad.

Old Granddad

Old Granddad is a troll, who has been asleep for centuries up on the cliff. When Herrena captures Cohen, Twoflower and Bethan, she takes them into Old Granddad's mouth thinking it is a cave. She lights a fire on his tongue and wakes him up.

Great A'Tuin

Great A'Tuin carries the disc world on his back.



Objects/Places

The Discworld

The Discworld is an imaginary world where the novel takes place. The Disc sits on top of four elephants, which the Great A'Tuin carries on his back.

Unseen University

The Unseen University in Ankh Morpork trains Wizards.

The Art Tower

The Art Tower is within in the grounds of the Unseen University. From the top of the building, you can see the edge of the world. Trymon and Rincewind fight on top of the tower.

The Lower Cellar

The Lower cellars hold the Octavo book.

Ankh Morpork

Ankh Morpork is a polluted city that is home to Rincewind and the Unseen University.

The Magic Shop

The magic shop appears in front of Rincewind, Twoflower and Bethan when they are running away from the star people. The shopkeeper takes them to Ankh Morpork.

Octavo

This is the book of the eight spells. One of the spells is in Rincewind's head, and his mission is to put it back into the book.

Forest

Rincewind, Twoflower, Bethan and Cohen spend a lot of their time traveling through the forest. Here they meet trolls, talking trees and Herrena.



Stonecircle

Rincewind saves Bethen from the Druids at the Stone Circle.

Broomstick

Rincewind and Twoflower escape from the wizards on a broomstick that they find in the Barley Sugar cottage.

The Eighth Spell

A spell that is in Rincewind's head after he disobeyed a rule at the University about not opening the Octavo, when he was a student magician.



Themes

Fantasy Cliches and Parody

Pratchett uses a variety of fantasy clichés in order to parody the fantasy genre. He uses so many clichés and in such a humorous manner that he gives them new meaning. However, in the Discworld, these are not clichés, but part of reality. Sometimes Pratchett takes this further when TwoFlower mentions something that the reader recognizes from fairy tales and one of the Discworld characters shrugs it off as pure fantasy. For example, Twoflower thinks Druids are good people, when actually in the Discworld they are bloodthirsty.

Like in many fantasy books, Pratchett uses wizards, spells, dwarfs, trolls, magic and most notably a fantasy adventure plot. Within this plot, Pratchett begins with the staple fantasy fare of a world heading towards destruction. Rincewind, the man who has to save the world is essentially a coward accompanied by a person he does not like, Twoflower. The novel then goes on the typical journey of self-discovery, with the main character starting to see good in people, and in the process learning about himself.

A few of the subplots also adhere to convention. For example, Cohen the Barbarian saves Bethan from death and then falls in love with her. Near the end, they separate and Cohen, like the true hero, has to find her again. Pratchett transcends these conventions by making Cohen a man in his 70s with no teeth and a bad back, and Bethan a young, nubile maiden. The reader can again see this as a cliché, but Pratchett transcends it by showing Cohen as lacking self-awareness.

The fantasy parody has its own conventions, but Pratchett even tries to transcend these clichés. For example, at one point in the book, he talks about how the government does not allow writers to use similes that paint an object as something else. His subsequent use of such banned similes gives the book a superficial rebellious spirit. The convention of the plot means Pratchett even parodies his rebellion.

Finding Oneself

The main character in this novel is Rincewind. Unlike the other characters, Rincewind lacks an identity. Cohen is a hero coming to the end of his career; Twoflower is a tourist, but with an enough money and self-confidence to suggest he copes well enough in his own world, and Bethan seems to have little ambition other than to get married. Even Luggage is happy serving his master. In contrast, Rincewind is a failed wizard, who has sunk to new depths when he became a tourist guide.

So initially, Rincewind is a man low in confidence and communicates this by the way he distances himself from the characters. For example, he shows disgust at the beginning of the book when Twoflower finds him and then throughout most of the story, Rincewind harshly criticizes his friend Twoflower for being naïve. Fortunately, for Rincewind, this



always comes across to his friends as defensive, and even when he lets them down, they never give up on him.

The main reason they do not give up is that his character becomes stronger the longer the book goes on. At the beginning of the book, he is scared of everything. He does not want to get close to Twoflower and has the constant need for the security of his hometown. Gradually, the other characters eliminate his distrust. His friends stay loyal in spite of anything he does, and he manages to tame the eighth spell in his head. At the end, he has enough confidence to fight and defeat Trymon. It is looking like the only thing that he now needs to learn to trust is Luggage, when Twoflower offers it as a gift.

Reality vs Imaginary

Though the Discworld is completely imaginary, Pratchett does add elements from reality. Of course if he did not, it would mean the readers would find it difficult to make sense of it, but here it also serves other more satirical purposes. Aspects of reality can be seen everywhere, but most notably in the character of Trymon. Unlike the other wizards, Trymon is clever and likes things in their place. When he takes over from Galder as the chief wizard, he goes about changing the structure of the University until it resembles a type of organized business that makes more sense to the reader. Pratchett, however, does not represent this as a good thing. In fact, Pratchett shows through changing from their more haphazard ways into something more structured, that in his own world, people do not understand the change, so he can rule by fear. In other words Trymon's modern innovations repress the character's base instincts, leaving Trymon do what he wants, in this case take over the world.

Pratchett's foray into the reader's reality highlights the fact that they make sense only in the reader's environment. In comparison, the Discworld is an exotic and colorful planet with many things the reader will find strange, but to the characters of Discworld, it makes perfect sense. For example, it makes perfect sense for Twoflower to solve Belafon's problem by looking it up in a book from his own world. However, as Rincewind states, it could result in Belafon suffering from culture shock

Style

Point of View

Pratchett tells the story in the third person. This point of view is mostly omniscient, and Pratchett switches between scenes with Trymon and Rincewind. In terms of seeing the story through a character's eyes, Rincewind is the protagonist and Trymon the antagonist, and we understand the other characters through their thoughts. Even when Twoflower and Rincewind split up and Pratchett switches between these two characters, he delves very little into the mind of Twoflower. From this point of view, the narration is unreliable as we often only get the cynical opinions of Trymon and Rincewind. However, this cynical tone works to parody the more fantastical elements of the novel. For example, each time some magical part of the world fascinates Twoflower, Rincewind usually shrugs it off as just part of life.

Occasionally the narrative is self-reflexive and Pratchett talks directly to the reader. He does this to explain things about the world that paints a better picture of how it exists compared to earth and to point out why he is writing in a certain way. For example Pratchett explains to the reader he will not go into why Rincewind jumps off the Disc because it will take too much time, and he wants to get on with the story. By using his own point of view, Pratchett is able to further parody the fantasy genre.

Setting

All of the action takes place upon the Discworld. The world is literally a disc and sits on four elephants. The elephants stand upon a giant turtle called the Great A'tuin. In the world, magic and heroism are prevalent, much like the world of a fairy tale. Here wizards, trolls, heroes, dwarfs, witches and other mythological entities all share adventures.

Within the Discworld, the main setting in this novel is the city of Ankh-Morpork. Pratchett describes it as a polluted city with a smell all of its own. The city is home to the character Rincewind and the Unseen University. The Unseen University is the world's main wizard university. The wizards keep the Octavo in the lower cellars. When the book releases its spells, the magic rises up from the cellar, into the Great Hall and through the University roof. The wizards all climb to the top of the art tower to watch the magic as it rises into the sky. The Art Tower is one of the few places where the characters can see the edge of the Disc. Later on, Trymon climbs the tower to read seven of the spells. Rincewind confronts him here and they fight for the eighth spell.

At the beginning of the book Rincewind and Twoflower, find themselves lost in the forest. In the forest, they come upon a barley cottage, which they start eating. The wizards find them here and the two escape on a broom. When Rincewind directs the broom towards the ground, they land on a flying rock. The rock takes them to a stone



circle reminiscent of Stonehenge and where druids are conducting a ceremony. At the ceremony, Rincewind and Twoflower save the maiden, Bethan, and meet the ancient hero, Cohen the Barbarian. These four characters go back into the forest. In the forest, there are many rocks, which turn into trolls at night. When Herrena captures Rincewind's friends, the trolls take Rincewind up into the cliffs. Here Herrena lights a fire inside the mouth of Old Granddad. She thinks Old Granddad is a cave, when actually it is a sleeping troll.

During their time in the forest, Rincewind has to save Twoflower from Death's Domain. When he gets there, he finds Twoflower in Death's study, teaching the Four Horseman of the Apocalypse how to play Bridge. As they escape, Twoflower tries to take a picture of a huge clock with a long and sharp pendulum, standing in the hallway of Death's house.

As the four main characters' relationships develop, Cohen the Barbarian and Bethan decide to get married. They go to a village, where they meet many angry people with stars painted on their heads. Bethan, Rincewind and Twoflower manage to escape into a magic shop. Pratchett describes a magic shop as something that appears in many worlds and where you can find strange gifts. For example, Twoflower found his luggage at a magic shop on his own world. The magic shopkeeper takes them to Ankh-Morpork. Meanwhile Cohen goes to the village's jewelers to look for a wedding ring.

Language and Meaning

The language of the novel is highly colorful, using a number of similes for both parody and dramatic effect. At times, Pratchett will use two or three similes to describe one object, which works to parody his own style and jokingly present himself as unconventional. Early in the novel, he says the world's rulers have banned writers in the Discworld from making comparisons that are not accurate. Consequently, his overuse of metaphors gives the novel a rebellious spirit.

Though this may be tongue-in-cheek, it also serves to parody the fantasy genre. Pratchett uses a host of fantasy clichés and references, then makes them his own by going against the reader's expectations. For example, when the reader first meets death, Pratchett describes him just as the reader would expect; the only difference is that Death is holding cocktail sticks in between his bony fingers. When asked why there are cocktail sticks in between his fingers, Death says he has just come from a party. Cohen the Barbarian is obviously a play on the famous fantasy character Conan the Barbarian. The main difference between the two characters is that Cohen is in his seventies and can hardly swing a sword without his back going out. Interestingly, these comparisons with popular culture give the book a sense of reality, allowing Pratchett to make the point that the things the reader sees as strange is probably quite normal to the people who live everyday in the Discworld.

Structure

The *Light Fantastic* consists of 283 pages and no chapters. However, Pratchett has four narratives he moves between. The main narrative is Rincewind and Twoflower making their way to the Unseen University. Most of the scenes contain both characters, but when they split up, for example, when Herrena captures Twoflower, the narrative moves between the two characters. The second narrative contains scenes at the Unseen University, particularly following the character of Trymon and his rise to power. The third narrative follows the giant turtle A'tuin as it makes its way to an unspecified destination. By the end of the book, the three narratives come together. Rincewind and Twoflower arrive at the Unseen University and defeat Trymon in a battle, and the Great'Tuin arrives at his destination, where he gives birth to another world.

The aim for Trymon and Rincewind within their narratives is to prevent the other from achieving their goal. Rincewind wants to avoid capture and keep the spell in his head for as long as possible, and in doing so save the world. Trymon wants to capture Rincewind and use the eighth spell to become the world's most powerful wizard. The narrative work towards these goals, and consequently the narrative's pace increases the closer they are to achieving their aim, much like the plot of an adventure fantasy.

Within this fantasy structure, Pratchett both follows and parodies the various conventions of the genre. For example, the hero Cohen the Barbarian saves a virginal maiden from being sacrificed and then wins her hand. They then split up near end of the book, and like a true fantasy hero, Cohen has to find his love again. The parody comes from the fact Cohen is over fifty years older than Bethan, and often she is the one that saves him. In fact, at the beginning, she does not want Cohen to save her.

Unlike many fantasy or sci-fi books, Pratchett makes a conscious effort not to over explain, and when he does need to explain something, he does so within the narrative. For example, when he explains the make up of the Discworld, he does so at same time as he is telling the reader about where the Great A'tuin is going and the effect it could have on the Discworld. This makes the narrative flow very smoothly, though sometimes Pratchett leave things unexplained. However, at the beginning of the book, he tells the reader there is no point in over explaining because it will detract from the story.



Quotes

P.7

"Of course no other world was carried through the starry infinity on the backs of four giant elephants, who were themselves perched on the shell of a giant turtle"

P.31

"An ancient proverb summed it up: when a wizard is tired of looking for broken glass in his dinner, it ran, he is tired of life."

P.34

"The air in the center of the octogram shimmered and thickened, and suddenly contained a tall, dark figure. Most of it was hidden by a black robe and hood and this was probably just as well. It held a long scythe in one hand and one couldn't help noticing that what should have been fingers were simply bone, The other skeletal hand held small cubes of cheese and pineapple on a stick."

P 67

"In that circle of blackness there was just one star, a red and baleful star, a star like the glitter in the eyesocket of a rabid mink. It was small and horrible and uncompromising. And the disc was being carried straight towards it."

p.260

"He turned his head, and saw that now he was fighting on the floor of an enormous amphitheater. On each side tier upon tier of creatures stared down at him, creatures with bodies and faces that appeared to have been made by crossbreeding nightmares."

P.23

"Rincewind had been generally reckoned by his tutors to be a natural wizard in the in the same way that fish are natural mountaineers."

P.117

"Herrena would look quite stunning after a good bath, a heavy duty manicure, and the pick of the leather racks in Woo Hun Ling's Oriental Exotica and Martial Aids on Heroes Street, she was currently quite sensibly dressed in light chain mail, soft boots, and a short sword."

P.122



"Oh, you musn't go!" she said. 'we don't often have living people here. Dead people are so boring, don't you think?"

P152

"When the red star lights the sky Rincewind the wizard will come looking for onions. Do not bite him. It is very important that you help him stay alive."

P.168

"And just in case Weems thought it was accidental the luggage's lid snapped open again, just for a second, and a large tongue as red as mahogany licked across broad teeth as white as sycamore. Then it slammed shut again."

P.204

"Cohen had heard of fighting fair, and had long decided he wanted no part of it."

P.256

"His eyes were empty holes."

Topics for Discussion

What similarities does Pratchett's Discworld have with the real world?

What effect do the fantasy cliches have on the novel?

Pratchett often leaves things unexplained. Does this add or take away from novel?

In such a magical world why are so many surprised at the powers of Luggage?

In what ways does the fact the Discworld is a series of books affect the novel characterization?

What parodies of pop and fantasy culture can you see in the novel?

There are very few bad or evil characters in the novel. What meaning does this give the Discworld? How does the concept of evil change when the world is on the verge of destruction?