

# **Men at Arms: A Novel of Discworld Study Guide**

**Men at Arms: A Novel of Discworld by Terry Pratchett**

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## Plot Summary

Men At Arms is a novel set in the magical universe of the Discworld, by author Terry Pratchett. It returns to the city of Ankh-Morpork, one of his most well developed settings in the Discworld novels and the characters who are employed as members of the Night Watch of the city. Here we find the Captain of the Night Watch (Captain Vimes), as well as Corporal Carrot the classic fantasy 'hero' who is actually heir to the throne of the city, the old watch members Fred Colon and Nobby Nobbs, as well as the 'new' recruits Angua, Detritus and Cuddy.

The Discworld is a magical setting with modern sensibilities. The author satirizes all of the usual fantasy trope ranging from wizards and their staffs to mountain trolls, greedy dwarves and mad inventors. He also gives them an urban and modern feel (although it still remains a fantasy world, with magic and technology similar to the Renaissance era of our own times). The city of Ankh-Morpork is the largest and the most successful of all of the cities on the Disc, and it, characteristically is full of crime, Guilds, murderers and thieves. At the start of the setting we discover that Captain Vimes is about to retire as he is to marry one of the wealthiest women of all of the city; Lady Sybil Ramkin. Just before this happy event the Watch has been swelled by the introduction of an equal opportunities bill, encouraging members from the 'minority' groups of the city to join. This means that Detritus is a Troll, Cuddy is a Dwarf and Angua is in fact a werewolf. As racial tensions are on the rise throughout the city, a series of murders plagues the city, all perpetrated by a new sort of weapon (a 'Gonne'). It becomes clear that the bearer of the firearm is actually trying to bring disorder into the city so that the Patrician (the leader) will be overthrown and the rightful king (presumably Carrot) will be put on the throne of the city.



# Page 1-33

## Page 1-33 Summary

The first section of the book introduces the reader to most of the main character's and the setting that all of the events will later involve. We find Corporal Carrot, a recent recruit of the Night Watch of Ankh-Morpork writing home to his Dwarvish parents (although he is not a dwarf himself), about the recent events at the City Watch.

Corporal Carrot was an orphan when he was found by the Dwarf miners high in the mountains, and since coming to the city writes home religiously every week, sending money and news of his activities. His letter introduces his other friends in the Watch (Captain Vimes, Sergeant colon and Nobby Nobs), and the idea that Vimes is about to step down as Captain as he is about to be married and become a 'Gentleman of Leisure'. Carrot's letter also includes that the Watch has taken in some new recruits from the 'ethnic minorities' which through the course of this section are revealed as Cuddy the Dwarf, Detritus the Troll and Angua the Werewolf.

Meanwhile, the section covers the back story of Edward d'Eath, the assassin whom other Assassin's are wary of, as he seems obsessive, reclusive and cruel. His story starts at the grave of his bankrupt father, and continues with him accidentally meeting Corpral Carrot one day (whom d'Eath instantly recognises as being of royal blood.

The assassin starts researching, and discovers that the orphan Carrot is indeed the last surviving heir to the throne, and holds a meeting with other disgruntled noble families to try and inspire a coup. This meeting fails spectacularly, and so d'Eath hatches another plan to achieve his dream.

Meanwhile life continues almost as normal for Captain Vimes and the Night Watch, save that Vimes is called to consult with the Patrician about the new Head of the Night Watch. Vimes is worried about his legacy, and seems unable to imagine his life as a gentleman of leisure as the Patrician skilfully goads him into considering his resignation.

The new recruits that carrot first mentioned are then seen training at the Watch Headquarters, where almost all, to a man, woman, dwarf and troll of them seem entirely unsuited to the task. Sergeant Colon and Nobby Nobbs has to watch his language as he almost starts a fight between the bitter rivals (Detritus the Troll and Cuddy the Dwarf), and Fred Colon despairs that the new recruits will ever truly 'fit in' with the Night Watche's way of doing things.

Angua goes on patrol with Carrot, and the two form a quick and easy friendship as they apprehend Here'n'Now, an unlicensed Thief. Carrot explains the workings of the criminal justice system to Anguag as he shocks her into taking Here'n'Now into protective custody (knowing that the licensed thieves will automatically kill him for Mugging without A Permit and not paying his Thieves' Taxes).



In the final scene of this section, we see an unfortunate clown by the name of Beano who is hurrying down an alley when Edward d'Eath approaches him. They appear to know each other and so Beano is surprised when the Assassin d'Eath hits him and kills him suddenly. The character of Death materialises, helping Beano to accept his post-mortal state and moving on to the Other Side.

## Page 1-33 Analysis

In this first section, the author works to characterise all of the principle character's and display their essential qualities; facts that will become necessary to know the further we move into the book. He uses the medium of the Letter from Carrot to introduce the characters to the reader (through Carrot's eyes), and also the recent events that are happening for the City Watch. These Letters serve to act as a useful device to keep the reader up to date on who all of the character's are and what has been happening behind the scenes as we move through the plot.

The actual narrative of the first section remains in the third-person personal, with a strong narrative voice (seen in the use of asides and footnotes, directly from author to reader) that is characteristic of Pratchett's work; again it is used to highlight the interesting, significant and humorous events and characters, and also supplies red herrings to the reader in what promises to become a murder mystery.

The first use of the theme of Racism and Prejudice is seen in the statements by Sergeant Fred Colon as he believes that the Watch is a place for 'Men' (I.E: humans), and shows that he is holding on to outmoded and ignorant views about the other races of the discoworld. It is only when Detritus and Cuddy, both seperately show him just how effective and useful they can be does Colon begin to give them a grudging respect. This foreshadows the later events of racial/species tension, and also indicates that Colon is not truly vindictive, merely ignorant.

The final point that we shows itself most clearly is the introduction to the reader of the City of Ankh-Morpork and the Discworld itself. Through the use of episodic scenes as each character moves through their life and goes about their jobs in the Watch we encounter different 'parts' of the city (such as the Thieve's Guild, Gaspode the Dog, and Twerp's Peerage), that introduces the reader to the satirical, absurd and strangely realistic make-up of the world.



# Page 33-68

## Page 33-68 Summary

This section of the book concerns itself primarily with the character of Captain Vimes as he starts to adjust to the idea of becoming a 'Gentleman of Leisure' and also, whilst he cogitates on this the plot of the book starts to quicken as mysterious events happen at the Assassin's Guild.

The section starts with Captain Vimes returning from his audience with the Patrician, realising that there is probably no one in the Watch ready to take on the role of Captain, and wondering why he feels so averse to leaving his job. He understands that he is doing so for the good wishes of his future wife, but feels that the social circles that he is soon to be a part of do not fit him. He considers the fact that the Ramkin mansion, with its attendant servants and butler Willikins is far removed from his own sensibilities. He waxes lyrical about his old serviceable boots, and even though he could afford new ones, he refuses to give them up.

Vimes finds his wife to be inside her Sanctuary for Marsh Dragons; a small breed of fire-breathing lizard that can fly, but has the unfortunate habit of exploding. Here he discovers his wife mucking out the stalls, worried that one particular dragon - Chubby - has gone missing. He promises her to keep an eye out for any news, and the very next section is seen from Chubby's point of view as the narrative relates how Chubby was stolen and the pet marsh dragon is getting very angry about being moved in a box.

Meanwhile, back at the Watch House, Sergeant Fred Colon swears in the new recruits (or fails to do so and Carrot has to step in and ask them to accept the 'King's Shilling' and take the Oath to uphold the peace). The new recruits then go on their first patrol as a new unit, as Fred Colon wonders himself what will happen now that Vimes is retiring. The patrol haven't gone far when they see that there is a rally of two opposing forces going on in the city: the Trolls celebrating their victory at Koom Valley, and the Dwarf's celebrating their victory at Koom Valley (a distant battle). Fearing an imminent riot, Carrot intervenes and calls both arguing sides to attention, reminding them that they are citizens of Ankh-Morpork and that no civil unrest will be tolerated. Although Fred Colon and Nobby Nobbs are all up for fleeing the vicinity, Angua watches with amazement as Carrot seemingly manages to bring order to the two sides merely by his commanding presence, before a loud explosion is heard.

Vimes is back at the empty Watch House worried about what he will do now that he is no longer working class and in fact, owns a sizeable chunk of the city in the form of rents when he hears the explosion. He looks out of the window to discover that smoke is emanating from the Assassin's Guild. He assembles the patrol when he finds them and heads to the guild, where at first he is refused entry but, when he reveals that he in fact owns the building is allowed inside to find the museum of the Assassin's Guild full of debris and smoke. Here the Master of the Guild of Assassin's (Doctor Cruces) assures



him that it is either a thief or a prank, and that nothing had been stolen, but later Vimes discovers from Cuddy the Dwarf that there was a smell of gunpowder, from Carrot that a mirror had been broken and left shards everywhere, and that a small white card was left in the wreckage.

During these events Angua discovers Gaspode (or rather, Gaspode investigates Angua), telling her that he knows that she is a werewolf and that he overheard that a dragon had been exploded in the Guild of Assassin's. Angua realizes that she cannot reveal the clue, and learns about Gaspode's magical past as being given the power of speech and thought by the wizards.

In the final sections, Doctor Cruces is seen furious at whatever has happened in his guild, and announces to his trusted councillors that 'it' has been stolen. In the next scene we find Edward d'Eath cradling 'it' and finally happy that he can fulfil his plan.

## Page 33-68 Analysis

This section features most heavily on the personality of Captain Vimes, as he compares his belongings, lifestyle and appetites to that of his wife. Surprisingly, he finds that Sybil Ramkin is far more austere than he is, but that also she doesn't have to be, which he finds indicative of society as a whole. Through his thoughts about his boots and his sudden ownership of vast amounts of land and buildings (including the Assassin's Guild, which is why he is allowed in to investigate), we understand that Vimes feels somewhat of a class traitor, as he will be able to afford anything he desires. These worries and thoughts are actually another way of explaining Vimes' motivations: that really he is essentially a Republican. He hates wealth, privilege, and especially royalty as he sees that they have no right to their riches. Instead he automatically places himself 'close to the streets' both metaphorically and literally in his job. This bears interesting allusions to his faith in 'Keeping The Peace' and the role of the Watchman as protecting the downtrodden from all oppressors - whether criminal, foreign, or the elite.



# Page 68-101

## Page 68-101 Summary

This section begins with Captain Vimes extolling the evils or royalty to the young Corporal Carrot whilst on patrol. Nominally, they are on the hunt for clues that could lead to the answer behind the explosion at the Assassin's Guild. Vimes' leads Carrot on a path through the city, showing him the Old Post Office as a piece of evidence against the idea that 'the city' itself never really did 'work' - it just carried on.

On their journey, Gaspode the dog manages to convince the pair to see a clue high up on one of the walls adjacent to the Assassin's Guild: a frayed piece of leather which was obviously once 'Chubby's collar. Captain Vimes and Carrot now correctly assume that it was the missing dragon (Chubby) who was exploded inside the Assassin's Guild.

The next short section introduced (as yet unnamed) genius inventor with the prefix; 'the most dangerous man in the world'. This passage accounts how he has made many items that could bring disaster to the fates of nations, but as yet remains totally innocent and harmless of any malice.

The events move swiftly on, so we see the Patrician in his Palace meeting Doctor Cruces (the Head of the Assassin's Guild), who angrily demands that the Patrician calls off his 'pet dog' Captain Vimes (as the Watch Captain has been nosing about the Guild house). The Patrician questions him as to whether the 'item' had been stolen, and why on earth the Assassin's hadn't destroyed it, to which Doctor Cruces seems suddenly shocked and apologetic. The Patrician's answer to this meeting is, cunningly, to summon Captain Vimes to the Palace where he absolutely forbids him to become further involved with this case (especially as he is imminently about to retire). Captain Vimes leaves fuming, having learnt from the Patrician that connected to this case (which he is not allowed to investigate) is the death of a Dwarf Artificer, one Bjorn Hammerhock.

The scene of Bjorn Hammerhock's death is played out in a 'cut scene' where the Dwarf, who is a specialist in the art of tiny machineries, is busy working on cleaning a strange, cylinder-like device. The device accidentally goes off in his face, resulting in his immediate death and the arrival of Death (who attempts to make a joke with him, before realising that the Dwarf doesn't get the joke).

The last few scenes concentrate themselves more fully with the rest of the Night Watch, as they are trained up by Sergeant Fred Colon and Nobby Nobbs. It at first appears, as Detritus breaks every longbow that he is given and resorts to using his fists to pound the mannequin targets, that the new recruits are going to be hopeless. Later that night the Watch goes to the only 'watch-friendly' bar in town and discuss the string of murders, and the fact of Vimes' retirement. Suddenly Carrot retrieves the piece of card that had been stuck to his shoe all the time (since leaving the Assassin's Guild), it reads 'Gonne'.





## Page 68-101 Analysis

In this section, through his discussion with Corporal Carrot, Vimes' complete hatred of Kings grows apparent. Captain Vimes appears to believe in the City itself, which is why he insists to Carrot that the City will always 'go on' just as before. This conversation highlights the fundamental piece of captain Vimes' character: that he deep down believes in democracy and equality of opportunity.

Despite Vimes' believes in the power of civic action, the scenes relating to the Patrician still show, quite clearly that he can be manipulated by people in power. The Patrician here uses a direct order, telling Vimes to back off the case knowing that Vimes will do exactly the opposite merely out of a misguided sense of vengeance. In his conversation with Doctor Cruces, it becomes obvious that the Patrician knows exactly what item it is that has been stolen, and knows just how dangerous it could prove to become.



## Page 101 - 139

### Page 101 - 139 Summary

This section begins with Captain Vimes returning morose after having to tell the dwarf family of Bjorn Hammerhock that their relative had died, and the man is strangled by his own feelings of uselessness. Knowing that he is about to resign and that he made a promise to the Patrician, Captain Vimes feels like he has hit rock bottom, and so he turns to his old poison; alcohol. He arrives desultorily home to find his wife to be Lady Sybil Ramkin worried and upset with him - not only that he has been drinking again, but that he seems to have forgotten that tonight was the night that they were throwing a Ball for all of the friends of the Ramkin family.

Elsewhere in the city, Angua is on patrol with Carrot, and the two are having an argument. Carrot mistakenly talks about his feelings for the undead (that they are the only social group in the city that he disagrees with), not realising that Angua herself is a werewolf. Almost as if to prove the point, Angua notices that it is almost full moon, so she angrily says her goodbyes and leaves to change into a large wolfhound). Surprisingly, she is watched by Gaspode, who befriends her and tells her that he knows what she is, and that he can smell human fear all around and near by the dwarf Hammerhock's workshop.

The next section deals almost exclusively with the Ramkin's party, and Captain Vimes' hatred for it. The Captain washes and descends to the party, which almost immediately entertains a long discussion about the merits of all the different races in the city. Captain Vimes is obviously angry at his guests, and leads them on sarcastically until they start showing themselves up. Just as Vimes is about to finally lose his temper, Corporal Carrot arrives at the Ramkin household with the card reading 'Gonne'.

Captain Vimes realizes that there must have been something in the Assassin's Guild Museum, and also that Carrot can help him get into the Dwarf Hammerhock's workshop. The Captain and Carrot go straight to the Hammerhock's house, where Carrot (as a foster-dwarf) manages to convince the Hammerhock family to let them into the late Artificer's workshop. Here Vimes finds the slug from the 'Gonne' embedded in the wall, a fine strand of red cotton-like thread (or a hair). Carrot also finds another piece of paper with strange alchemical symbols on it.

On the route back to the Watch House, Vimes is walking across the Ankh river, thinking through the clues when he happens to look down and sees a ghostly hand sticking up out of the river. This turns out to be the hand of a dead body with a clown's grease paint on it's face.

The last scene in this section involves the new Watch recruits Detritus and Cuddy, as they find the body left by Carrot and Vimes and pursue the lead on the alchemical note. They proceed to the Guild of Alchemists, where they discover a group of mad scientists.



Here Cuddy and Detritus find out that the note is the writing of Leonardo de Quirm, the genius inventor.

## Page 101 - 139 Analysis

This section is mostly concerned with drawing out the themes of the previous (Vimes' hatred for elites), but also introduces the idea that ignorance itself is the enemy of progress.

The wealthy patrons that attend the Ramkin party all appear to be ignorant of the other races that exist in the city, choosing to spout their prejudices and opinions. This point is further shown by the idea that Carrot is able to get the Dwarvish community (and the Hammerhock family) to give him access to the deceased workshop. As humans, Carrot and Vimes should not be allowed inside the almost sacred location of a dwarf's workshop, and yet they manage to overcome their cultural differences in the service of truth.



## Page 139 - 170

### Page 139 - 170 Summary

This sections with Sergeant Fred Colon and Nobby Nobbs proceeding to the Fool's Guild to inquire about the dead Clown that they had received at the Watch House. When they arrive they are welcomed to the door by Boffo, a miserable Clown on probation who doesn't wish to answer any of their questions about the recent death in their guild. Whilst there, they discover that the Fool's Guild is situated backing onto the Assassin's Guild, and that the whole Guild is in somewhat of an uproar. Sergeant Colon and Bobby wait while the body of Beano the clown is brought and cremated at the guild, and watch the ceremony of his ashes being humorously dumped into another clown's trousers. At this point Doctor Whiteface, the Head of the Fool's Guild arrives and sternly asks them to leave as this all seems to be Guild Business. On their way out, Boffo their clown attendant makes the remark that the Fool's should all go over to the Assassin's guild and 'have it out with them' and then takes back his remark, which seems to be implying that the Assassin's murdered one of their Guild Members. Just as he ushers them out of the Guild House, Boffo hisses at them they should concentrate on finding the dead clown's 'real nose' - a comment which mystifies the two watchmen. On their way back Fred Colon asks Nobby if he had been in many battles, to which it turns out that he had, and they both agreed that, even though the Fool's Guild said that Beano was seen just yesterday, his body appeared to be days older than that.

Meanwhile, as Angua wakes up in her bed in her boarding house for the Undead, her landlady Mrs Cake informs her that a young man - Corporal Carrot in fact, is there to see her. Carrot offers to take her out to 'see the city' and get some breakfast (in part because he wishes to apologise for upsetting her the day before).

Captain Vimes also wakes up, in his office in the Watch House. He is hungover and thinking about the clues in front of him when he sees something glinting out of the window on the roof of the opera house opposite. There is a sudden bang and he realizes that someone is shooting something into his room. Vimes dives for the floor, before thinking that whatever could fly that far could probably fly through the walls as well and so crawls out of the room and down, out of the Watch House. When he gets to the other side of the street, and to the roof of the Old opera House he finds it empty, apart from the semi-sentient gargoyles who sprout from the roofs of the tallest buildings in the city.

Knowing that they watch everything, Vimes' attempts to talk to one, who responds in a more friendly manner as the gargoyle knows the ever-likeable Corporal Carrot. The gargoyle tells the Captain that not a few minutes ago there was indeed a man up here on the roof, who ran off. He appeared to having something like a 'firework stick' or a device that could shoot rockets, which he used to attack the Watch House opposite. Vimes makes his way to where his unknown attacker escaped, and as he does so trips over something shiny - a round casing for the 'Gonne'.



At the same time in the City, Carrot and Angua are having a 'dwarf' breakfast with Gaspode the Wonder Dog trailing behind them. Gaspode is convinced that Carrot and Angua like each other, and takes every opportunity to point this out to Angua (which Carrot does not notice, of course).

After breakfast, Angua starts to realize that she may indeed feel something for the burly, muscular and above all innocent Corporal Carrot when Carrot takes her to the Museum of the Beggars Guild to find their Guild also in an uproar. Here they find that one of their beggars has been killed, through a window at long range. It turns out to be Letitia Knibbs, the serving maid to 'Queen Molly' (the Head of the Beggar's Guild). It becomes apparent that no one would have any reason to kill a serving-beggar, but that she was wearing one of Queen Molly's ancient dresses at the time and Carrot believes that the assassination attempt was actually meant for Queen Molly herself. Corporal Carrot finds the slug that shot through the room (and Letitia Knibbs) embedded in the oak floor, and wonders at what sort of crossbow or projectile could have been fired with so much accuracy over so far, and with so much killing power.

## Page 139 - 170 Analysis

This section develops the plot by bringing another level: that of Guild Politics and the machinations of power between them. It also serves to develop the feeling of a crime drama by having the character's involved in a hit-and-run, and attempting to be confused by the lies of the Guild Members.

In reading this section we can begin to see that there is another 'level' of society that operates almost entirely distinctly from the law and order of the rest of the city; the Guild's. Sergeant Colon and Nobby Nobbs are almost turned away and then lied to, before being asked to leave by Doctor Whiteface when they start investigating the death of the clown (and it becomes obvious that their guide, Boffo, believes the death to be at the hands of the Assassin's Guild). This whole scene further presents to the reader the question of what constitutes Law and Order, and the Role of the Police Officer in a corrupt society.

Another point to be made about this section is the developing love interest between Corporal Carrot and Angua. Their attraction seems inevitable as two of the most 'normal' of all of the characters. In a sense, their relationship fulfils the part of the 'classic' fantasy and crime tale of two of the protagonists coming together in the midsts of overwhelming adversity.



## Page 171 - 200

### Page 171 - 200 Summary

This section starts with Vimes considering the reports coming from his officers about the investigations, and his latest find on the roof of the Old Opera House. He has held in his hands what seems to be a series of six cylinders affixed together. The reports from Cuddy the Dwarf and from sergeant Colon both refer to their recent finds at the respective Guild Houses: that the people at the Fool's Guild seems to believe that Beano was killed by an Assassin and that they should 'find his real nose' and also that Beano was sent after he had died in the river. The report from Cuddy refers to the inventor of gunpowder, Leonardo da Quirm, and how the Alchemists know that the mathematical formula that Vimes' found was one of Leonardo's own workings.

Attempting to put this together, Vimes' begins to believe that they are looking at the effects of another, a new type of weapon that is faster., more deadly and more accurate than any that they have seen before. He also correctly guesses that the weapon was kept in the Assassin's Guild precisely because it was so dangerous and this is a sign of how dangerous things could become if they were not careful.

Meanwhile, Cuddy and Detritus are still out on patrol together whilst Cuddy the Dwarf is trying to teach the Troll Detritus the finer points of arithmetic. They turn down a street and suddenly someone runs away from them. They give chase. Their quarry leads them to a place called 'Grove Alley' which gets narrower and narrower the further in they get, until they emerge at a small metal door, standing open. There is no where else for their quarry to have escaped so they go inside, stepping into pitch darkness.

Inside the quarry, it is incredibly cold, and the two watch Recruits surmise that this is because it is a warehouse for the storing of pork. Suddenly they seem something glint ahead and loud bangs are heard, and a door slammed and bolted. Cuddy gets up from where he was hiding behind Detritus, who appears to have been shot by something. Although not seriously injured, there is a greater danger of them freezing to death. They also notice that as Detritus' the Troll's brain starts to cool down he becomes ever more and more intelligent. He soon starts thinking in advanced algebra and calculus as Cuddy realizes that they are both going to die if they do not escape. Using his enhanced brain power, Detritus calculates a throw that launches the Dwarf through a high window, and out into the street.

Meanwhile, Captain Vimes is again summoned to the Patrician's Palace, where the Patrician asks for his sword and his badge. Captain Vimes is shocked, and does not hand over his badge. The Patrician again informs him that he was not supposed to investigate the deaths that are happening around the city, and that he has until he is married - noon of the next day to keep his badge and his position. After Vimes leaves the Patrician's office the story follows the Patrician as he moves through a secret door into the depths of the Palace, where he has Leonardo da Quirm (quite happily) living in



a cellar room. Leonardo is happily creating a flying machine and listens to the Patrician who talks to him about the ballistic device; the Gonne.

## Page 171 - 200 Analysis

In this section it is finally revealed who created the Gonne to the reader (the mad inventor Leonardo de Quirm) and just why the Patrician wants it kept off of the streets of Ankh-Morpork. The Patrician realizes that the Gonne - or gun - would change the fabric of society, and would destroy his control over the city, but he also knows that Leonardo da Quirm did not design it out of spite or malice. For this reason Leonardo was deemed 'too dangerous to be allowed to be free' and so is allowed to create any invention he likes, as long as the Patrician inspects each and every one and keeps him locked in the Palace.

The character of Captain Vimes is shown as a truly remarkable detective as he begins to come to the same conclusion without the benefit of knowing the facts, as he pieces together the bits of evidence.

Another important feature of this chapter is the easing of enmities between the two recruits; Detritus the Troll and Cuddy the Dwarf. As they first start their patrol Cuddy the Dwarf is scornful of the Troll's lack of intelligence, suggesting that he can only count to two and was therefore thick. However, when he sees Detritus's intelligence approaching genius levels, and being saved by the Troll from freezing inside the warehouse, Cuddy seems to have a sea change in character as he rushes to save his friend's life. This scene has a somewhat similar message for the theme of racial prejudice as did the scene in which Carrot manages to convince the Hammerhock family that he and Vimes should be allowed to see the dead Bjorn's workshop. They both show off the different races acting out of stereotype, and realising how similar they are, and indeed how mistaken their previous misconceived ideas had been.



## Page 201 - 237

### Page 201 - 237 Summary

Back in the frozen pork warehouse, Detritus the Troll is performing ever more advanced calculus as Cuddy returns with the key to the door. The Troll's vast intelligence collapses as he is rescued by Cuddy the Dwarf, who notices that his colleague has been shot five times. Whilst Cuddy is trying to determine how badly hurt Detritus is, the passer's-by start jeering at the 'stupid troll' and Cuddy the Dwarf threatens them. He manages to get Detritus to stand up and takes him to Quarry lane, where all the Trolls live in the city of Ankh-Morpork (hoping to find a Troll doctor).

Meanwhile, the innkeeper of the nearest bar to the Watch House rushes to the Watch to fetch Carrot, Angua, Colon and Nobbs to tell them that the usually tee-total Captain Vimes has been drinking whiskey in the bar, solidly, all day. They race to fetch him, finding a drunk Watch Captain. Carrot and the rest of the Watch take Vimes back to his room, at which Angua is shocked to see is so bare, save for a ledger containing woman's names, and some spare cardboard for the souls of his re-used Old Boots. Carrot angrily tells Angua that those names are the widowers of Night Watchmen, and that Vimes pays their pensions out of his own salary. They administer strong Klatchian Coffee, which suitably sobers the Captain up. At this juncture they realise why Captain Vimes was so drunk when Captain Quirke of the Day Watch arrives disarm all of the Night Watch. Because of their ongoing investigation into the murders, the Day Watch have relieved them of their duty.

Meanwhile, at Quarry Lane, Detritus and Cuddy step into the middle of a street battle between the Dwarves and the Trolls, as the Dwarves believe a Troll killed the Dwarf artificer Bjorn Hammerhock. Detritus, already wounded and Cuddy realise that they are hopelessly outnumbered and decide to make a run for it. They make their way through the back alleys of Ankh-Morpork, for the street below them to suddenly give way and they fall through to the Old City (the ruins of Old Ankh-Morpork). Here they find footprints leading to a sewer, and notice that all of the walls are fashioned with crowns and the reliquaries of the lost Kings of the city. They attempt to follow the footprints to find their way out before becoming lost, and Detritus decides to use a breastplate to dig themselves out.

Meanwhile, back at the Watch House Vimes goes home to Sybil Ramkin where he quietly seems to have given up hope, not knowing whether to care or not about losing his job and his Watch. At the same time reports of fighting reach the Watch and the rest of the characters learn that Captain Quirke has arrested Coalface the Troll for the murder of the dwarf Hammerhock. Carrot immediately knows that it could not have been Coalface as he was too large to get inside the Dwarf's workshop.





## Page 201 - 237 Analysis

In this section, the plot takes off as the action escalates around the main characters. The real reason for the murders we can now guess (that the murderer wanted there to be fighting amongst the minority races of the City, the Dwarves and the Trolls so that everyone would decide that the Patrician was a poor ruler). It seems at this point that the antagonists - whomever they are - have won as our characters watch helplessly at the chaos.

This section is the 'crisis' point of the book and the lowest of the low points that the characters can reach before they will inevitably have to confront their enemies. This can be seen in the fact that Vimes appears to have given up and has gone back to drinking, and that the whole Night Watch have been disarmed and relieved of duty. This is a necessary point for any adventure story, as it follows the classic tradition of leading the characters to their lowest ebb to discover what their real motivations are. Captain Vimes in particular displays a marked confusion about his role in society now that he has been disarmed as a Watchman. At this point we can assume that he lives for his job of 'Keeping the Peace' and without it, he would not be able to visualize himself as a person at all (hence the alcoholism).



## Page 237 - 276

### Page 237 - 276 Summary

While Captain Vimes is enjoying his post-employment bath in the Ramkin mansion (or attempting to enjoy it, but all the while thinking about the loss of his job), the Night Watch have left to investigate the body that Detritus and Cuddy had found in the Old City. They wander and wonder at the old ruins of the city, and why the city of Ankh-Morpork does not now need Kings when they come to the dumped body. It appears to be the body of Beano the Clown, even though he was apparently already dead. When the Watch recruits get back to the Watch House they are talking about the case when suddenly Carrot realizes what has been going on. He has realised that only a Clown could have broken into the Assassin's Guild.

At that moment a member of the Day Watch arrives, saying that the Watch House has been attacked by Trolls and that they have to help. Carrot sternly reminds them they have been fired, but that he has another idea. He decides to institute a militia (as it is in the law that citizens can enforce a militia if there has been a threat to the city). At that point Carrot takes the Watch recruits to the City Armoury, where they intimidate the city weapon-smiths into giving them weapons as they are acting as a militia in defence of the city.

Their next stop is the Fool's Guild, much to the protest of the other recruits, who believe that they should be going to help out the watch House from the riots. When they arrive Carrot very carefully informs Doctor Whiteface that the city is now in crisis and that he (and his very heavily armed men) have come to investigate. They demand answers from the Master of the Guild House, who reluctantly tells them that Beano the Clown appears to have been murdered by the Assassin's for trespassing on their property. He shows them to Beano's old room (which backs onto the Assassin's Guild) and tells them that a hole was blown up in the back of the room, allowing access to the other guild. The Fool's have guessed that, for whatever reason, Beano decided to break in and steal something from the Assassin's.

At the end of this section carrot idly asks to see the museum of the Clowns, taking Angua and Boffo the attendant clown with them. Here they find the Museum of Clown faces, all painted on eggs. Carrot realizes that the fools, Clowns and Jester's believe that their only real 'face' is the one on the egg, and that a Fool has no 'face' underneath it.

### Page 237 - 276 Analysis

In this section, the hidden events that have caused the previous murders are being explained as the character's finally realise just what happened. It appears that a wall in the back room of the fool's Guild has been blown up (with chubby the swamp dragon)



for a clown to be able to steal his way into the Assassin's guild and apparently steal the Gonne from the Assassin's museum. The only fact that doesn't fit is that Beano appears to have already been dead when he was seen leaving the Guild House.

In this section, we see some of the main character's revert to type, even after they have lost their jobs and modus operandi as Watchmen. When Carrot institutes them as the city militia he is really enforcing the idea that he is a man of the city, and that as such he has a right to try and defend the city against threat. It is also an important note that, in this way Carrot is becoming 'more himself' as he is acting out his apparent 'natural born kingness' in the form of a noble leader of men.



## Page 276 - 300

### Page 276 - 300 Summary

After leaving the Fool's Guild, Carrot leads his new band of militia off to confront the riots overtaking the city, but Angua and Gaspode decide to do some more investigating in the Assassin's Guild. Angua rushes into an alley and changes her form to that of a large hunting dog, and her and Gaspode wander in through the kitchens of the Assassin's Guild. Treated in a friendly manner, the dogs are allowed to wander the halls until they find the room on the other side of the wall from Beano's old room, only to find Doctor Cruces outside with a team of his closest assassin's. They overhear them talking, that the room on their side of the wall belonged to young Edward d'Eath, a noble son who must have been complicit in the theft of the Gonne. Realising that they might have a clue to the murderer's identity, the hounds leave the Guild.

Back in front of the Watch House, Carrot sees a large crowd of assembled Trolls surrounding the Watch House and demanding that Coalface the Troll has been wrongfully imprisoned and that they want him released. Carrot wades into the centre of the mess and calls for Captain Quirke to come out of hiding. The Captain of the Day Watch emerges prideful and angry, to be quickly knocked unconscious by Carrot, who tells the Day Watch that they have committed a crime and are relieved of their post by the City Militia. The Troll faction are glad to have Coalface released, but are about to turn on Carrot when Corporal Carrot offers select Trolls a job in the militia. They are at first confused, but realising that this would mean pay and possible respect, they sign up. At this point the dwarf rioters arrive, and demand that it is unfair that the Trolls are allowed to join the militia, and so Carrot signs select dwarves up too. When he has formed a large force with enough numbers to significantly change the allegiances of the crowd, he sets Detritus and Cuddy to leading them on patrol of the city.

On their way back from the Assassin's Guild, Gaspode and Angua run into the feral gang of dogs 'Big Fido.' They surround the two, and take them to swear allegiance to the psychotic 'Fido' who turns out to be a chihuahua. The Feral Dogs have sworn themselves against all forms of mastery and viciously attack any other dog which is subservient to humans. Angua and Gaspode manage to leave their circle, where Angua muses on the idea that real wolves (whom the feral dogs are imitating) would never actually attack their own, and themselves do not have ideals and vendettas like this gang does.

### Page 276 - 300 Analysis

Even though the events of this section appear to be chaotic and getting out of hand, we can see that in actual fact they are progressing their way to a resolution of the core conflict at the heart of the book. This resolution is in part made possible by the discovery of the initial culprit of the Gonne theft; Edward d'Eath.



The main theme of the conflict is that of prejudice (as seen in the riots between the Dwarves and the Trolls). When carrot confronts them and gets them to enlist in the 'city militia' he is essentially asking them to ut their city first, and to think about their status as citizens before their past or background. We can surmise that the this is perhaps one of the underlying messages of the book: that ignorance and prejudice is born from dwelling on the mistakes on the past, instead of trying to make ones' present situation fairer, better and more equal. We can also see through this encounter Carrot's unshakeable belief in 'the City' over and above any other notion or ideal of 'Kingship' or 'Vendetta.'

This point is further brought home when we realise that even the feral dogs of the city have their own Guild with their own secret war. The dog's led by Big Fido are mistakenly using rhetoric to think of themselves as noble wolves, to justify their terrorising of the other dogs of the city. Angua points out that this is a mistaken idea because wolves themselves have no values or politics, they merely are what they are. We can draw an interesting conclusion about how political and aggressive rhetoric uses (or abuses) ideals to further their own ends.



## Page 301 - 339

### Page 301 - 339 Summary

This section begins with Gaspode and Angua heading back to the Watch House whilst, unfortunately, Angua also happens to be naked (The beggar Foul Old Ron stole her clothes when she transformed into a wolfhound). They make their way through the streets surreptitiously, before breaking back into the Watch house. When they hear Colon and Nobby Nobb's arriving back from their patrol, Angua hides in the only available dorm room: Corporal Carrot's. Corporal Carrot emerges back, to find Angua wrapped in a sheet in his room and at first appears to not take any notice of her disrobed state as they talk about the case. They realise that the initial thief of the Gonne must have been Edward d'Eath, but that the murderer could not be him as Edward d'Eath is in fact dead (he was the body that they had pulled out of the river, painted with grease paint make up). As the night draws in, Carrot and Angua's affections for each other become clear and they go to bed together.

During the night, Carrot wakes up and opens the curtains to let the moonlight in, turning around to see that his lover (Angua) has transformed into a Wolf. He grabs his sword as she dives out of the window, and then instantly regrets his action, realising that Angua is a werewolf and that he still loves her. Carrot is furious with himself and is about to chase Angua when he sees Gaspode outside the door; Carrot finally understands that Gaspode has the power of speech and manages to convince the mongrel to help find Angua for him (as he will be able to smell her out).

The next day is Captain Vimes' wedding day, and the ceremony is being held at the Unseen University with a procession through Sartor Square (one of the main square's that occupy the city centre). Now that the 'militia' have quelled the riots of the previous night, they see no choice but to hurriedly honour their former Captain by assembling an honour guard to go to his wedding.

Meanwhile, Gaspode tracks down Angua; finding her near the Shades. He manages to convince her that Carrot is truly sorry for reaching for his sword and is deeply in love with her. As they are about to make their way back to the Watch House they are confronted by Fido and his gang of Feral Dogs, who gives chase. They run over the overs and Angua leaps onto some of the low rooftops to evade Fido's gang, but the small Fido - believing himself to be a wolf leaps to, misses and falls after Gaspode attempts to save him.

Back at Sartor Square, the Patrician's carriage pulls up to pay his respects to the marriage of Captain Vimes and the Lady Sybil Ramkin when Carrot notices someone on the Tower of Art (the tallest tower in the city). At first he thinks it must be Cuddy the dwarf whom he stationed up there, but then realizes that it cannot be, and launches himself to protect the Patrician. The Patrician gets shot in the thigh, whilst Carrot is also shot.



## Page 301 - 339 Analysis

This section suggest the message that two of the central characters; Angua and Carrot have to overcome their own ignorances in order to reach their final resolution and indeed, to become happily in love. Carrot responds through fear when he notices Angua-as-Wolf, but instantly regrets it as he realizes that he loves her, and that his feelings of love far outweigh his fear and his previous opinions. For Angua, her conversation with Gaspode shows that previously Angua had fears about her own werewolf state, and believed that all humans would treat her unkindly if they knew. Gaspode the Wonder Dog, in his unique position of being both a canine and with possessing human intelligence, manages to convince her that she needs to accept the fact that she is both things, and that 'pure humans' (like Carrot) too could be many things;p both ignorant and worthy of love.



## Page 339 - Page 381

### Page 339 - Page 381 Summary

In the final section of the book, the murderer is shooting down at the Patrician's carriage as Vimes and Carrot manage to get the wounded Patrician back into the University, and guarded by the new Troll recruits. After a few moments Detritus also walks in, carrying the body of Cuddy the dwarf who had been stationed on the Tower of Art but had been pushed off the Tower and killed.

Vimes realizes that the murderer could be anyone, and that the only evidence they have is a scrap of black cloth in the hands of the dwarf Cuddy; that it must be an Assassin. This is coupled with the fact that, alongside the militia guards, the only ones on the roofs were Assassin's 'guarding' the Patrician. Carrot informs the crowd that they should announce that Edward d'Eath was the killer and that all was well. Meanwhile, Carrot and Vimes descends down to the Old City to try and track down the killer (knowing that it is the killer's preferred escape route).

The two confront the murder, Doctor Cruces, who gloats at them that Edward d'Eath was right when he said that the city needs kings. Edward had killed the clown after hiring him to make it appear that the theft was committed from outside the Guild, and then the Doctor Cruces killed Edward d'Eath so he could have the gun. Just as Doctor Cruces is about to shoot Vimes and Carrot, Angua as a wolf jumps on him, but herself gets shot in the process. Vimes chases Cruces, seizing the Gonne off of him and finds that the Gonne gives him a drunken sense of power. As he gives chase they emerge from the Old City and into the Assassin's Guild, where Carrot finally kills Doctor Cruces.

At the end of the book, Carrot approaches the Patrician now that the city has been returned to law and order, and is granted his request that the Watch been enlarged to cover the whole city, and that Captain Vimes (now retired) is rehired as the Commander of the entire Watch. Carrot himself is appointed to Captaincy.

### Page 339 - Page 381 Analysis

In the last section of the book, the final identity of the murderer is revealed as Doctor Cruces, as the only one who had the opportunity and the power to be able to perform the acts. Another interesting point is played out that the Gonne, because of its very nature almost has a mind of its own. The destructive 'evil' of it seems intelligent as it urges its different bearers to solve all of their problems by killing whomever stands in front of them.

In the final resolution, we also see the victory of the theme of 'Keeping the Peace' over ignorance, as the Patrician question Captain Carrot over the notions of kingship, and what he would do if it were generally recognised that he were the king of the realm.



Captain Carrot replies that it made more sense for kings to only arrive when they were needed, and for the rest of the time for the city to keep on functioning properly.



# Characters

## Captain Vimes

The main character throughout the 'City Watch' series of Discworld books, Captain Vimes is the hard-boiled, frowning, practical, and cynical leader of the Night Watch for the city of Ankh-Morpork. During the course of the events in the novel of 'Men At Arms' we find Captain Vimes finally approaching the spectre of retirement as he is about to marry Sybil Ramkin, one of the wealthiest women of the old noble families of the region. This prospect of giving up the job that he grew up in, and loves so much causes a crisis for the character, as he tries desperately to solve the biggest case he has had to deal with so far, whilst wondering how he is going to live with himself when he becomes one of the 'landed gentry'.

The character of Captain Vimes is heavily based on the detective noir stereotypes of Sam Spade and Elmore Leonard.. A natural iconoclast, he was born poor and rose through the ranks of the most undesirable job in the city (that of the Night-Watchmen), showing a talent for ferreting out information and doggedness in his pursuit of his duty. The character comes from a long line of iconoclasts and working-class heroes (a fact that becomes significant in his dealings with his wife-to-be's wealthy associates), as one of his ancestors 'Old Stoneface' himself led a revolution, executing one of the tyrannical Kings of the city's past.

It is through Captain Vimes's character that the author most often explores the major themes of the book ('Keeping The Peace' and Modernity especially), as Vimes strives to battle the outmoded opinions of those around him.

## Corporal Carrot

Corporal Carrot is one of life's natural innocents, having been orphaned as a baby and brought up by a family of Dwarfs in the mountains before coming to the city of Ankh-Morpork. His hard-working and decent upbringing with the Dwarves have led him to believe that he is a Dwarf, and has engendered in him the values of honesty, respect, and politeness.

Carrot is actually one of the last surviving heirs to the throne of Ankh-Morpork, and has an 'innate' ability to make people like him and command their attention. Obviously naturally cut out to rule at the head of armies or diplomats, Carrot himself appears to be somewhat totally unaware of his abilities as he goes about his duties as a Night Watchmen. It is Carrot's simple and direct approach that starts to create an avalanche of change around him as he demands that other's behave as decently as he does.

Through the course of the story Carrot falls in love with the werewolf recruit to the Watch, Angua, and also naturally falls into positions as the successor to Captain Vimes when he is otherwise incapacitated.



## Sergeant Colon

Sergeant Colon is the second ranking officer in the Night Watch under Captain Vimes, and is a typical career Watchmen: he runs away from trouble, gambles and eats far too much. Mortally afraid of paperwork, Colon is the quintessential lazy police detective who nevertheless has a good heart underneath it all. Even though his natural inclination is towards an easy life, Sergeant Colon sees the value of what Vimes and Carrot are attempting, and puts his comrades in the Watch before his own concerns.

Sergeant Colon is an older gentleman (middling years), is married and represents the status quo for the Watch in the book. Although perhaps slightly slow-witted, he nevertheless displays bravery and courage through the course of events that make up the plot.

## Nobby Nobbs

The next longest-serving member of the Night Watch, Nobby Nobs is described as being 'disqualified from the human race for shoving' and this quote aptly sums up his semi-criminal attitude towards life. A very small man with few endearing features (either physical or social), Nobby Nobbs was an urchin on the streets of Ankh-Morpork before realising that a job in the watch would allow him a comfortable bed and food. He used his position in the Watch to gain the attention of girls, or to bribe and wheedle money out of his fellow man. Although only a whisker away from the criminal fraternity himself, Nobby Nobbs shows an almost unswerving loyalty to Sergeant Fred Colon and Captain Vimes; this might be because Nobby (alongside the other long-standing Watch members) share the same sympathies for the common man and intense antagonism against all forms of nobility, favour or prestige.

Nobby Nobbs forms some of the principle comedic relief in his interchanges with the other characters, acting as a prat-fall for the plot.

## Angua

Angua is one of the newest recruits to the Night Watch, recruited after a drive called for representatives of 'minority groups' was issued to join the Watch. Angua is deemed a member of a minority group because she is in fact a full werewolf.

Coming to the city to find her fortune (and escape her overbearing, wealthy family of 'noble' werewolves), Angua quickly discovers that there is an easier life for the undead in Ankh-Morpork than in the countryside. There is at least a token of recognition for their status as citizens, and she is able to conduct her changes every full moon with only a medium amount of trouble. Unexpectedly however, she joins the Watch rather than become a 'Seamstress' (a prostitute), to find that she is falling in love with the handsome and brave Corporal Carrot.



Angua is a sensible, practical woman who knows what she wants and knows also, when to run away from a situation. Although she has attained some respectability in her job, she is still scared of her secret being found out by her colleagues, as Racism/Speciesism/Ignorance is still rife in the city. She acts somewhat as one of the more intelligent actors that moves the plot forwards.

## Lance-Corporal Cuddy

Lance Corporal Cuddy is a dwarf recruit to the Nigh Watch (responding to the call for more representatives from minority groups in the civic defence). Cuddy appears to be a typical dwarf, in the sense that he is hard working, stubborn, and never backs down from a fight. When the other characters in the Watch at first react badly to his being there, Cuddy angrily shows them all that he is just as fierce as any human. It is his growing friendship with the other recruit detritus that most deeply examines the theme of Racism and Segregation in the novel. By the end of 'Men At Arms' Cuddy starts to see himself not as a dwarf but as a Watchman, and so transcends the racial stereotypes that are plaguing the city.

## Lance Corporal Detritus

Lance-Corporal Detritus is the first troll to ever be admitted into the city watch, as a part of an equal-opportunities drive by the Patrician (designed to make the Watch more representative of Ankh-Morpork's inhabitants). Detritus at first encounters stereotyping and abuse from other Watch members and civilian's alike, for being a troll and for his famous slow intellect (slow-witted even for a Troll), but through his loyalty and bravery he earns the respect of Cuddy the dwarf and becomes instrumental in healing some of the rifts between the Troll community and the wider community of the city at large.

Detritus and Cuddy, as a team examine one of the book's central themes of Racism and Modernity as they come to accept each other, and by the end of the book is recognised as an invaluable member of the Watch.

## Leonardo de Quirm

Leonardo de Quirm (a character loosely inspired by the renaissance genius Leonardo de Vinci of our own world), was a member of the guild of Alchemists who vanished some years ago mysteriously. Responsible for creating wild, outlandish and above all 'modern' inventions, Leonardo is taken in by the Patrician and kept in a locked room where he is allowed to work away at his heart's content on his inventions (the most workable of which, presumably, the Patrician considers putting into production for the good of the city). Leonardo is a highly dangerous man, as his inventions have the power to shape history (one of the prime reasons why the Patrician locks him away in the first place), his inventions rarely work well, but show seeds of the modern era that fascinates the Patrician so. It is Leonardo who is responsible for creating the 'Gonne' (or 'gun') as



an exercise in the study of rocketry and ballistics, and it is his invention that, when stolen, forms the basis of the entire plot of the story of Men At Arms.

## The Patrician

The Patrician Vetinari is a mysterious, shadowy figure who rules the city of Ankh-Morpork with a velvet and iron glove. Utterly ruthless, devious and calculating; the Patrician nevertheless seems to have some sort of code of principles which favour of the over-all harmony of the city above all things. Renowned for his 'disappearance's' and his hatred of mime artists, the Patrician is amusing for the reader in the fashion that he is so wry and sarcastic about the city around him. A constant manipulator, the Patrician manoeuvre's Captain Vimes into tracking down the killer and the stolen gun, seemingly worried about what impact the 'Gonne' would have when it becomes general knowledge and released into society. It is through the character of the Patrician that we find the opposite of the stubborn morality of Captain Vimes, and an examination of the theme of 'Modernity'.

## Gaspede

Gaspede (the Wonder Dog) is a magical accident wandering the city of Ankh-Morpork, who takes a liking to the werewolf recruit Angua (being able to sense, as he does, what her true nature is). He attempts to take the 'wolf-Angua' under his wing, showing her the best places to get scraps, and revealing to her all of the ins and outs of gossip and hearsay that a mongrel mutt in his position has the opportunity to hear. He is remarkable for the fact that he can speak, and is intelligent.

Although most other character's do not notice him speaking (they merely block it from their minds when he does, giving him the power to subconsciously influence their minds as they hear his suggestions such as 'give me some food'), Angua being a magical creature does notice. Gaspede is an accident because he was accidentally given the power of speech and intelligence by a backlash from the Unseen University (the school of Wizards in Ankh-Morpork), and has since been trying to use his intelligence to outwit the Dog's Guild (the band of vigilante feral Dog's that 'rule the streets'), whilst attempting to be make friends with other misfits such as himself.

As a character in the story, Gaspede acts as a question for the themes: How different are all of the characters really from each other?

## Edward d'Eath

Edward d'Eath is an Assassin, a member of the Assassin's Guild of Ankh-Morpork and also the last heir to a rich and wealthy noble family. Always on the verge of madness, Edward d'Eath is preoccupied with the 'glory days' of Ankh-Morpork; namely when there was a king, and knights, and wealthy noble families. He represents the stagnant views

of the past, and is a living obstacle to the Modernity that 'men At Arms' concerns itself with.

Having fallen upon hard times, his family had lost all of their money and Edward d'Eath is dedicated to try and reclaim his position, titles and to restore what he sees as the 'natural order' of the world. He at first conspires with other noble families and then later hatches a plot to steal the Gonne and assassinate key figures in city life, resulting in a coup that will force the nobles to take charge (and perhaps push Carrot onto the disused throne of the city). Characterised by his obsession, fanaticism and cruelty, Edward d'Eath is the principle antagonist for the book, although the stream of events that he sets in motion uncovers other, uglier motives and nefarious characters.'



# Objects/Places

## The Discworld

The Discworld is the fictional world created by author Terry Pratchett in which is set a large number of books, featuring some recurring characters and themes. Physically, the Discworld is based on the assumption of 'what would a fantasy universe be like if some of the ancient myths and stereotypes were true?' Hence from this we have the notion of the Discworld as a disk of land held atop the backs of four elephants, which rides a giant turtle (similar to Ancient myths from our own world). It is a highly magical place, existing as it does in another 'type' of universe from our own, in which magic is an almost tangible force like radiation or light. Peopling the Discworld are all of the usual stereotypes for the classical fantasy genre (Giant's, Dwarves, Wizards, Barbarians, and Elves etc), but all of whom are taken to logical absurdity as the author adds real-world rules, ironies and assumptions into the mix.

For example; in a 'modern' city of a fantasy world, how would all of the mixed Races get along (which is one of the assumptions at the heart of the City Watch series)? Inside this sometimes satirical mix we find moments of tenderness, humour and even metaphysics as the characters often as not battle emotional truths as much as they do monsters and strange events.

## The City of Ankh-Morpork

The location in which all of the action is exclusively set in this novel, the city of Ankh-Morpork is the largest, most diverse and above all 'modern' city on the face of the Discworld, ruled over by the autocratic Patrician and home to a number of different races, species and magical creatures.

Ankh-Morpork is an imaginary amalgam of fantasy cities featuring slum areas, guild houses, temples, forgotten squares, markets and docks, all centred around the Ankh river that sluggishly moves through the city. A renowned den of iniquity, the Patrician has made nearly all vices legal (and thus taxable), instituting Guilds such as the Thieves Guild and the Assassin's Guild so that there will always be a 'balance' of criminality without it affecting commerce.

The City is policed by the City Watch in its two forms; the Day Watch and the Night Watch (the Night Watch being the most hazardous and undesirable, and home to Captain Vimes, Sergeant Colon and the other main character's of the book). Similar to a Renaissance-era London, the city of Ankh-Morpork is highly corrupt in a farcical way, as different merchants, political and religious factions strive to achieve dominance over the others. It can be suggested that the city itself is a character in this novel, acting as it does as a study for the books themes of 'Modernity', 'Keeping the Peace' and the Civic Life.



## The 'Gonne'

The 'Gonne' or gun is a form of cylinder matchlock rifle, devised by the genius inventor Leonardo de Quirm as a foible and an idle curiosity. It was ordered dismantled and destroyed by the Patrician (who immediately realised just how dangerous it would be if it were released or copied on the streets of the city of Ankh-Morpork, but was instead the design was kept in secret in the museum of the Assassin's Guild. The Assassin's apparently held it is some kind of reverence as a symbol of the most devastating killing power yet devised, until a plan is hatched to steal it by Edward d'Eath. This Assassin later replicates the Gonne using a Dwarf Artificer in order to use it to start a revolution in the city.

## Vime's Badge

Vimes' Badge of office is an old, worn Night Watchmen Badge, which comes to represent for Vimes his very reason for living and everything that could be right in the world. When asked to hand over his badge, Vimes' reacts almost in a state of shock and seemingly has something near a breakdown as he starts to drink (something he never does, on account of his latent alcoholism). He refuses to give up his badge as it represents Vimes himself: his belief in a better, ordered society, and his job in maintaining that order.

## Vime's Old Boots

Similar to Vimes' Badge of Office, Vimes' old boots are a serviceable set of leather boots with reinforced cardboard heels that he reuses and mends by replacing the soles. He is offered new boots by his wife to be Sybil Ramkin but refuses almost angrily, realising that his old boots are a way for him to remain close to his poor upbringing and 'closer to the city'. Even though it becomes obvious that all the other members of the watch occasionally buy or steal new boots, Vimes' use of hoarding his old pair becomes symbolic and metaphorical for his whole character. In a sense, Vimes' Old Boots are a statement that he is still a man of the people (no matter how high he rises up because of his Watch position or marriage), and reminds him what is important - he stubbornly wears them as a mark of pride that he knows will annoy the richer circles that he is now moving in.

## The Old City

The Old City refers to the underground parts of the city in which Detritus and Cuddy find themselves after escaping from a riot between the dwarves and the trolls of Ankh-Morpork. They discover that underneath Ankh-Morpork is the highly developed ruins of the monarchical city that preceded it (featuring statues of long dead kings and heroic battles). It is here that Detritus and Cuddy discover a body that later becomes a key





piece of evidence, and find out that the murderer who is terrorising the city is using the Old City as a means of escape from his assignments.

## The Assassin's Guild

The Assassin's Guild is one of the more elaborate and wealthier Guild Houses in Ankh-Morpork, collecting as it does the noble and wealthy sons for its training. Characterised as a very dangerous and forbidding place, it is nonetheless filled with every luxury (fit for its wealthy patrons), and, strangely, backs onto the Fool's Guild. It is here that Angua and Gaspode (in wolf form) discover the identity of the killer, discover that the design for the Gonne was stolen, and that the Assassin's guild itself was broken into through one of the Clown's bedroom's.

## The Palace

The Palace of the Patrician was once the seat of the King's and Queen's of Ankh-Morpork, but has since become the home to the cities ruling secular tyrant (the Patrician). It is here that, almost fatedly, crowds start to gather to 'oust' the tyrant when the city is on the verge of collapse, and here that the officials of the city (Captain Vimes, for example) dread to be summoned to. The Patrician has made the Palace a devious warren of rooms, in which he has secret torture chambers, hidden inmates (such as Leonardo de Quirm), and from which his power spreads. The Palace acts as more of a symbol in the book of authority for the people of Ankh-Morpork, then as an actual location.

## The Fool's Guild

The Fool's Guild sits in the Guild's quarter of the city of Ankh-Morpork, and is home to its associated members of Clowns, Jesters, Fools and Buffoon's. The Guild is headed by Dr Whiteface, a severe, terrifying looking clown who rules his little domain with a rod of iron (and a red nose). Whilst it should be a place of frivolity and fun, the author manages to draw out all of the unsettling nature of Clowns and Fools, as once inside Carrot finds the Fools a strange, almost obsessive people. It is from here that one of the clowns worked in conjunction with Edward d'Eath to break into the Assassin's guild and steal the designs for the Gonne, before apparently later being found dead in the Ankh river.



# Themes

## Racism and Prejudice

One of the underlying themes of the book, which is heavily connected to the idea of 'Modernity' is that of the conflict with Prejudice that the main character's have to face, both externally within their society and also, within themselves.

The cultural mix of the Discworld and in particular that of Ankh-Morpork means that there are a large number of different species of intelligent creatures who are given the status of civilian's in the central city of the world. Anything that is intelligent and can use money, in short. This inevitably clashes with the historic narratives of each culture (the living automatically hate the Undead, the Dwarves hate the Trolls and vice versa), and everyone is suspicious of the wizards, alchemists and those with arcane knowledge. Through the course of the narrative an equal opportunities drive is brought into force by the Patrician, in an effort to make the city more representative and also, we can assume, to increase the chances that normal city life is harmonious and everyone keeps on paying their taxes. This precarious balance is threatened by the sudden urge for the populous to riot, seemingly at the drop of a hat (as happens several times throughout the book and the other City Watch series). Whilst the author does not directly tackle these issues from a moralistic stance, he seemingly uses the events to show how these attitudes are bred by stupidity and, in most cases, idle gossip (when Dibbler is asked what is happening by Corporal Carrot, he responds that the hordes have laid siege to the Palace, only to clearly see the Palace unscathed, for example).

Prejudice and 'Specieism' is one of the sardonic natural extrapolations that we see the author making use of "I.E" doesn't every fantasy genre contain implicit prejudice and segregation between the races? However, by examining these issues through the lens of the character's of the book (notably Colon, Detritus, Cuddy and Vimes), we are led to see that what is really at fault is that of centuries old beliefs and traditions getting in the way of the modern day. When Colon and Carrot eventually start recruiting Trolls and Dwarf's for their 'militia' to protect the city, we see that these character's at last believe in the status of every individual, regardless of background. By proclaiming the recruits 'Watchmen' first and foremost, Carrot is declaring that they are really all citizens of the city of Ankh-Morpork, and this should be their fundamental method by which they define themselves.

## Modernity

Shown in relief to the other themes of the book, the concept of Modernity can be described as one of the central issues of the book. Through the events of the plot (the finding and creation of firearms; the 'Gonne'), and the election of different ethnic groups into the City Watch, we see notions of Modernity (in this sense referring to technical social development) starting to appear. However, as to be expected not all 'Modern'



events are deemed to be desirable (the Patrician in particular hold technological advance by imprisoning Leonardo de Quirm and striving to have the 'Gonne' destroyed from public memory). There is here a central paradox between what is a 'good' advance for the city, and what is an 'unhealthy' one, and with no clear answers.

The theme of Modernity versus the traditions of the Past are central to the motivations of the Assassin Edward d'Eath who, perversely thinks that he is acting for a better future by killing people in order to institute the old line of Kings. His opposite in this argument is of course Captain Vimes, who places himself in opposition to any assumed prestige and power, whether inherited or not. The tricky question that we can see being prodded is 'what is good for a functioning civil society?' This is a question that Patrician directly poses by instituting the equal opportunities bill into the Watch, and we can automatically feel like this is a good thing for civil society.

Underneath the questions of Modernity however, we also find that perhaps the answer is the one posed by Corporal Carrot when he realises that the problem is not tradition of 'modernism' but rather it is of ignorance versus liberty. As he polices the city as an organising member of a free-standing militia, his main concern seems to be stopping arguments, fights and mistakes being made, rather than putting forward his own idea of 'what the future should look like.'

## 'Keeping The Peace'

The major effect of the two previous themes, is the examination of the watchmen's (read; policeman's) role for a functioning society. That is, as Carrot and Vimes both believe; to 'Keep the Peace' against all forms of oppression (whether it be domestic or foreign, invading army or corrupt elite).

Previous to their somewhat dedicated belief in the power of the civil society, we see the examples of when this has failed and the police have not 'Kept The Peace' (mostly through the examples of Captain Quirke of the Day Watch, and a little in the attitudes of Nobby Nobbs and Sergeant Colon). Captain Quirke is given the job of commanding the Watch in this time of crisis, and proceeds to take out his own ignorant vendetta against the trolls, nearly sparking a riot outside the steps of the Watch Headquarters. Also in the case of Fred Colon and Nobby Nobb's, they several times almost start a fight by their ill-informed choice of words to the wrong people, and sometimes seem more inclined to obey the Letter of the Law over the Spirit of the Law. Thankfully these latter two characters can be put on the right track by Corporal Carrot, as we see that they are both, at least, protagonists in the story (even if they are lazy).

The bigger question of what the police-man's role is answered by Corporal Carrot, who relates how 'Policeman' actually comes from the words of 'Polis' which means city, or city-state. In his eyes, the job of the Watch is to be an upstanding man of the state and to enjoy the freedoms of civil society but also to maintain the civil society.



# Style

## Point of View

The Point of View of the novel 'Men At Arms' by author Terry Pratchett is that of the third-person perspective. This indicates that the events of the story are told by a narrator who knows more about the city, the world and the events than the characters within the course of the plot do. This is achieved in the way of humorous asides ('such and such did not notice when...') and footnotes; which often highlight further facts about the setting.

This third-person point of view allows the reader to be entertained by events outside of any particular character's knowledge, quite often after a section concerning the principle protagonists of the Watch, the next Scene will involve a piece of back story, or a hidden event involving the murderer that the protagonists are unaware of taking place. The author does this to heighten the humour and the drama of the story; in keeping with the style of the detective drama. For example, whilst we are watching the Watchmen try to figure out just what has happened in the aftermath of the explosion at the Assassin's Guild, we are also (through the use of cut scenes) finding out that the murderer has stolen something, and has used Chubby the dragon to steal it. This has the effect of increasing the tempo of the story, and lending the feeling that events are running out of hand, are not in control and that the protagonists have to run to catch up.

Another interesting use of the Point of View is the use of the Death character. Death is a constant character throughout almost all of the Discworld Books (indeed, metaphorically and literally the only constant feature). Death is the embodiment and the spectre who guides the recently deceased away from their mortal remains and ushers them along to whatever lies beyond, often having a comedic talk with them about their fate and the events that have led up to their death. This character acts similar to the narrator in that Death afford's the unfortunate characters the opportunity to perceive just how (and perhaps why) they were killed, giving further insight into the plot and the motivations underneath the events of the story.

A final note to make about the Point of View is that, whilst being in the third person there is also a very strong narrative voice, which serves to add a friendly air to the book in general. We can assume that the narrator's voice, witticisms, irony and asides are the author's own observations about the plot and the world, and makes it feel like the author himself is taking the reader on a tour of their setting, and that both are watching events playing out before them. This has the effect of making the book highly enjoyable and involving for the reader.



## Setting

The setting of the book, first and foremost is the Discworld fantasy setting that the author Pratchett has been developing in intricacy for over twenty-five years. More specific to this, the Setting is that of the City of Ankh-Morpork (a location that the author returns to again and again in his Discworld books), and the more immediate and particular settings that exist within the City (the Fool's Guild, the Alchemist's Guild, the Assassin's Guild and the {Patrician's Palace).

As it is a fantastical setting, the book explores the concepts and rules of the fantastical universe; that magic exists, that it is a satirical (and hypothetical) setting similar in sensibilities to our own, that dragons and wizards and crazy inventions all exist. This use of the magical setting gives the author some leeway to explore a familiar genre - the crime drama - from a very different standpoint. We still have a hard-boiled detective (Captain Vimes) at the heart of the story, but instead of racial inequality in Nineteen Fifties America (as is the case in the classic pulp-noir crime drama) we have the riots and the prejudices between Dwarves and Trolls. Instead of a murderer using high technological tools to begin the story, they use a dragon as a means of explosive. Similarly the common idea in crime drama's of 'keeping an ear to the streets' and being one step away from low-life's and destitution is given a whole new meaning by casting one of the Watch as a werewolf who has to sneak her way past gangs of feral dogs and beggars to find the clues.

The City of Ankh Morpork itself is one of the most highly developed settings in the Discworld canon, and apes as it does the cities of the Renaissance era and the mean criminal streets of any modern city. The author uses particularly the observations of Captain Vimes and Corporal Carrot to examine the notion of the City - what it means as a place of law and order and possible equality.

In general, the setting of the City and that of the Discworld is somewhat similar to our own Medieval era's, but that the technology has been replaced by magic. Above all the setting is humorous and comedic; it uses traditional fantasy tropes (the lumbering Troll, the genie in a bottle) but instead gives one of them a job and places the other in a box and calls it a rudimentary camera. This serves to highlight some of the amusing glamour of the fantasy setting, whilst also gives space for the characters to explore some more serious themes - to not be heroic rather than the traditional 'heroes of myth'.

## Language and Meaning

The Language used throughout the book is almost unique in style to the author, and uses a mix of olde-worlde spellings, metaphors and anachronisms, modern day slang and twists of scientific language (for example the Wizards have a High Energy Magic Building). This general tone of language is common to all of the Discworld series of books, and serves at once to be recognisable to the reader (as it is based on our own slang and terms used in the real world), but makes them farcical and humorous by giving them a faux 'Medieval' slant. For example we regularly see the side character of



'Cut-Me-Own-Throat-Dibbler' who is clearly a take on the stereotype of the Cockney entrepreneur similar to 'Only Fool's And Horses'. Instead of 'Pigs-in-a-Bun' (a normal cry to be heard at British football matches) he sells 'Rat-on-a-Stick'.

Aside from this general use of language throughout the entire book, we also the language varying according to character. Notably Carrot, Edward d'Eath and Detritus, who all have their own very distinct modes of speech there is also distinctions to be seen the logical, manipulative and above all refined speech of the Patrician (which reflects his character and motivations). Corporal Carrot is a notoriously bad speller, but who nevertheless writes home every week. His letters and his speech are idealistic, simple and inspiring, which serves to highlight his character as the 'traditional fantasy warrior' (the boy who is actually the last heir to the throne and who can defeat dragons, etc.). Edward d'Eath on the other hand has comical language; he speaks with an almost stutter or a lisp similar to the melodramatic villains of television history, whilst Detritus the troll barely grunts and speaks awkwardly apart from when his brain gets cold, when he start to be able to think clearer and clearer as his brain is made of silicon (like a computer chip).

The language of the whole narrative turns serious and somewhat sombre when the author wants to signal that the events are becoming threatening and dangerous. This happens later on in the plot, particularly after the death of the Dwarf Artificer Bjorn Hammerhock. At these points, the language of the crime-noir, the deadpan narrative style and the pragmatic cynicism of Captain Vimes can be seen carrying the themes of the book onwards.

## Structure

Similar to the way that the author has turned the accepted fantasy genre on its head with the Discworld books, the author also performs a similar operation on the structure of the book. He avoids splitting the book into Parts or Chapters, and instead breaks the narrative every few pages or so with a different scene taking place elsewhere in the City. This gives the book almost a similar feel that we may have watching a film or a play, as each 'scene' has its own character's, its own events occurring, its tone and feel. The idea of the book actually being a narrated film is further helped by the use of cut-scenes, flashbacks, back story interjections and main sequences.

The use of this technique makes the plot highly readable and gives the sense of a fast-paced thriller (as there are no natural 'breaks' and resolution to the action in the form of Chapter breaks etc. This can also be said to continue the idea that the events are spiralling out of control around our protagonists inside the Watch, that they are in fact unstoppable. This technique can also be said to give a better impression of the City of Ankh-Morpork. However, it must also be said that sometimes this approach can be difficult for the reader to 'keep up' with the pace of events as they carry on with only small section breaks separating them.



## Quotes

"His seniors described him as a man to watch - and, because there was something about him that made even Assassin's uneasy, preferably from a long way away" (Edward d'Eath, p. 9).

"Carrot was much better at this sort of thing. He knew the laws of Ankh-Morpork by heart. He was the only person who did" (Colon, p. 42).

"...and, after a battle with himself which he'd lost, he'd picked up half a bottle of Bearhugger's Old Persnickety and wandered into the night" (Vimes, p. 103).

Cigar smoke hung almost motionless in the air. Vimes was dimly aware that he'd spent several hours eating too much food in the company of people he didn't like" (Vimes, p. 115).

"No clowns were funny. That was the whole purpose of a clown. People laughed at clowns, but only out of nervousness. The point of clowns was that, after watching them, anything else that happened seemed enjoyable" (The Fool's Guild, p. 144).

"Someone like Vimes could upset thing. Not because he was clever. A clever Watchman was a contradiction in terms. But sheer randomness might cause trouble" (The Murderer, p. 149).

"Detritus was considered moronic even by city troll standards. But that was simply because his brain was naturally optimized for a temperature seldom reached in Ankh-Morpork even during the coldest winter" (Detritus, p. 199).

"And you're a wolf and a human at the same time, right? Tricky, that...Bit of a dichotomy, sort of thing. Makes you kind of like a dog. 'Cos that's what a dog is, really. Half a wolf and half a human" (Gaspode about Angua, p. 328).

"Yes, sir. But what will he do next day? You can't treat people like puppet dolls. No, sir....If there was a king, then the best thing he could do would be to get on with a decent days work" (Carrot talking about Kingship, p. 373).

"Perhaps this wasn't the way it ought to be. But it was the way it was" (Gaspode, Page 381).



## Topics for Discussion

Identify the theme of Prejudice in the novel 'Men At Arms' by Terry Pratchett. Cite examples in the text.

Why do you think it is that the Patrician of the city of Ankh-Morpork wants to suppress the creation of the 'Gonne'? What are his motivations? Cite examples from the text.

Examine the character of Captain/Mister Vimes in the novel 'Men At Arms'. What motivate him? What is his greatest weakness?

Explain both Carrot's and Vimes' belief that the City does not need Kings. Do you think this is true? Wouldn't it be better if Carrot were on the throne of the city?

How is humour used in the novel? Does the author use it to enhance or hinder the story?

What role does the character of Death play in the novel? Whose deaths does he arrive at, and what literary significance does Death perform?

Why is Gaspode the Dog able to speak human?

In what ways is the Captain of the Day Watch, Captain Quirke, unhelpful to the story?