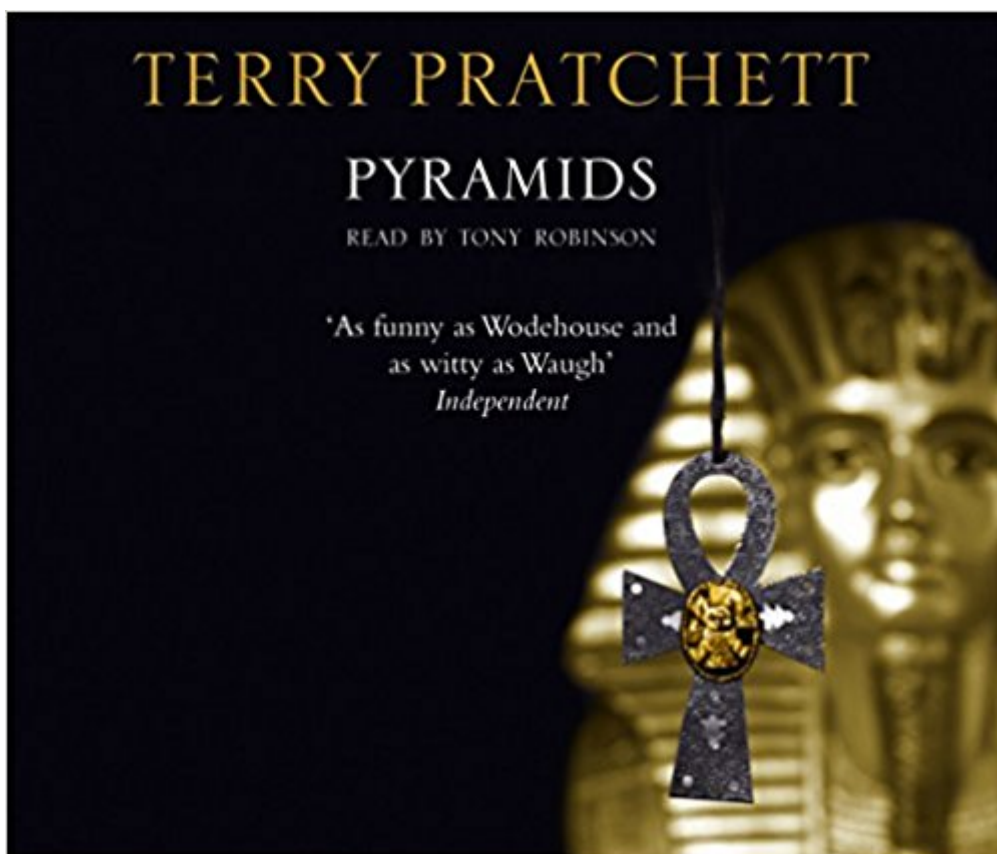


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Pyramids



Synopsis

“Look after the dead,” said the priests, “and the dead will look after you.” Wise words in all probability, but a tall order when you have just become the pharaoh of a small and penniless country whose largesse—and indeed treasury—is unlikely to pay for the construction of a monumental pyramid to honor your dead father. And particularly when your only visible means of support is a recently acquired qualification from the Guild of Assassins, an association wherein running a kingdom and basic financial acumen were not prerequisites for course entry.

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Customer Reviews

Pyramids represents something of a detour in Pratchett's Discworld series. The principal action takes place in the heretofore unfamiliar land of Djelibeybi, located in northern Klatch across the Circle Sea from Anhk-Morpork. This is a unique realm of the Discworld, two miles wide and 150 miles long. It is often referred to as the Old Kingdom for a very good reason—it is quite old, over 7000 years old in fact. It is a desert land whose pharaohs are obsessed with pyramid-building; besides bankrupting the country, this obsession has also had the unforeseen consequence of keeping the country firmly entrenched in the past. Pyramids, you see, slow down time, and there are so many pyramids in Djelibeybi now that new time is continually sucked in by them and released nightly in flares. In a land where the same time is reused daily, it comes as something of a surprise when the pharaoh Teppicymon XXVII decides to send his son Teppic outside of the kingdom to get his

education. Just after becoming a certified, guild-approved assassin, young Teppic is called upon to return home after his father suffers the unfortunate consequences attendant upon thinking he can fly. Three months into his reign, he basically loses his kingdom-literally. The Great Pyramid being built for his father's mummy is much too big, and eventually it causes the temporal dislocation of Djelibeybi from the face of the Discworld. Accompanied by the handmaiden Ptraci, whom he rescued from certain death, and a camel whose name would be edited were I to state it here, Teppic must find a way to restore his kingdom back to its proper place and time above the ground. The ordeal is only complicated further by the fact that all of the land's dead and thousands of gods suddenly have appeared in person, acting as if they own the place.

This is a fairly early Terry Pratchett (number seven I believe) and demonstrate his unique ability to lampoon nearly everything at once. We find ourselves with Teppic the heir to throne of Djelibeybi, who has been sent off to Ankh-Morpark to learn a decent trade. Or rather, a lucrative indecent trade of inhumation (otherwise called assassination). Djelibeybi has been building bigger and bigger pyramids for some 7,000 years and is way behind on its payments. Somebody has to bring home a paycheck. Teppic has mastered all the requisite skills (tucking equipment everywhere, wearing black clothes, swinging from buildings, etc) and now, in a flash of accidental good luck, he has passed his final exam. At this crucial moment, Teppic's father develops a sudden urge to fly and our young assassin must return to the world's most tradition bound kingdom (no toilets, no mattresses, and no aqueducts). Having spent years in the most corrupt city on Discworld Teppic must wear a very heavy mask, sleep on stone beds, and be a very bored god. And bankrupt the kingdom building his father's pyramid. Pyramids are the problem. Since each one has to be bigger than the last, they have long since achieved enough mass to bend light and absorb time. This keeps their occupants alive, but the accumulation of present and future time has to be vented off nightly. The reason Teppic's country is so stodgy is that all the present and future is being shot off into space and they only have the past left to live in. Now Teppic decides that his father's tomb will be an order of magnitude larger than its predecessors, and all quantum breaks out.

and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. On earth this passage from Genesis describes the Tower of Babel. But on Discworld it just may describe the proud towers (pyramids actually) built by the people (slaves actually) of Djelibeybi in Terry Pratchett's seventh Discworld book, *Pyramids*. *Pyramids* is an excellent addition to the Discworld series and, like just about every other volume in the series is both hilariously funny and thought

provoking. Teppic is the heir to the throne of Djelibeybi. For each generation going back as far as anyone can remember the new king, upon the death of his father, builds a pyramid that will serve both as his tomb and an eternal monument. This would be fine but for the fact that each succeeding generation is expected to build a monument that is greater than the last. This keeps Djelibeybi locked in a perpetual financial crisis and has caused each succeeding ruler (Pharaoh) to lead a life that is overly regimented to the point of insanity, or at the very least officious inanity. Teppic's father, Teppicymon XXVII, seems to want a bit more from his son than a life of idleness sitting on the throne and when the story opens we find Teppic going off to 'college' in this instance the famed school run by the Guild of Assassins on Ankh-Morpork. No sooner does Teppic pass his Assassin's exit examination (a typical Pratchett tour de 'farce') than his father dies and Teppic is called back to assume the throne. Teppic chafes at the constraints put upon him and his life by Dios, the nation's chief holy man and enforcement officer.

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