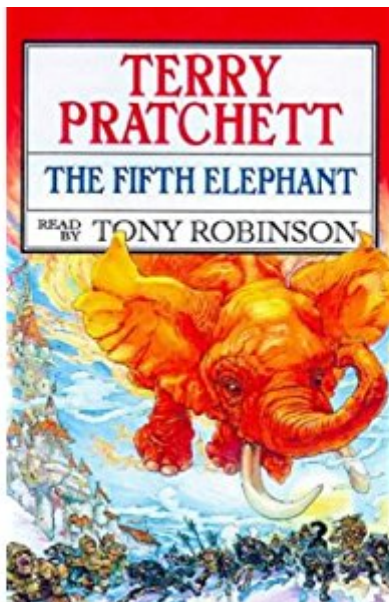


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The Fifth Elephant: Discworld #24



Synopsis

Everyone knows that the world is flat and supported on the backs of four elephants. But weren't there supposed to be five? Indeed there were. So where is it? When duty calls, Commander Vimes of the Ankh-Morpork constabulary answers -- even if he doesn't want to. Now, he's been invited to attend a royal function as both detective and diplomat. The one role he relishes; the other requires, well, ruby tights. Of course, where cops (even those clad in tights) go, alas, crime follows. An attempted assassination and a theft soon lead to a desperate chase from the low halls of Discworld royalty to the legendary fat mines of Uberwald, where lard is found in underground seams along with tusks and teeth and other precious ivory artifacts. It's up to the dauntless Vimes -- bothered as usual by a familiar cast of Discworld inhabitants (you know, trolls, dwarfs, werewolves, vampires, and such) -- to solve the puzzle of the missing pachyderm. Which, of course, he will . . . after all, solving mysteries is his job. --This text refers to the Mass Market Paperback edition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The Fifth Elephant is one of my favorite Discworld novels but, fair warning, this is an abridged version. It is well done - nothing essential is left out of course - but much of Pratchett's funny meanderings are not included. I would not use this or other similar recordings as a first time experience of Discworld. Tony Robinson (Baldrick from the Black Adder BBC series) does wonderful voices. Unfortunately, it seems like these recordings were never normalized so you have to turn up the volume for his quiet voices and then get blasted by his louder or more projected

voices. This aspect is a technical one, not Pratchett's or Robinson's fault but it is why I give this less than the Five Stars.

In this book you get to know about the Legend of the Fifth Elephant. Mostly it seems to be a legend originating from the lands closer to the Ramtops, named Uberwald. The home region of Angua the Werewolf, Cheery the female Dwarf, and Detritus the Troll. A new Lower King (Head king of the Dwarves) is about to be elected in Uberwald, and as such Ankh-Morpork needs to be present as it's a major diplomatic occurrence. Ankh-Morpork sends some of its finest people to handle the situation, and meanwhile the Watch goes into a deep sleep back in Ankh-Morpork under the leadership of Sgt. Colon. We get an insight into the world of Dwarves, Werewolves and even a bit on the Vampire side of the Discworld. Filled again with politics and Deceit just like Jingo, but this time our crew is more alone than they were in Klatch. Vimes nearly escapes with his life after being chased by a werewolf/naked man and all for the greatest treasure Uberwald has to offer! The remains of the Fifth Elephant.

Sam Vimes, Commander of the Watch & sometime Duke of Ankh-Morpork, is sent to Uberwald to handle a tricky dispute between conservative & modern factions of Dwarfs regarding which should govern. Someone has stolen the Scone of Stone, the traditional rock on which the Low King of the Dwarfs must sit when being crowned & handing down judgment. A series of possibly related murders has been committed in Ankh-Morpork. It's up to Vimes, along with his trusty officers, the female (!) dwarf Corporal Cheery Littlebottom, Sergeant Detritus (a troll who gets smarter as the weather gets darker & colder) & an ever-reliable Igor, to solve the mystery. Meanwhile, Captain Carrot is searching for the missing Sergeant Angua (the female werewolf he loves), with the help of Gaspode (the talking dog first seen in "Moving Pictures"), because werewolves & vampires are doing their best (or worst) to create more problems between the Dwarf factions. And don't even ask about what's going on back at the Watch, as acting Captain Colon broods over who's stealing his strawberries - uh, sugar cubes. A combination of police procedural, detective story, comic take on "The Caine Mutiny," & good old-fashioned interspecies rivalry fantasy. Pratchett never disappoints.

Down boy - good dog! Well, it turns out Angua has several siblings and one of them has been a very bad dog indeed! Vimes is instructed, in no uncertain terms that he has to go to Uberwald as the official diplomat from Ankh-Morpork. He is happy to be a copper, but when Lady Sybil packs his Duke costume he knows all hope is lost. But he leaves the city in the capable hands of Carrot and

ventures out into unknown territory. Carrot soon follows leaving Colon in charge of the Watch. Terry Pratchett has created a masterpiece with this cleverly written novel. Each character has been finely tuned, and display all their special talents in this book. Nuanced humour, and a great plot move the reader along quickly. This is one of those books where I was sorry to reach the end. It left me wanting more. From Colon's paranoia at the watch house, to Carrot's carefully worded statements to Vimes regarding Angua and Gavin, to Lady Sybil's frustration at not being able to talk to her husband, Pratchett does not put a foot wrong. When I grow up I want to write like Terry Pratchett!

I've been re-reading Discworld in publication order and just finished The Fifth Elephant. It starts slow, but like an elephant falling from the heavens, it really picks up speed and finishes with a nice, satisfying splat. I've pretty much read these books as they appeared and am pleased that they hold up to re-reading. Truly the world is a sadder place for the loss of Terry Pratchett. We are so lucky that we can continue to visit his legacy.

After several books before (and after if, like me, you've read a great deal of Discworld's novels out of sequence) The Fifth Elephant takes the main plotline deep into the heartland of werewolves, vampires, and dwarves. While Night Watch will always remain my favorite Sam Vimes novel, Elephant runs a very close second. Our dear old Vimes is taken completely out of his element as a beat cop and put on diplomat duty for the coronation of the new Low King (king of the dwarves). In fact, the majority of the characters returning from other books are thrown a curveball. Sgt. Colon gets a promotion, Nobby finds himself in a position of power, the Watch almost falls apart while Vimes is away. Packed with humor and interesting fantasy takes on real-life situations, Pratchett does not disappoint!

One of Pratchett's best. One of my favorites!

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