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# Terry Pratchett

## THE

## COLOR OF

## MAGIC



INSIDE —  
A SNEAK PEEK  
AT TERRY  
PRATCHETT'S  
NEW NOVEL,  
*THUD!*

INTRODUCING THE LEGENDARY *DISPATCHES*

—DISCOVER WHERE ALL THE FUN BEGINS—

# THE COLOR OF MAGIC

A Discworld<sup>®</sup> Novel

Terry Pratchett

 HarperCollins e-books

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## Foreword

IF I HAD A PENNY for every time someone asked me where I got the idea of the Discworld, I'd have—hang on a moment—£4.67.

Anyway, the answer is that it was lying around and didn't look as though it belonged to anyone.

The world rides through space on the back of a turtle. It's one of the great ancient myths, found wherever men and turtles were gathered together; the four elephants were an Indo-European sophistication. The idea has been lying in the lumber rooms of legend for centuries. All I had to do was grab it and run away before the alarms went off.

Since this is a reprint by popular demand—gosh—of the first book in a series that will, eventually, contain at least ten, there's a very good chance that you already know what happens *after* this book, which is more than I did when I wrote it.

The Discworld is not a coherent fantasy world. Its geography is fuzzy, its chronology unreliable. A small traveling circle of firelight in a chilly infinity has turned out to be the home of defiant jokes and last chances.

There are no maps. You can't map a sense of humor. Anyway, what is a fantasy map but a space beyond which There Be Dragons? On the Discworld we know that There Be Dragons Everywhere. They might not all have scales and forked tongues, but they Be Here all right, grinning and jostling and trying to sell you souvenirs.

Enjoy.

*Terry Pratchett  
October 1989*

# **The Color of Magic**

## Prologue

IN A DISTANT AND SECONDHAND SET OF DIMENSIONS, in an astral plane that was never meant to fly, the curling star-mists waver and part...

See...

Great A'Tuin the turtle comes, swimming slowly through the interstellar gulf, hydrogen frost on his ponderous limbs, his huge and ancient shell pocked with meteor craters. Through sea-sized eyes that are crusted with rheum and asteroid dust He stares fixedly at the Destination.

In a brain bigger than a city, with geological slowness, He thinks only of the Weight.

Most of the weight is of course accounted for by Berilia, Tubul, Great T'Phon and Jerakeen, the four giant elephants upon whose broad and star-tanned shoulders the Disc of the World rests, garlanded by the long waterfall at its vast circumference and domed by the baby-blue vault of Heaven.

Astropsychology has been, as yet, unable to establish what they think about.

The Great Turtle was a mere hypothesis until the day the small and secretive kingdom of Krull, whose rim-most mountains project out over the Rimfall, built a gantry and pulley arrangement at the tip of the most precipitous crag and lowered several observers over the Edge in a quartz-windowed brass vessel to peer through the mist veils.

The early astrozoologists, hauled back from their long dangle by enormous teams of slaves, were able to bring back much information about the shape and nature of A'Tuin and the elephants but this did not resolve fundamental questions about the nature and purpose of the universe.

For example, what was A'Tuin's actual sex? This vital question, said the astrozoologists with mounting authority, would not be answered until a larger and more powerful gantry was constructed for a deep-space vessel. In the meantime they could only speculate about the revealed cosmos.

There was, for example, the theory that A'Tuin had come from nowhere and would continue at a uniform crawl, or steady gait, into nowhere, for all time. This theory was popular among academics.

An alternative, favored by those of a religious persuasion, was that A'Tuin was crawling from the Birthplace to the Time of Mating, as were all the stars in the sky which were, obviously, also carried by giant turtles. When they arrived they would briefly and passionately mate, for the first and only time, and from that fiery union new turtles would be born to carry a new pattern of worlds. This was known as the Big Bang hypothesis.

Thus it was that a young cosmochelonian of the Steady Gait faction, testing a new telescope with which he hoped to make measurements of the precise albedo of Great A'Tuin's right eye, was on this eventful evening the first outsider to see the smoke rise hubward from the burning of the oldest city in the world.

Later that night he became so engrossed in his studies he completely forgot about it. Nevertheless, he was the first.

There were others...

# **The Sending of Eight**

## PROLOGUE

THE DISCWORLD OFFERS SIGHTS far more impressive than those found in universes built by Creators with less imagination but more mechanical aptitude.

Although the Disc's sun is but an orbiting moonlet, its prominences hardly bigger than croquet hoops, this slight drawback must be set against the tremendous sight of Great A'Tuin the Turtle, upon Whose ancient and meteor riddled shell the Disc ultimately rests. Sometimes, in His slow journey across the shores of Infinity, He moves His country-sized head to snap at a passing comet.

But perhaps the most impressive sight of all—if only because most brains, when faced with the sheer galactic enormity of A'Tuin, refuse to believe it—is the endless Rimfall, where the seas of the Disc boil ceaselessly over the Edge into space. Or perhaps it is the Rimbow, the eight-colored, world-girdling rainbow that hovers in the mist-laden air over the Fall. The eighth color is octarine, caused by the scatter effect of strong sunlight on an intense magical field.

Or perhaps, again, the most magnificent sight is the Hub. There, a spire of green ice ten miles high rises through the clouds and supports at its peak the realm of Dunmanifestin, the abode of the Disc gods. The Disc gods themselves, despite the splendor of the world below them, are seldom satisfied. It is embarrassing to know that one is a god of a world that only exists because every improbability curve must have its far end; especially when one can peer into other dimensions at worlds whose Creators had more mechanical aptitude than imagination. No wonder, then, that the Disc gods spend more time in bickering than in omniscience.

On this particular day Blind Io, by dint of constant vigilance the chief of the gods, sat with his chin on his hand and looked at the gaming board on the red marble table in front of him. Blind Io had got his name because, where his eye sockets should have been, there were nothing but two areas

of blank skin. His eyes, of which he had an impressively large number, led a semi-independent life of their own. Several were currently hovering above the table.

The gaming board was a carefully carved map of the Discworld, overprinted with squares. A number of beautifully modeled playing pieces were now occupying some of the squares. A human onlooker would, for example, have recognized in two of them the likenesses of Bravd and the Weasel. Others represented yet more heroes and champions, of which the Disc had a more than adequate supply.

Still in the game were Io, Offler the Crocodile God, Zephyrus the god of slight breezes, Fate, and the Lady. There was an air of concentration around the board now that the lesser players had been removed from the Game. Chance had been an early casualty, running her hero into a full house of armed gnolls (the result of a lucky throw by Offler) and shortly afterward Night has cashed his chips, pleading an appointment with Destiny. Several minor deities had drifted up and were kibitzing over the shoulders of the players.

Side bets were made that the Lady would be the next to leave the board. Her last champion of any standing was now a pinch of potash in the ruins of still-smoking Ankh-Morpork, and there were hardly any pieces that she could promote to first rank.

Blind Io took up the dice box, which was a skull whose various orifices had been stoppered with rubies, and with several of his eyes on the Lady he rolled three fives.

She smiled. This was the nature of the Lady's eyes: they were bright green, lacking iris or pupil, and they glowed from within.

The room was silent as she scrabbled in her box of pieces and, from the very bottom, produced a couple that she set down on the board with two decisive clicks. The rest of the players, as one god, craned forward to peer at them.