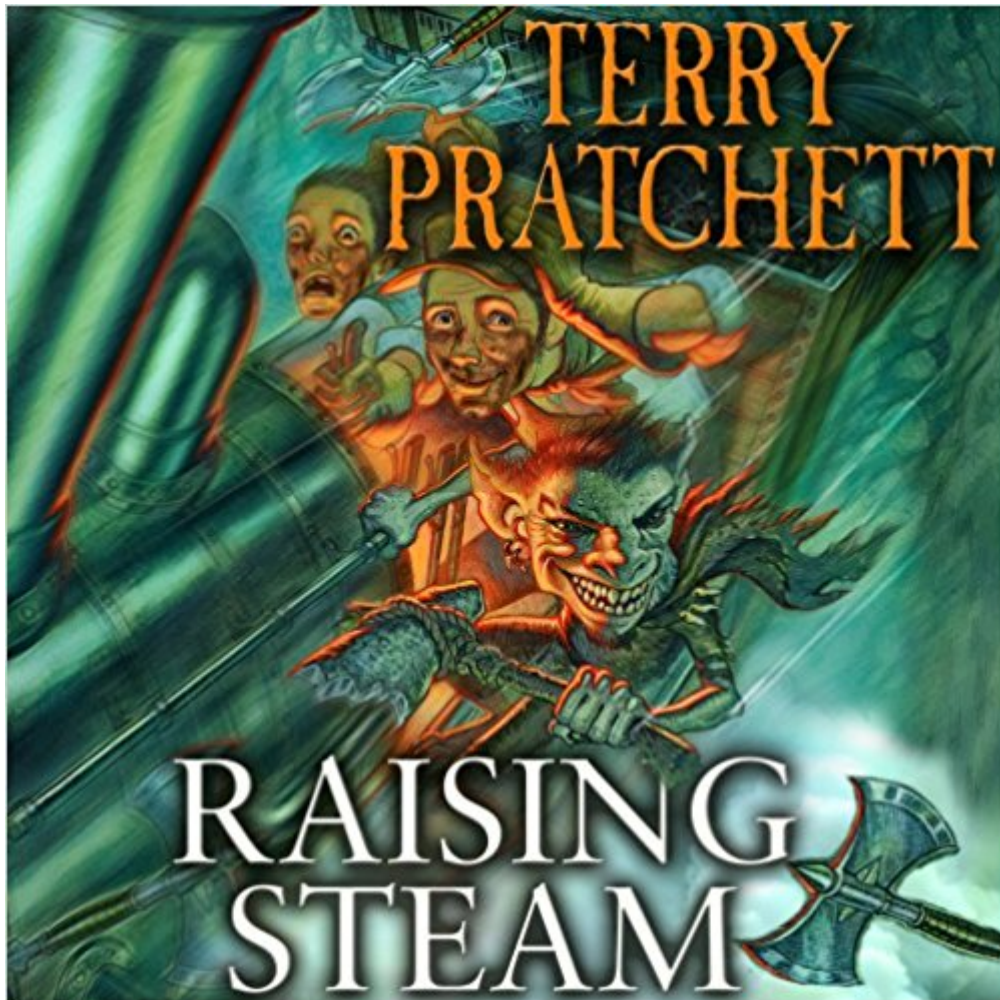


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Raising Steam: Discworld Novel 40



Synopsis

The new Discworld novel, the 40th in the series, sees the Disc's first train come steaming into town. To the consternation of the patrician, Lord Vetinari, a new invention has arrived in Ankh-Morpork, a great clanging monster of a machine that harnesses the power of all of the elements: earth, air, fire and water. This being Ankh-Morpork, it's soon drawing astonished crowds, some of whom caught the zeitgeist early and arrive armed with notepads and very sensible rainwear. Moist von Lipwig is not a man who enjoys hard work -- as master of the Post Office, the Mint and the Royal Bank his input is, of course, vital... but largely dependent on words, which are fortunately not very heavy and don't always need greasing. However, he does enjoy being alive, which makes a new job offer from Vetinari hard to refuse. Steam is rising over Discworld, driven by Mister Simnel, the man with a flat cap and sliding rule who has an interesting arrangement with the sine and cosine. Moist will have to grapple with gallons of grease, goblins, a fat controller with a history of throwing employees down the stairs and some very angry dwarfs if he's going to stop it all going off the rails.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Like the other reviewers who made this claim, I'll state my bona fides. I've read all the Discworld books. I've read half of them at least six times each. I've read most of Pratchett's other stuff. And like the other people who made this claim, I never imagined I would ever write a bad review for a Terry Pratchett book. But I've come to the conclusion that someone else wrote this book. As soon as this

thought struck me (around page 80) I found myself reading on and wondering how I could ever have believed this was Pratchett's voice at all. No, someone else has taken over the shop. His daughter is the most likely suspect, since he said he was handing the Discworld on to her. (By the way, a note for the copyright page detectives: The books have been copyrighted in the names of both Terry and Lyn Pratchett for years... long before his illness. And Lyn is his wife, not his daughter.) Assuming that whoever wrote Raising Steam goes on writing, I want to offer him/her a few tips:- You need to know two things about Vetinari. He's always in control of any situation, and we are never shown what he's thinking. Never.- All right, you need to know a third thing about him. We are constantly told he's ruthless, but he's not. He's got way more ruth than most people.- Oh, and a fourth thing. He's the king of understatement. When Vetinari threatens you, he raises an eyebrow. He may or may not make some comment along the lines of "Indeed?" He does not give detailed, repeated, re-repeated descriptions of what he's going to do to you.- The members of the City Watch call Vimes "Mister Vimes".- The dwarves do not represent Muslims.- Dwarves refer to female dwarves as "he".- Death is a good guy.

Trying to write this review was difficult as it took a while to figure out how to best approach the criticism. It's well-established that Pratchett is suffering from Alzheimer's and as a consequence the caliber of his writing has noticeably diminished. Raising Steam is no exception. It simply does not have the wit, charm or humor of Pratchett's earlier Discworld book (the last "real" Pratchett book was probably Unseen Academicals). Those who claim that Pratchett's back on form, well, go and reread Soul Music or Hogfather or The Truth. They're two different writers now. But I can't really fault Pratchett for the decline in his writing standards due to his health, nor is it fair at all. In fact I'd even say that it's impressive he's still able to put out a fairly decent story. So I gave the book three stars. But I will comment on the following: Goblins: I am not a fan of the goblins. I found them annoying little characters who add little to the story other than their cumbersomely long names. When Pratchett introduced the other sapient creatures of the Discworld - dwarves, vampires, trolls and the living dead, he introduced them with all their cliches and stereotypes and thoroughly poked holes through all of them and still gave them their due flaws, which made these characters so real to the point that I almost expected to run into a dwarf or troll when I stepped outside after reading a Pratchett novel. But the goblins have been given a hands-off treatment in a fairly politically correct manner that makes it difficult to warm up to them. Compared to the trolls and dwarves of earlier books, the goblins remain limited two dimensional characters that add little to the story.

If this is your first venture into the Discworld of Terry Pratchett, DO NOT BUY THIS BOOK. Start with "The Color of Magic", "The Light Fantastic", "Going Postal" or almost anything else. If I had started with this one, I would not now own every single Discworld book written by Sir Terry. Not only do I own them all, I have read each one at least 10 times, since I discovered Sir Terry 3 years ago. (Yes, I know - hard to believe, but I do love them.) Presents of choice are Pratchett books for my family and friends. The characters are seriously flawed - pale and very blurred imitations of the real characters - cardboard characters as other reviewers have stated.: Samuel Vimes - acerbic, dour, cynical Mister Vimes, laughs with "so twisty he can slide through a corkscrew sideways" Moist Von Lipwig. WHAT? (And if the author had called him "Commander Vimes" just once more, I would have been screaming at the top of my lungs.): Mustrum Ridcully, Arch Chancellor of Unseen University, never had more than a knowing twinkle in his eye. Now he indulges in laughing.: Adora Belle Dearheart has turned into a non-smoking (from over 100 cigarettes a day) June Cleaver, "puffing" Moist's pillow and serving him a healthy (?) breakfast in bed. This is the woman whose brother called her "Killer" and Moist calls "Spike".: Lady Margolotta who speaks with absolutely no accent, has had no problem pronouncing a "W" previously. In this book, not only can't she pronounce a "W", she seems to use only sentences that have a forest of those letters in them.: Lord Vetinari: oh lordy. Where to start? Intelligent, taciturn, secretive Vetinari has turned into a verbose, jolly good fellow who laughs with the inestimable Drumknott, his secretary. I could cry.

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