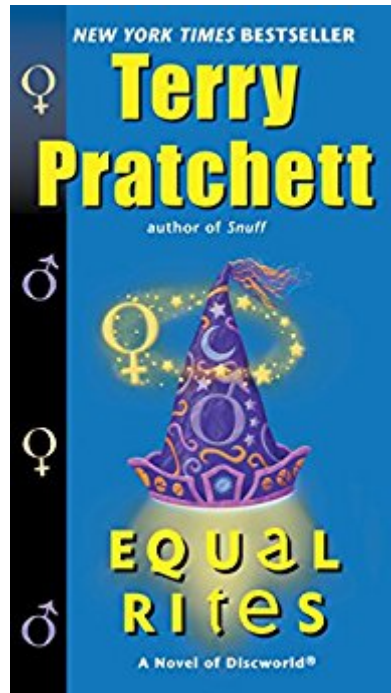




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Equal Rites: A Novel Of Discworld



Synopsis

Terry Pratchett's profoundly irreverent, bestselling novels have garnered him a revered position in the halls of parody next to the likes of Mark Twain, Kurt Vonnegut, Douglas Adams, and Carl Hiaasen. In *Equal Rites*, a dying wizard tries to pass on his powers to an eighth son of an eighth son, who is just at that moment being born. The fact that the son is actually a daughter is discovered just a little too late.

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Customer Reviews

Well, it's a Discworld book, innit? It's not great literature, but it's a fun read. Pratchett hadn't hit his stride yet, but his style is definitely evolving and this book was a bit tighter and more imaginative than the earlier books. Tradition has it that wizarding ability is passed on to the 8th son of an 8th son when that child is born. So a dying wizard shows up at a remote town in the Ramtops to bestow his power on a newborn child of a blacksmith. But before they can explain that the baby is a girl, the wizard has passed along his power and his staff, and has died. But girls can't be wizards! Granny

Weatherwax is called in to try to train little Eskarina to be a witch, but the magical power is too strong. So Granny takes her to Ankh-Morpork and attempts to get her into the Unseen University. When Eskarina is unable to demonstrate her ability, they just laugh her out of the building. She gets a job as a sweeper and uses her employment status to access classrooms and learn surreptitiously. Events in another plot arc come to a head, and it comes down to Esk and a stuttering boy prodigy to save the world. But it seems the more power they use, the more powerful their enemies become. How can they defeat the forces of evil and save the university? Read the book to find out.

After reading the first two thoroughly delightful Discworld novels, I decided to plow ahead with this one and commit to the whole series. This book is set some time after the misadventures of Rincewind and Twoflower from the first two novels, *The Color of Magic* and *The Light Fantastic*, though it's not necessary to have read them first, and a quick introduction is enough to situate a reader in the Discworld universe. (For that matter, Pratchett fans have suggested countless Discworld reading orders other than the usual order of publication.) Though the action of the story focuses on young Eskarina Smith's efforts to become Discworld's first female wizard, the real standout character is her mentor Granny Weatherwax, a formidable rural witch who disapproves of wizardry but nonetheless supports Esk's choice to travel to the city of Ankh-Morpork and apply for admission to Unseen University. The story moves along at a good clip and is filled with Pratchett's trademark humor; he's like a witty, fantasy counterpart to Douglas Adams, though perhaps with less wryness and more warmth in his writing. In terms of reading level and content appropriateness, I'd say it's fine for precocious middle schoolers and up, and it's a pretty fast read.

Okay, so I'm waiting for a book I won on Library Thing to be delivered and thought I'd read *EQUAL RITES* again and I'm so glad I did. I gave it five stars last time and I wish I could give it five more. It is so fun and funny and such a magnificent story! It is also incredibly well written. Sir Pratchett has a way of painting a scene that is unlike anyone else--a visual shorthand that describes the action perfectly with a sparsity of words. My only complaint about his writing (and I have read a lot of his books!) is that he occasionally draws you out of his story by breaking the fourth wall. He does it beautifully, and deftly draws you back in, but personally I would have preferred he not do it in the first place. It draws attention to his writing and makes me realize he's telling me a tale, rather than keeping me immersed in that tale. But apart from this, what I admire most about Terry is his unique way of looking at life and his uncanny ability to explain complex concepts with both insight and humor. The world lost a true genius when he passed away far too young.

Can a girl be a wizard? Can a boy be a witch? Can the universe turn itself inside out and outside in and fold into a single viewpoint that explains what magic is and what it isn't? And, more importantly, can one understand that the monsters we see are reflections of us, and if they are scary, that means that we are scary, and that by simply waving a magic staff at them won't do any good, and one has to step away and peer deep inside oneself, although not too deep, because then maybe one can suddenly see the back of one's head and really lose it? Yeah? No? I don't know. You'll have to read *Equal Rites* to get the answers to these questions. Or maybe not, maybe you will only get more confused, the way ants get confused if you put a cube of sugar in their path. And that really happens in the book, and they discover the true secret of longevity. For real. What, you don't believe me? Here is what the story is about. There is a big turtle, it has four elephants on its back, who have a disc on their backs in turn, which is Discworld. There, in a town called Bad Ass (it was not me who named it) a little girl is born who is destined for great things, for throwing burning stares at strangers), and for an adventure of a lifetime, namely, she goes seeking her fortune in the company of a fierce witch in disguise (in disguise because she is really very sweet and not fierce at all) Granny Weatherwax. They proceed changing wizarding rules, as women can't be wizards, it is known, it is in the lore, and it can not be questioned. Or else. Which actually what the book is about. About the "else". And carrots. Well, maybe also orangutans. Or librarian orangutans. Anyway, it's the third installment of the Discworld series (in order they were published) and I loved it, and I laughed every other sentence, to the point of belly aches. I am a transformed human being now, and if you read it, you will be transformed too.

This is the story of the first and only female wizard in Disc World, Eskarina. In typical Disc World fashion, there are new characters, old characters, and magic woven into a very readable story. He does a great job with his female characters who are brave, self-reliant, and creative. Terry Pratchett is the master of his own genre within the fantasy universe.

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