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Terry Pratchett's
Maskerade

Adapted for the stage by
Stephen Briggs

Samuel French — London



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ISBN 0 573 01829 4

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**Terry Pratchett's
MASKERADE**

First presented by the Studio Theatre Club at the Unicorn Theatre, Abingdon, on 14th November, 1995, with the following cast:

Granny Weatherwax	Laura Ridout
Nanny Ogg	Judith Leonard
Agnes Nitt	Sharon Stone
Walter Plinge	Nigel Tait
Mr Salzella	Stephen Briggs
Christine	Kath Leighton
Seldom Bucket	Trevor Collins
Dr Underschaft/Sgt Detritus	Tim Arnot
Señor Basilica	Mark Cowper
Greebo	Mike Davey
Mrs Plinge	Claire Spittlehouse
Mr Goatberger	Robin Allen
Mr Pounder/Cpl Nobbs	Graham Cook
Manager to Snr Basilica	Simon Banks
André	Andy Moseley
Colette	Sarah Salholm
Solange	Sarah Wilson
Giselle	Laima Bite
Hron	Martin Lyons
Kevin	John Kirchhoff
Mr Arno	Keith Franklin
Tommy Cripps	Simon Hill

Directed by Stephen Briggs
Lighting by Colin James
Stage Manager: Leonie Forman
Sound: Phil Evans and Gill Petrokofsky

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CHARACTERS

Granny Weatherwax, *a witch*
Nanny Ogg, *another witch*
Agnes (Perdita) Nitt, *not a witch*
Walter Plinge, *a very odd-job man*
Dr Underschaft, *Chorus Master*
Mr Salzella, *Director of Music*
Mr Seldom Bucket, *Opera Manager*
Greebo, *a cat in human form*
Mrs Plinge, *Walter's mum*
Señor Enrico Basilica/Henry Slugg, *opera singer*
Christine, *opera star*
Mr Goatberger, *a publisher*
Tommy Cripps, *scenery painter*
Mr Pounder, *ratcatcher*
Snr Basilica's Manager
Death of Rats
André, *a pianist*
Sergeant Detritus, *City Watch, a troll*
Corporal Nobbs, *City Watch, a human?*
Arno, *the Stage Manager*
Hron, *a stagehand*
Kevin, *another stagehand*
Colette, *a dancer*
Solange, *another dancer*
Giselle, *also a dancer*
Corps de ballet, Stagecrew, Audience, Travellers,
Bodies

AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

An Awfully Big Adventure

Oxford's Studio Theatre Club were the first people ever to dramatize the Discworld. That was in 1991, with *Wyrd Sisters*.

We had a theatre that seats ninety people. We had a stage about the size of a pocket handkerchief with the wings of Tinkerbell. Put on a Discworld play? Simple ...

A flat, circular world borne through space on the backs of four enormous elephants who themselves stand on the carapace of a cosmically large turtle? Nothing to it. A seven foot skeleton with glowing blue eyes? No problem. A sixty foot fire-breathing dragon? A cinch.

My drama club had already staged its own adaptations of other works: Monty Python's *Life of Brian* and *Holy Grail* — and Tom Sharpe's *Porterhouse Blue* and *Blott on the Landscape*. We were looking for something new when someone said, "Try Terry Pratchett — you'll like him."

So I ventured into the previously uncharted territory of the "Fantasy" section of the local bookstore. I read a Terry Pratchett book; I liked it. I read all of them. I wrote to Terry and asked if we could stage *Wyrd Sisters*. He said yes.

Wyrd Sisters sold out.

So did *Mort* the year after.

So did *Guards! Guards!*, *Men at Arms*, *Maskerade* and *Jingo* in the years after that. In fact, "sold out" is too modest a phrase. "Oversold very quickly so that by the time the local newspaper mentioned it was on we'd had to close the booking office" is nearer the mark.

My casts were all happy enough to read whichever book we were staging, and to read others in the canon too. The books stand on their own, but some knowledge of the wider Discworld ethos helps when adapting the stories, and can help the actors with their characterizations.

The Discworld stories are remarkably flexible in their character requirements. *Mort* has been performed successfully with a cast of three (adding in an extra thrill for the audience, who knew that sooner or later a character would have to have a dialogue with themselves. But it turned out very well). On the other hand, there is plenty of scope for peasants, wizards, beggars, thieves and general rhubarb merchants if the director is lucky enough to have actors available.

I'd better add a note of caution here. There are a lot of small parts in the plays which nevertheless require good acting ability (as we say in the Studio

Theatre Club: “There are no small parts, only small actors”). The character may have only four lines to say but one of them might well be the (potentially) funniest line in the play. Terry Pratchett is remarkably democratic in this respect. Spear-carriers, demons and even a humble doorknocker all get their moment of glory. Don’t let them throw it away!

Terry writes very good dialogue. Not all authors do. But Terry, like Dickens, writes stuff which you can lift straight into your play. Although it was often necessary to combine several scenes from the book into one scene in the play, I tried to avoid changing the original Pratchett dialogue. After all, you perform an author’s work because you like their style; as much of that style as possible should be evident in the play.

The important thing was to decide what was the basic plot: anything which didn’t contribute to that was liable to be dropped in order to keep the play flowing. Favourite scenes, even favourite characters, had to be dumped.

I had to remember that not all the audience would be dyed-in-the-wool Pratchett fans. Some of them might just be normal theatre-goers who’d never read a fantasy novel in their whole lives, although I have to say that these now are a dwindling minority.

The books are episodic, and this can be a difficult concept to incorporate into a play. Set changes slow down the action. Any scene change that takes more than thirty seconds means you’ve lost the audience. Even ten-second changes, if repeated often enough, will lead to loss of interest.

The golden rule is — if you can do it without scenery, do it without scenery. It’s a concept that has served radio drama very well (everyone knows that radio has the best scenery). And Shakespeare managed very well without it, too.

The plays do, however, call for some unusual props. Many of these were made by the cast and crew: a door with a hole for a talking golden door-knocker, coronation mugs, large hourglasses for Death’s house, sponge chips and pizzas, shadow puppets, archaic rifles, dragon-scorched books and Discworld newspapers (“Patrician Launches Victim’s Charter”). Other, more specialized props were put “out to contract”: Death’s sword and scythe, an orang-utan, the City Watch badge, a Death of Rats, a Greebo and two swamp dragons (one an elaborate hand puppet and one with a fire-proof compartment in its bottom for a flight scene).

Since the Studio Theatre Club started the trend in 1991, Terry and I have had many enquiries about staging the books — from as far afield as Finland, South Africa, Australia and the Czech Republic (as well as Sheffield, Aberdeen, Exeter and the Isle of Man).

So how did our productions actually go? We enjoyed them. Our audiences seemed to enjoy them (after all, some of them were prepared, year after year, to travel down to Abingdon in Oxfordshire from as far afield as Taunton, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Ipswich, Basingstoke and ... well, Oxford). Terry seemed to enjoy them, too. He said that many of our members looked as

though they had been recruited straight off the streets of Ankh-Morpork. He said that several of them were born to play the “rude mechanicals” in Vitoller’s troupe in *Wyrd Sisters*. He said that in his mind’s eye the famous Ankh-Morpork City Watch are the players of the Studio Theatre Club.

I’m sure these were meant to be compliments.

MASKERADE

By the time we staged *Maskerade* in 1995, we knew that the Discworld plays were a winner.

As with all the adaptations, there were difficult choices about which scenes should be sacrificed to try and keep the play down to a reasonable running time. We had also realized that Abingdon’s medieval Unicorn Theatre was a part of the package; it has its shortcomings, but its ambience contributed much to the success of the shows. This, for us, would particularly be the case as it would itself easily play the part of the Ankh-Morpork City Opera House, in which most of the show takes place.

Maskerade had appealed to me for dramatization since Terry first mentioned the idea to me. The Phantom of the Opera theme is a strong one and he and I had fun researching backstage at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden.

This dramatization was written with the Unicorn Theatre’s restrictions, and the number of players I expected to have available, in mind. Really complicated scenic effects were virtually impossible. Basically, we had a bare stage with an onstage balcony at the back of the stage with a small curtained area beneath it. Anyone thinking of staging a Discworld play can be as imaginative as they like, calling upon the might of Industrial Light and Magic, if it’s within their budget. But *Maskerade* can be staged with only a relatively modest outlay on special effects and the notes that accompany the text are intended to be a guide for those, like us, with limited budgets. Bigger groups, with teams of experts on hand, can let their imaginations run wild!

In short, though, our experience and that of other groups is that it pays to work hard on getting the costumes and lighting right, and to keep the scenery to little more than, perhaps, a few changes of level. One group with some resourceful technophiles achieved magnificent “scenery” simply with sound effects and lighting (“dripping water” and rippling green light for a dungeon scene, for example). There’s room for all sorts of ideas here. The Discworld, as it says in the books, is your mollusc.

Characterization

Within the constraints of what is known and vital about each character, there is still room for flexibility of interpretation. With the main roles, though, you have to recognize that your audiences will expect them to look as much like

the book descriptions as possible. *Maskerade* is, to an extent, easier in that few of the characters are Discworld “regulars”. Also, most drama clubs don’t have a vast range from which to choose and it’s the acting that’s more important than the look of the player when it comes down to it! There is some character description in the script notes, but here is a little more detail about the main protagonists.

Granny Weatherwax

In the opinion of many, not least herself, the greatest witch on the Discworld.

She is nominally the village witch of Bad Ass in the kingdom of Lancre in the Ramtops (a mountainous and unforgiving area of the Disc). For practical purposes, however, she regards the whole kingdom and, indeed, anywhere else she happens to be as her rightful domain.

She lives in the woods outside the village in a traditional, much-repaired witch’s cottage, with beehives and a patch of what might be medicinal plants. She owns a broomstick, but despite the best efforts of dwarf engineers everywhere, it cannot be started without a considerable amount of running up and down with it in gear.

Esmerelda (“Granny”) Weatherwax is a formidable character with every necessary attribute for the classical “bad witch” — a quick temper, a competitive, selfish and ambitious nature, a sharp tongue, an unshakeable conviction of her own moral probity, and some considerable mental and occult powers.

Granny likes to look the part. She is tall and thin, with blue eyes and with long, fine, grey hair tied back in a severe bun. She wears sensible black, her skirt incorporates some servicable pockets and her lace-up boots have complicated iron fixtures and toecaps like battering rams. She likes to wear several layers of clothing, including respectable flannelette petticoats. She wears a reinforced pointy hat, held in place by numerous hat-pins. She has perfect skin - a source of irritation; her complexion has resisted every one of her attempts to gain some warts.

Nanny Ogg

Gytha (“Nanny”) Ogg is probably in her seventies. Her family arrangements are cosy but haphazard. She has been formally married three times. All three have passed happily, if somewhat energetically, to their well-earned rest. She has fifteen living children.

Contrary to the rules of traditional witchcraft Nanny Ogg now lives in quite a modern cottage in the centre of Lancre, with up-to-date conveniences like a modern wash copper and a tin bath a mere garden’s walk away on a nail at the back of the privy. The cottage is between those of her sons Shawn and Jason. She likes to have all her family around her in case of an emergency,

such as when she needs a cup of tea or the floor washed.

Nanny's hair is a mass of white curls. She is a small, plump, attractive and good-natured woman, with a crinkled face, thighs that could crack coconuts and a large and experienced bosom. She smokes a pipe and, like Granny Weatherwax, she wears heavy, lace-up boots.

Nobby

Corporal C W St J (Cecil Wormsborough St John) Nobbs. A Corporal in the Ankh-Morpork Night Watch. A four-foot tall, pigeon-chested, bandy-legged man, with the muscle tone of an elastic band and a certain resemblance to a chimpanzee. The only reason you can't say that Nobby is close to the animal kingdom is that the animal kingdom would move further away. Nobby is actually smaller than many dwarfs (er ... we compromised a bit on this!).

He is rumoured to have terrible personal habits, although these appear to be no more than a penchant for petty theft (usually from people too unconscious or, for preference, too dead to argue) an ability to do tricks with his facial boils, and a liking for folk dancing.

Men like Nobby can be found in any armed force. Although their grasp of the minutiae of the Regulations is usually encyclopaedic, they take good care never to be promoted beyond, perhaps, Corporal. He smokes incessantly, but the weird thing is that any cigarette smoked by Nobby becomes a dog-end almost instantly but remains a dog-end indefinitely or until lodged behind his ear, which is a sort of nicotine Elephants' Graveyard.

Nobby is known to have served as a quartermaster in the army of the Duke of Pseudopolis. There are rumours that he had to join the Watch after items missing from the stores were found in his kit. Since the items were the entirety of the store inventory, Nobby's kit at the time consisted of two warehouses.

Detritus

Detritus is a silicon-based life-form. A troll. There are lots of them in Ankh-Morpork. We had the good fortune to have already invested in a mask and gloves for our production of *Men at Arms*. He's only a minor character in this play, so you might just buy stuff from a fancy dress shop, or just use make-up.

The Phantom/Ghost

Discerning readers will notice that, throughout the play the masked man is called the "Ghost" by the characters in the script, but referred to by the adapter (me) as the "Phantom" in the stage directions. This inconsistency is simply that "Ghost" remains true to the book dialogue and reflects the characters' belief that the masked man is really supernatural. Whereas, to me, "Phantom", whilst still supernatural, is a more romantic title and is thus the

one I used in the directions. After all — in the book by Gaston Leroux which has some parallels with Terry Pratchett’s tale, Eric refers to himself in letters as “O.G.” the Opera Ghost, but the “book” is called *The Phantom of the Opera*.

We had, in effect, three Phantoms. Each dressed, of course, identically. Two were Walter and Salzella. One, who we used only twice (I think) was just another member of the cast about the same build as our Walter and Salzella. This third Phantom was used in the first scene, to prevent either of the other two having too fast a costume change and, in one other scene, to give the impression that the “Walter Phantom” had jumped fifteen feet from a balcony. On the higher level, our Walter Phantom jumped from sight but it was the “double” who emerged a split second later at ground level. The stage notes make it clear which actor is playing the Phantom in each scene. This helps to involve the audience in the confusion that arises from identifying someone simply from their clothing and their white mask!

Costumes

We played most of the characters in a form of Victorian dress, though the men wore tights and buckle shoes instead of trousers. The City Watch were attired in uniforms of the English Civil War period, but with their opera cloaks, white ties and white waistcoats over the top of their armour.

We hired our outsize suit for Señor Basilica from Angel’s and Berman’s in London (from whom we also hired two identical opera cloaks for the various Ghosts).

Scenery

Virtually none. We had the chandelier hanging over the front of the audience throughout. It was made for the show and was wired to the lights and could be “rocked” from the wings by fine fishing wire, although the movement seemed to the audience to be caused by the actor shaking the thick supporting rope.

We also had a screen on stage for the Ghost’s letters. Apart from that, there were just the odd bits of furniture, most of which were moved on and off stage by the “Opera’s” stage crew.

Special Effects

Sword-stick and Sword-broom

We managed to hire a sword-stick from Bapty (the theatre armourers), but the sword-broom was made especially for the show — no, we don’t still have it!

Stephen Briggs

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Terry Pratchett and Stephen Briggs take an active interest in amateur productions of their work and may wish to attend such performances. It would be appreciated if groups planning productions could write to Stephen Briggs to let them know when they are planning to stage *Maskerade*. He can also give contact information for groups who wish to open their productions to Pratchett fandom! Stephen Briggs can be contacted at PO Box 147, Oxford, OX2 8YT (e-mail — sbriggs@cix.co.uk).

ACT I
SCENE I
An Empty Stage

We are in the interior of the Ankh-Morpork Opera House. There is a theatre balcony with eight seats at the back of the stage with a small curtained area beneath it. (The curtains here will be referred to henceforth as “the small curtains”.) Above the front few rows of the audience hangs an ornate chandelier with a faded glory; it is, as yet, unlit. To one side of the stage is a small screen on which the Phantom’s letters will be projected

The overture starts and the house lights go down. In the complete Black-out, a cloaked and hatted figure (a double for the Phantom) moves around, carrying a lantern. He is wearing evening dress, with a black cloak, a broad-brimmed black hat and a white mask obscuring his face. As the overture ends, he is seen on the balcony, in a follow spot. He stands for a moment, then exits suddenly

The chandelier illuminates and the play begins. The music ends. On stage are some chorus people and stage crew, chatting. During the early part of the scene, Salzella, a tall, slim man in his forties, and Dr Underschaft enter the auditorium and stand at the back. (The auditorium mentioned here and henceforth is the actual auditorium in which the performance is taking place)

Walter Plinge enters, sweeping. He appears to be a gangling youth, wearing a long warehouseman’s coat and a black beret. Almost immediately, Agnes Nitt enters DL on to the stage. She is a large girl in her early twenties, who would very much like to be a slim girl in her early twenties. She has a penchant for black lace

Agnes Nitt Excuse me.

The chorus people give her an uninterested glance. Walter Plinge jerks and drops the broom. He tries to pick it up and, in doing so, gets tangled in the broom handle and falls over. Agnes Nitt rushes to him to help him up

Oh, I’m so sorry! Are you all right?

Walter Plinge tries to get up and again gets tangled in the broom

Shall I hold the broom?

Agnes Nitt helps Walter Plinge to his feet

There. Do you work for the Opera House?

Walter Plinge Yes, miss!

Agnes Nitt Er, can you tell me where I go for the audition?

Walter Plinge Er, this is it, miss. You're here.

Mrs Plinge, Walter Plinge's mum, enters, carrying a box full of wine bottles

Hallo, Mum! *(To Agnes Nitt)* That's my mum.

Agnes Nitt Oh yes?

Walter Plinge Can I help you with those, Mum?

Mrs Plinge Oh Walter, would you? The delivery boy brought the drinks to the wrong entrance.

Mrs Plinge hands Walter Plinge the box. There is a bit of business as he tries to cope with the broom and the box

Er, I'll carry the broom, shall I?

Mrs Plinge and Walter Plinge exit. Mr Arno, the Stage Manager, enters with a clipboard

Arno Yes, miss?

Agnes Nitt Er ... I'm here for — the auditions. I, er, saw the notice that said you were auditioning today. Um, who was that?

Arno That's Walter. Walter Plinge. Everyone knows him. Now, miss — who are you?

Agnes Nitt Oh. I'm Ag — erm ... I'm Ag — er ... Perdita. Perdita X., er ... Nitt.

Arno Well, Perdita X Nitt, you're a bit early; we've only just finished the dress rehearsal for tonight's show. I'll just see if the Musical Director, Mr Salzella and the Chorus Master, Dr Underschaft, will hear you now. *(He looks out into the auditorium)*

Dr Underschaft *(from the auditorium)* Yes, very well, Mr Arno, as we're here.

Arno So — when you're ready.

Agnes Nitt Well, I've got this song. It's a ——

Arno Give us your music, then, and I'll give it to Miss Proudlet.

Agnes Nitt Er, there is no accompaniment, actually, it ——

Arno Oh, it's a folk song, is it? Blimey. Well, the best of luck, then.

Arno shuffles off

Salzella (*in the auditorium*) I don't think that we need to subject ourselves to a folk song, thank you, er, Perdita. Perhaps you would just sing us your scales?

Agnes Nitt Scales?

Salzella (*coming forward*) Yes. You know. "Doh-Re-Mi". Starting low and going up as high as you can? Thank you.

Agnes Nitt does a scale that stretches all the way from basso profundo to somewhere above dog-whistle

A number of corps de ballet and stage crew, including Christine, and Mr Arno, appear, attracted by this unusual audition. Christine is an attractive, slim, girl in her early twenties with bubbly blond hair and a personality to match. She seems always to talk in exclamations!!

At the zenith of Agnes Nitt's scale Salzella, followed by Dr Underschaft, walks on to the stage and a bat falls from the rafters

Dr Underschaft Is — is that your full range, my dear?

Agnes Nitt No.

Dr Underschaft No?

Agnes Nitt If I go any higher, people faint. And if I go any lower people say it makes them feel uncomfortable.

Dr Underschaft and Salzella whisper

I can sing with myself in thirds. You know, like doh-mi, but at the same time.

Dr Underschaft Splendid. Perhaps later. Now, your voice projection ——

Agnes Nitt Oh I can do that. Where would you like it projected?

Here the sound boffins must fix it so that Agnes Nitt's recorded voice can be moved around the speakers in the theatre!

(*From one speaker*) To here? (*To another*) Or here? (*To another*) Or here?

Salzella and Dr Underschaft look astounded

Salzella Well, erm, Perdita Nitt. You are now a member of the Ankh-Morpork City Opera chorus.

Salzella and Dr Underschaft move away

Christine You have an amazing voice! Hallo, I'm Christine! Isn't this exciting!?

Agnes Nitt Er, yes.

Christine I've waited all my life for this day. I trained with Mme Venturi at the Quirm Conservatory! Are you staying in the Opera tonight? What room are you in?

Agnes Nitt I don't know ...

Arno (*consulting his clipboard*) Well, you'd be in — number seventeen.

Christine Oh goody. Next to me. Do stay. Come on, let's look at our rooms!!

Agnes Nitt and Christine exit. Arno, the corps de ballet and stagehands drift off, too, leaving Underschaft and Salzella alone

Dr Underschaft Well. Now then, Salzella. What do you think of today's batch?

Seldom Bucket enters. He is a self-made man, in his fifties

Ah, Mr Bucket. We were just considering today's batch of auditionees.

Seldom Bucket Yes, Dr Underschaft. I watched most of the audition from the gods. That Christine. Marvellous stage presence, eh? Good figure, too. (*He winks at Dr Underschaft*)

Dr Underschaft Yes. Very pretty. I'm still not happy about you hiring her, though. She can't sing.

Seldom Bucket What you artistic types don't seem to realize is that this is the Century of the Fruitbat. Opera is a production, not just a load of songs. The idea that a soprano should have fifteen acres of bosom and a horned helmet belongs to the past, like.

Salzella and Underschaft exchange glances

Salzella Unfortunately, the idea that a soprano should have a reasonable singing voice does not belong to the past. She has a good figure, yes. She has a certain ... sparkle. She'll look good on stage. But she can't sing.

Seldom Bucket You can train her, can't you? After a few years in the chorus?

Dr Underschaft Yes, maybe after a few years, if I persevere, she will merely be very bad.

Seldom Bucket Er, gentlemen. Ahem. All right. Cards on the table, yes? I'm a simple man, me. No beating about the bush, speak as you find, call a spade a spade.

Salzella Do give us your forthright views.

Seldom Bucket I've been through the mill, I have. And I made myself what I am today ——

Salzella Self-raising flour?

Seldom Bucket — but I do have to, er, declare a bit of a financial interest. Her dad did in fact, er, lend me a fair whack of money to help me to buy this place. And he made a heartfelt plea on behalf of his daughter. Um. If I remember correctly, it was “Don't make me have to break your legs”. I don't expect you artistes to understand. It's a business thing.

Salzella Very well. It's your opera house, I'm sure. Now Perdita ...?

Dr Underschaft I'm sure she will prove an asset.

Seldom Bucket Yes, what a range she's got.

Salzella Yes, I saw you staring.

Seldom Bucket I meant her voice, Salzella. She will add body to the chorus.

Salzella Ye-e-es. But could you ever see her in a major role?

Seldom Bucket Heck, no. Wonderful personality, though. And good hair, of course. So we will keep them both on, then. Mmmm?

Salzella } (together) Yes. Yes I suppose we will.
Underschaft }

They exit

The Phantom (the double) appears on the balcony, watching them

The Lights cross-fade to:

SCENE 2 The Blasted Heath

The small curtain opens. Wind noise. Thunder. Lightning. Smoke billows out over the stage. We see that there is a small “fire” on stage

Granny Weatherwax and Nanny Ogg are invisible in the smoke. Granny Weatherwax is tall and slim, with a determined expression. Nanny Ogg is short and dumpy, with a large, comfortable bosom. Both are in their sixties to seventies

Nanny Ogg (in the fog) When shall we — two meet again?

Granny and Nanny appear through the fog, Granny striding through purposefully, Nanny breezing in fanning at the “fog” with her hands. They both carry toasting forks

Granny Weatherwax For goodness' sake, Gytha. What on earth did you have to go and shout that for?

Nanny Ogg Sorry, Esme. I was just doing it for, you know — old times' sake. Don't roll off the tongue, tho'.

Granny Weatherwax You made me drop me toast on the fire.

Nanny Ogg Sorry.

Granny Weatherwax Anyway, you didn't have to shout.

Nanny Ogg Sorry.

Granny Weatherwax I mean, I ain't deaf. You could've asked me in a normal voice. And I'd 'ave said, next Wednesday. Pass me another slice.

Nanny Ogg Magrat! Pass us the bre — oh. Whoops, mind wandering for a minute there. I'll get it.

Granny Weatherwax Hah!

Nanny Ogg I thought it might cheer you up. Comin' up here again.

Granny Weatherwax Really.

Nanny Ogg Take you out of yourself, sort of thing.

Granny Weatherwax Hmf.

Nanny Ogg Um. Erm. Now — look here, Esme. Look, I'm worried, see. Er, about, um, you. Very worried. I don't want to think that you might be turning — “black”?

Granny Weatherwax “Black”?

Nanny Ogg I know it can happen, with the really powerful witches. And let's face it, Esme, you're pretty damn powerful. Prob'ly even more than — Black Allis. And ev'ryone knows what happened to her.

Granny Weatherwax Yes yes. Stuffed into her own stove by a couple of kids. Good job too, to my mind. Even if it did take a week to clean the oven. Anyway, I ain't going “black”.

Nanny Ogg Ah. (*Pause*) Saw Magrat the other day.

No reaction

She's looking well. Queening suits her.

No reaction

Don't think she's missin' being the third member of our coven one little bit. (*Pause*) The Maiden, the Mother and the Crone, eh? Well, I reckon it's safe to assume that ole Magrat no longer qualifies as the maiden nowadays — but I've still got me fifteen kids and — er ...

Granny Weatherwax Yes, well. Is that tea ready, Gytha?

Nanny Ogg goes back to the fire to pick up two mugs of tea. She hands one to Esme and downs hers quite quickly

Nanny Ogg What about that Agnes Nitt?

Granny Weatherwax What? Perditax?

Nanny Ogg Perdita X.

Granny Weatherwax She showed some promise, I 'spose. Might do as the third witch at a pinch.

Nanny Ogg Nope. Nearly forgot. Saw her mum the other day. She's gone off to Ankh-Morpork. Had some idea about joining the Opera.

Granny Weatherwax Opera? What's that?

Nanny Ogg Well, it's a bit like theatre, but with more singing and less acting.

Granny Weatherwax Less acting? Less acting than theatre? How do they manage that? Can't see Agnes Nitt — Perdita — fitting in too well. She's a sensible girl. Not flighty like them actresses we seen.

Nanny Ogg She said Lancre was dull, her mum said.

Granny Weatherwax Dull?

Nanny Ogg That's what I said. I said we get some lovely sunsets up here. And there's the annual fair every Soul Cake Tuesday. Regular. *(She finishes her tea and peers into her mug)* Bleeding bloody hell!

Granny Weatherwax What's up? No sugar?

Nanny Ogg Look! Esme, look!

Nanny Ogg hands the mug to Granny Weatherwax

And think of Agnes when you do.

Granny Weatherwax *(hissing between her teeth)* Well, well. There's a thing.

Nanny Ogg Do you see it?

Granny Weatherwax Yes. A shape. Like a skull.

Nanny Ogg And them eyes? I bloody near pi — I was pretty damn surprised I can tell you. She could be facing something bad, Esme. Her mum giv me one of her letters home — here. *(She reaches into her pocket. A big wodge of letters falls out)*

Granny Weatherwax Hallo. What's all this, then? *(She picks up some of the letters)* "The Lancre Witch"? Why've you got my post in your pocket, Gytha? And why're people writing to me? *(She opens one; reading)* "Dear Lancre Witch, I would just like to say how much I appreciated the Carrot and Oyster Pie. My husband..." *(Her voice trails off. She looks incredulous and angry)*

Nanny Ogg starts to exit, sideways

Gytha Ogg, you stay right here! *(She opens another couple of letters and skims them)*

Nanny Ogg Thing is, my late husband said to me once, after dinner, he said, "You know, Mother, it'd be a real shame if all them recipes you know just

passed away when you did.” So I started to scribble stuff down, as and when. Then I thought it might be nice to have it done properly so I sent it off to the almanack people in Ankh-Morpork and they hardly charged me anything at all, and a while later they sent me this ... (*She pulls out a book*)

It’s amazing how they get the letters so neat ...

Granny Weatherwax You done a book.

Nanny Ogg Only cookery.

Granny Weatherwax (*taking the book and reading the cover*) “The Joye of Snacks. Bye a Lancre Witche”.

Nanny Ogg It’s my gnome de plum. The almanack man — Mr Goatberger — said it’d make it sound more mysterious.

Granny Weatherwax (*reading*) “One hundred and twenty-third Prynting. More Than Twentie Thousande Sold. One Half Dollar”. You sent them money to get them printed?

Nanny Ogg Only a couple of dollars. Then they sent the money back afterwards, only they got it wrong and sent three dollars. So I kept quiet about it. Di’n’t want him saying he wanted it back.

Granny Weatherwax Oh, yes.

Nanny Ogg After all, money’s not important, is it?

Granny Weatherwax Good. ’Cos I reckon this Mr Goatberger owes you a bit more than you got, if there’s any justice.

Nanny Ogg Oh?

Granny Weatherwax About four or five thousand dollars, I should think. (*Pause*) So it’s a good job money don’t matter. It’d be terrible otherwise. All that money, matterin’.

Nanny Ogg What?

Granny Weatherwax Could be a bit more. Beats me why anyone’d fall over themselves to buy a cookery book, though ... It is a cookery book, isn’t it?

Nanny Ogg Oh yes. Recipes. And, er — cookery anecdotes. Um. Look under “Famous Carrot and Oyster Pie.” Page twenty-five.

Esme turns to page twenty-five of the book

And — er — “Cinnamon and Marshmallow Fingers” — page seventeen. Er — there’s “Humorous Puddings and Cake Decoration”. That’s all of Chapter Six. What one you looking at?

Granny Weatherwax (*reading; pointedly*) “Strawberry Wobbler.” (*Pause*) Gytha. This is me asking this. Is there any page in this book which does not relate in some way to — er — goings on? What about this one? (*She reads*) “Maids of Honour”?

Nanny Ogg Ah. Well they starts off as Maids of Honour. But they ends up as Tarts.

Granny Weatherwax (*reading*) “A Witch of Lancre”.

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