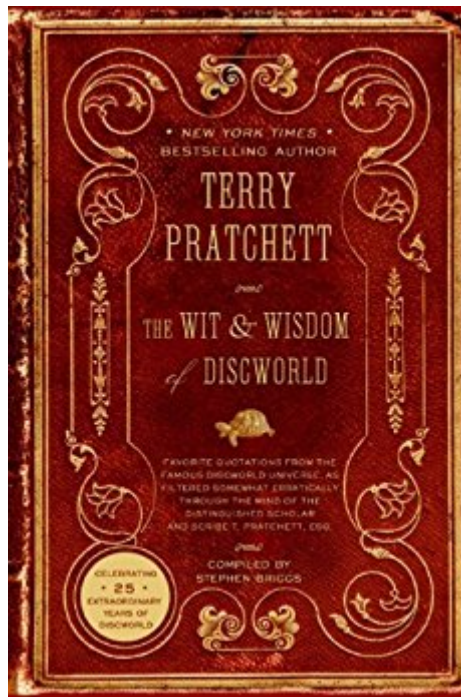


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The Wit And Wisdom Of Discworld



Synopsis

For more than two decades, Terry Pratchett has been regaling readers with tales of Discworld—a flat world balanced on the backs of four elephants, which are standing on the back of a giant turtle, flying through space. It is a world populated by ineffectual wizards and sharp-as-tacks witches, by tired policemen and devious dictators, by reformed thieves and vampires who have sworn to drink no blood. It is a world that is vastly different from our own . . . except when it isn't. Now, in *The Wit and Wisdom of Discworld*, various nuggets of Pratchett's witty commentary and sagacious observations have been compiled by Pratchett expert Stephen Briggs, a man who, they say, knows even more about Discworld than Terry Pratchett. Within these pages, you'll find musings on:

Interior decorating: "It's a fact known throughout the universes that no matter how carefully the colors are chosen, institutional decor ends up as either vomit green, unmentionable brown, nicotine yellow, or surgical appliance pink. By some little-understood process of sympathetic resonance, corridors painted in those colors always smell slightly of boiled cabbage—even if no cabbage is ever cooked in the vicinity." (Equal Rites)

Travel: "Any seasoned traveler soon learns to avoid anything wished on them as a 'regional speciality,' because all the term means is that the dish is so unpleasant the people living everywhere else will bite off their own legs rather than eat it. But hosts still press it upon distant guests anyway: 'Go on, have the dog's head stuffed with macerated cabbage and pork noses—it's a regional speciality.'" (The Last Continent)

Young men: "And then there was the young male walk. At least women swung only their hips. Young men swung everything, from the shoulders down. You have to try to occupy a lot of space. It makes you look bigger, like a tomcat fluffing his tail. The boys tried to walk big in self-defense against all those other big boys out there. I'm bad, I'm fierce, I'm cool, I'd like a pint of shandy and me mam wants me home by nine." (Monstrous Regiment)

Class: "'Old money' meant that it had been made so long ago that the black deeds that had originally filled the coffers were now historically irrelevant. Funny, that; a brigand for a father was something you kept quiet about, but a slave-taking pirate for a great-great-great-grandfather was something to boast of over the port. Time turned the evil bastards into rogues, and rogue was a word with a twinkle in its eye and nothing to be ashamed of." (Making Money) . . . and more! Culled from all the Discworld novels, *The Wit and Wisdom of Discworld* confirms Pratchett's place in the pantheon of great satirists and proves why the Chicago Tribune has praised his Discworld as "entertaining and gloriously funny . . . an accomplishment nothing short of magical."

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Customer Reviews

The problems with selecting the best Pratchett quotes are that no one agrees on which are the best and there are too many to include them all. So while there aren't any bad Pratchett quotes, it's annoying to find your favorites aren't included in this compilation. As just one example, the selections from "Soul Music" omit both the "felonious monk" pun - maybe the best pun in Pratchett - and "we're on a mission from Glod." I mean, reasonable minds can differ, but what can Briggs have been thinking? Maybe that's the best way to describe the problem with this book: what was Stephen Briggs thinking? Which is why I give this effort only two stars, the lowest rating I've given any Pratchett-related product. And it goes deeper than that. Many of the quotes in this compilation are only amusing in context. Lifted from context, they can be a little flat. So who is this written for? Folks who haven't read the books will be bewildered, unamused and disappointed. Hard core fans will disagree with and be annoyed by the selections. It's hard to see the target audience. I respect Mr. Briggs' dramatizations of Pratchett's novels, and his various editions of "Discworld Companion." But this effort falls flat. Notably, it does not contain an introduction from Pratchett, unlike some of the other non-canon books. Perhaps that omission is a comment all by itself. The bottom line: read the books. Read all the books. They are a lot more fun, and you can decide for yourself what's witty and wise. Recommended only for those who want to keep their Pratchett libraries complete.

Steven Briggs, the man behind the Discworld maps and stage versions of the Discworld stories and the Discworld Companion, has compiled in this single volume many of the funniest -- and wisest -- moments from the whole series of Discworld novels, all the way from "The Color of Magic" to "Making Money" (and including the four "youth" books). I say "many" moments, not all, because to do that, as Briggs says in his foreword, he might as well have tied a set of all the Discworld novels up with a ribbon. Some jokes, Briggs tells us, would not fit in this compilation because too much context was required, and the judgment of what is most funny is too subjective for everyone to agree. But any Discworld fan can be assured that at least many moments happily remembered make their appearance in "The Wit & Wisdom of Discworld" (and, if the fan is like me, some moments you have forgotten). Excerpts range from single sentences to several paragraphs, and occasionally Briggs supplies a comment or two of background to explain what the joke is about. The excerpts are arranged in chapters, one for each novel. And there is even an index in which you can look up such things as "witches: Omnians and," and "Vetenari, Havelock, Lord (Patrician of Ankh-Morpork): tyranny in practice". The book makes for wonderful browsing, or reading straight-through. And it makes you want to go back and read the novels themselves again.

Stephen Briggs has compiled a selection of quotes and passages from every Discworld book through MAKING MONEY. As Terry Pratchett is known for his clever sentences, puns and jokes, this may seem like a great idea. Unfortunately, it doesn't quite work. In the context of the Discworld novels, most of these passages are witty and humorous. Piled together here and ripped kicking and screaming from narrative context, it seems overmuch, and many passages end up giving the reader a "you had to be there" kind of feeling. Timing is everything with humor, but here, it's all out the window. This is not to say there is no value here. Pratchett's cleverisms are certainly worthwhile and enjoyable. However, fans of Discworld are better off sticking with the novels, and those who are new to Discworld won't get it. Nor should they be expected to. TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT

I have always loved the wit and humor that always comes through in Terry Pratchett's writing, and often find myself quoting odd bits and pieces from his books. The exact wording sometimes eludes me, and I would have liked little compendium that I could use to flip to a quote that was just on the tip of my tongue. Unfortunately, this book isn't really useful in that regard. I was expecting this book to be sorted by category, like religion, politics, birth, death, food, etc. The description seemed to support this expectation, since it names four categories, and gives an example of each. That isn't

the case. The quotes are arranged by their book of origin. I already own most of these novels, and could simply go look for the quotes inside the original novel as easily as I could in this book, without the added concern that the passage I was seeking had been omitted. It also makes for a very cumbersome read. Reading this book is kind of like watching a movie trailer. You get some idea of what is going on, but everything feels disconnected and incomplete. I fail to see the value that this "collection" offers, especially in a digital age, when we can carry the entire Pratchett library in our phones to thumb through at our leisure. Someone should consider editing and reorganizing these quotes by category, so that this publication serves some purpose. In its current state, it is a waste of money and a purchase I regret.

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