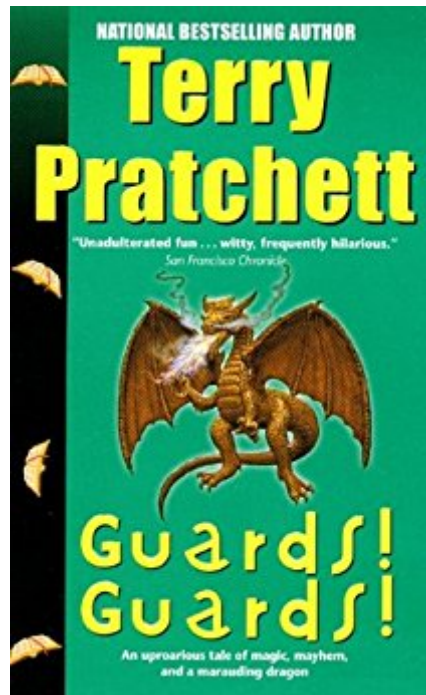




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Guards! Guards!: A Novel Of Discworld



Synopsis

Welcome to Guards! Guards!, the eighth book in Terry Pratchett's legendary Discworld series. Long believed extinct, a superb specimen of draco nobilis ("noble dragon" for those who don't understand italics) has appeared in Discworld's greatest city. Not only does this unwelcome visitor have a nasty habit of charbroiling everything in its path, in rather short order it is crowned King (it is a noble dragon, after all...). How did it get there? How is the Unique and Supreme Lodge of the Elucidated Brethren of the Ebon Night involved? Can the Ankh-Morpork City Watch restore order and the Patrician of Ankh-Morpork to power? Magic, mayhem, and a marauding dragon...who could ask for anything more?

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Customer Reviews

I was looking forward to giving this one a "very unpredictable" quick-rating, but for once, didn't ask. Guards is definitely a broader, meatier novel than its predecessors in the series as I've been reading through, and probably does top my prior favorite, Equal Rites, for character development. As might be expected of any author with an extensive canon, Pratchett is definitely well into his stride pulling in references from prior books, but the core of the story does not rely upon prior knowledge. Neither is it as extensively action/adventure as might be expected from a fantasy novel

with a dragon on the cover and a call of alarm in the title. Imagine something more along the lines of, say, a video meme of a kitten struggling to not slide off the edge of an armchair by having its claws embedded in a blanket which in turn is covered in other kittens who are consequently being dragged over to the edge as the whole blanket shifts, only in book form, arguably backwards, and with dragons. Not dragons in place of the kittens, no, that isn't... I mean... ok. What I'm trying to get at is that you may think you know where it's going, and on a macro scale you're probably right, but some of the kittens are magic, one of them is an orangutan, one may or may not exist, and besides, the laws of physics don't behave the way you'd expect. Which is all to say that the reason you're reading to begin with isn't because you know exactly what's going to happen, but is rather, in fact, because you don't, but you would anyway even if you actually did.

It is Anhk-Morpork and things are amiss as usual. A motley crew of manipulated misfits is meeting in secret to summon a dragon as part of a secret plot to overthrow the Patrician and install a puppet king. The Watch begins to watch, perhaps they have been joined by Carrot a 6' 6" orphan raised by dwarves. Carrot embodies great naiveté with enthusiasm to do a good job and enforce the law. A novel concept for the Watch. And then there is Errol the swamp dragon! No aspect of the story is immune from Terry Pratchett's wry wit from two very funny pages of bumbling around through recitations of silly complicated passwords to the Patrician in his dungeon and finally to the 1 million to one odds of success of the Watch. Reliable entertainment, but there are no witches and no wee free men.

Okay, so this is the best dragon book ever. For adults. Well, for those of us who think we are adults, who hope we are adults, but are really little kids in adult suits. I thought all the previous Discworld novels were funny. I was so wrong. This book left me in fits of giggles. At times I laughed so hard that I couldn't laugh anymore and just whimpered, and almost peed my pants once. Okay, twice. Okay, I don't remember how many times. Anyway. People told me that one of their favorites in the Discworld series is Guards! Guards! I get why. I mean, I haven't read the rest of them, but here Terry outdid himself. Every sentence is a pun, a joke, a clever satire, a poke at everything under the sky, marriage, religion, stupidity, politics, love, cowardice, you name it, he's got it all. Of course the dedication to the book alone will leave you struggling for breath. Haven't we all seen those movies with those unnamed men rushing at the hero, only to be butchered to smithereens? Yeah. You know what I'm talking about. Enter secret societies, ruthless rulers, or, rather, loathsome men willing to become ruthless rulers, kings, kings, dragons, heirs to the throne, did I mention dragons? Yes,

dragons, swamp dragons, dwarfs, big ladies (I will leave it here, because in the big ladies lies the secret of this book). But I'm rambling. Mind you, my stomach still hurts from laughing, so I'm a little jerky writing this. As to the actual story, because every proper review should do this. Let's see here. We start with a secret brotherhood doing something strange and mysterious—wait, no, before that we start with dragons dwelling in a mysterious place, and then a strange happening in the library, where, as you remember, an orangutan is a librarian. So, some plot is unfolding in the midst of the brotherhood, of course, as you might have guessed, to overthrow the Patrician of Ankh-Morpork and, well, everything that goes with it. But then, of course, everything goes wrong. Because there are still noble and honest men, like the men of the City Watch, especially the young recruit by the name of Carrot who was adopted by dwarfs but is actually twice their size and who has memorized the book of law of the city and is putting it to practice. You can imagine what that would cause in the city that is home to a Guild of Thieves, and Guild of Assassins, and stuff. Enter love. There is lots of awkward and hysterical love here, the details of which I can't disclose because I would spoil the book for you (it kept me guessing almost to the very end, which is rare, because I'm usually very shrewd.) There are also very important things like a tea kettle that gets eaten, and rats that understand English, and maidens chained to a rock, and lots of courage and pride and folk wisdom. That last one gave me stomach aches, one of those painful fits of laughter when you double down and lose all hope of ever standing upright. I think I need to cut writing this review, because you need to cut reading it and start reading Guards! Guards! as I can't possibly do it justice. Don't forget a pack of tissues. You'll need it.

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