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CARPE JUGULUM

A Play

by Terry Pratchett

Adapted for the stage by

Stephen Briggs

|| SAMUEL FRENCH ||

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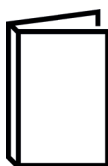
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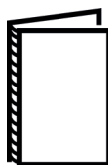


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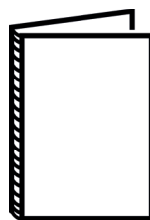
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Stephen says that, as all children know, the way you get into a fantasy world is by accident.... You go into the wardrobe, looking for somewhere to hide and – bingo. And that's how he found Discworld.

Stephen and Terry Pratchett played together on Discworld for 25 years and had a lot of fun along the way. In 1990 he had written to ask Terry if he could stage Wyrd Sisters. He had no idea it would go any further than one play (possibly two). But it did. He staged Wyrd Sisters in 1991. That was the first time anyone, anywhere in the world, had dramatised Terry's work. So far, he has adapted (and staged) twenty-two Pratchett plays. Most of these have now been published and they have been performed by amateur groups in more than 20 countries.

Stephen has also recorded many unabridged Pratchett novels for various UK and US audio publishers. He's won, and been nominated for, a number of industry awards. Despite those awards, regular listeners tell him it's easy to fall asleep while he's reading – not a good thing if you're listening in the car.

His written collaborations with Terry include the original Ankh-Morpork and Discworld Maps, the original series of Diaries, Nanny Ogg's Cookbook, The Discworld Companion (now called Turtle Recall) and The Wit & Wisdom of Discworld.

www.stephenbriggs.com

CARPE JUGULUM

First presented by the Studio Theatre Club at the Unicorn Theatre, Abingdon, on Tuesday 19th January 1999, with the following cast:

THE EXPERT/MORBIDIA

AGNES NITT

PERDITA X NITT

COUNT DE MAGPYR

COUNTESS DE MAGPYR

VLAD DE MAGPYR

LACRIMOSA DE MAGPYR

IGOR

BIG JIM BEEF

THE QUITE REVD MIGHTILY OATS

NANNY GYTHA OGG

SHAWN OGG

MAGRAT GARLICK

MILLIE CHILLUM

VERENCE II

GRANNY ESMERELDA WEATHERWAX

MRS SCORBIC

SGT KRAPUT

PIOTR/CPL SVITZ

JASON OGG

DEMONE

KRIMSON/SCRAPS

CRYPTOPHER

HANS

THE OLD COUNT

Victoria Martin

Sharon Stone

Claire Aston

Stephen Briggs

Kath Leighton

Peter Laurence

Catherine Long

Trevor Collins

John Kirchhoff

Colin Macnee

Karen Hale

Robin Allen

Tina Kempster

Sarah Young

Tim Arnot

Sue Hutchings

Lesley Young

David Weaver

Graham Cook

Keith Franklin

Rosie Everett

Claire Spittlehouse

Andy Allen

Simon Read

Mark Cowper

Directed by Stephen Briggs

Lighting and effects by Colin James

Sound by Phil Evans

Stage Manager: Mark Cowper

CHARACTERS

THE EXPERT, narrator

Witches and Family

AGNES NITT

PERDITA X NITT, *Agnes's alter ego*

NANNY GYTHA OGG

SHAWN OGG

JASON OGG

WAYNETTA OGG

BERYL OGG

DUANE OGG



Nanny Ogg's children

GRANNY ESMERELDA WEATHERWAX

Vampires and Followers

COUNT DE MAGPYR

COUNTESS DE MAGPYR

VLAD DE MAGPYR

LACRIMOSA DE MAGPYR

MORBIDIA

DEMONE

KRIMSON

CRYPTOPHER

THE OLD COUNT

IGOR, the de Magpyrs' servant

SCRAPS, his dog

SGT KRAPUT, soldier

CPL SVITZ, soldier

The Court

VERENCE II, King of Lancre

MAGRAT GARLICK, once a witch, now Queen of Lancre

MILLIE CHILLUM, her maid

THE QUITE REVD MIGHTILY OATS, an Omnian

MRS SCORBIC, palace cook

The Country

GERTRUDE
PIOTR
HANS
BESTIALITY CARTER
BIG JIM BEEF, border troll



Villagers

DEATH

AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

An Awfully Big Adventure

Oxford's Studio Theatre Club were the first people ever to dramatised 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*, *Jingo* and *Carpe Jugulum* in the years after that. In fact, "sold out" is too modest a word. "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 characterisations.

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 moments of glory. Don't let them throw them 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 doorknocker, 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 specialised

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, Indonesia, Australia, Bermuda 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.

CARPE JUGULUM

By the time we staged *Carpe Jugulum* in 1998, 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 to keep the play down to a reasonable running time. We had also realised 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 its oak beams and crumbling stone work would create a good backdrop for the Lancre and de Magpyr castles.

Carpe Jugulum had immediate appeal and we had fun watching the full range of vampire films to research the genre – everything from Bela Lugosi to Tom Cruise and every Dracula film, from Francis Ford Coppola’s to Bart Simpson’s.

This dramatisation (which runs for a fraction over two and a half hours) 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 – call upon the might of Industrial Light & Magic, if it's within their budget. But *Carpe Jugulum* 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.

The only change I have not made to this published script is to shorten the “gnarly ground” scene, cutting most of the “how they got to the cave” stuff. My cast would certainly have voted for that and it might shave some useful minutes off the running time. I am grateful to Irana Brown and to Terry Pratchett for that initial suggestion—and for encouraging me to bring Scraps back to life at the end of my production (a vote-winner with the audiences!).

Characterisation

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 recognise that your audiences will expect them to look as much like the book descriptions as possible. *Carpe Jugulum* is, to an extent, easier in that many of the characters are not 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 serviceable 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 husbands 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.

Magrat Garlick (Queen Magrat)

Once the youngest member (comparatively speaking) of the coven that Granny Weatherwax swears she has not got. Magrat is now Queen to Verence II, after a romance which was always on the point of foundering because the principals were invariably too embarrassed to speak to each other.

She was selected and trained by Goodie Whemper, a methodical and sympathetic witch with a rather greater regard for the written word than is common among the Lancre witches.

In a certain light, and from a carefully chosen angle, Magrat Garlick is not unattractive. Despite her tendency to squint when she's thinking. And her pointy nose, red from too much blowing. She is short, thin, decently plain, well-scrubbed and as flat-chested as an ironing-board with a couple of peas on it.

Magrat has an open mind. It is as open as a field, as open as the sky. No mind could be more open without special surgical implements. As a result, it fills up with all sorts of things. A lot of what she believes in has the word "folk" in it somewhere (folk wisdom, folk dance, folk song, folk medicine), as if "folk" were other than the mundane people she sees every day. She thinks it would be nice if people could just be a bit kinder.

She is, however, tougher and more practical than most people believe.

Agnes Nitt

Agnes is the new third member of the coven, having been recruited during the events of *Maskerade*. She is a small fat girl with a naturally rosy complexion; the sort of girl who would love to be a goth but was cut out by nature to be two goths. Easily swayed by her more imaginative friends, Agnes wears black, has a black hat with a veil, and even a black lace hanky, all this conspiring to give the effect of a small, low-flying thunderstorm. Despite her love of black, she has two shelves

of soft toys. According to Nanny Ogg, who is seldom wrong in these matters, Agnes actually does have some useful magical talent. She walks with her feet turned out, has large hands and an amazing singing range and ability. Agnes is in two minds about everything. Inside every fat girl is a thin girl trying to get out; Agnes's thin girl is Perdita; Perdita X Nitt, who is everything that Agnes isn't. In *Carpe Jugulum* I've written Perdita as a part for a separate actress, seen only by us and Agnes.

Costumes

We played most of the characters in a form of Regency/early Georgian dress, though the men wore tights and buckle shoes instead of breeches. The male vampires wore Regency velvet coats and fancy waistcoats, with frilly shirts in the style of *Interview with the Vampire*. The females wore more traditional "Gothic" dresses with bat jewellery, etc. We put our Lacrimosa in a white dress trimmed with pink and a pink-lined grey cloak (to emphasize her rebellion against vampire traditions!)

We had our Scraps costume made specially for the show. He's available for hire from the Studio Theatre Club, PO Box 655, Oxford, OX4 3EU.

Panorama

Virtually none. We dressed the set in stage cobwebs, bats, mice and spiders. We had also pre-set the "You go, we belong dead" Frankenstein-type switch which Igor uses at the end to revive Scraps.

Apart from that, there were just the odd bits of furniture.

Special effects

Other little bits and pieces, not covered in the text, included:

Fangs

We knew we could spend up to £240 a pair having fangs made by a dentician, but we found some cheaper, glue-in fangs at Charles H Fox in London. Our vampires wore these for almost all rehearsals to get used to speaking clearly with them in. Our principal vampires (male and female) also wore fake nails.

The weather/explosions

We made heavy use of thunder, lightning and rain effects – as well as carefully chosen dark and threatening music under some of the dialogue – to boost the dark mood of the piece. As well as mains-powered, hired, theatrical flash pods for the bigger explosions, the Count also used a handheld theatrical flash device (purchasable from AJS Theatre Supplies in London) when commanding the weather.

ACT I

Scene One A Bare Stage

At the back of the stage is a balcony with a curtained area beneath it.

When the play begins, the house lights dim. The stage is lit with an eerie light. Menacing music plays. Fog swirls across the stage; thunder rumbles and lightning flashes.

In the subdued light, a woman runs on. It seems she is being pursued. She looks this way and that, then moves to leave the stage.

*A **VAMPIRE** appears in the exit, blocking the woman's way.*

The woman turns and makes for another exit.

*Another **VAMPIRE** appears, blocking her path.*

The woman moves centre.

***VAMPIRES** move in from each stage exit.*

*One of the **VAMPIRES** crosses to the woman and bites her on the neck. She screams and dies.*

*The **VAMPIRES** drag the woman offstage.*

*One by one the **DE MAGPYRS** enter and stand, silently watching the audience – **VLAD**, then **LACRIMOSA**, the **COUNTESS** and finally the **COUNT**.*

*When they are all together, the **DE MAGPYRS** advance on the audience.*

The music swells.

*They stand for a moment at the front of the stage, observing the audience in the disinterested way one might look at food on a delicatessen counter when one is not actually desperately hungry, but knows one will be later! The music draws to a close; as it does so the **DE MAGPYRS** snarl, turn and walk upstage, where they stand, awaiting introduction by **THE EXPERT**.*

Blackout.

THE EXPERT *enters.*

*A followspot comes up on **THE EXPERT**.*

THE EXPERT Hello, good evening and, er, welcome to Discworld. Discworld. A flat world, carried through space on the backs of four enormous elephants who themselves travel on the back of a cosmically huge turtle, the Great A'Tuin. On a world such as this, anything can happen.

*The lights come up on the **VAMPIRES**.*

Ah. *(He/she clears his/her throat)* Yes. These, ladies and gentlemen, are vampires. On Discworld, as elsewhere, there are many kinds of vampires. Two things have traditionally struck vampire researchers. One is: why do vampires have so much power?

*The **VAMPIRES** look smug.*

They're so easy to kill, they point out.

*The **VAMPIRES** react.*

Second: why are they so stupid?

Another reaction.

During the following, IGOR enters, his back to the audience.

I mean, wearing evening dress all the time is a bit of a give-away, their castles are full of things that can be used to defeat them – for goodness’ sake! There’re dozens of ways to despatch them, after all. And they spend the day in a coffin somewhere, guarded only by some elderly hunchback—

A spot comes up on IGOR. He turns, as though surprised at finding himself on stage.

—who doesn’t look all that spry and should easily succumb to even quite a small mob.

IGOR looks a little hurt.

During the following, AGNES NITT and PERDITA enter and stand upstage right. PERDITA hides behind AGNES NITT.

These ones...are different. And they are on their way to the Kingdom of Lancre. At the invitation of the king. They’re going to his daughter’s naming ceremony.

The lights go out on the VAMPIRES and IGOR.

A spot comes up on AGNES NITT. PERDITA is, as yet, not visible behind her.

Also going to the ceremony is Agnes Nitt. Agnes is a witch. She was in two minds about going. Now she’s in two minds about her pointy hat. Mind you, she’s generally in two minds about everything. Inside every fat girl, they say, is a thin girl trying to get out. Agnes’s thin girl is Perdita.

PERDITA steps out from behind AGNES NITT. (Note: AGNES NITT is always accompanied by PERDITA)

Only we can see Perdita. Agnes doesn't like Perdita. Perdita is vain, selfish and vicious. Perdita hates being trapped inside Agnes. She says Agnes is fat, pathetic and weak-willed.

AGNES NITT *pouts.*

During the following, MAGRAT GARLICK enters and stands upstage left.

Perdita thinks a witch's hat is a symbol of her authority. Agnes thinks—

AGNES NITT —I look like someone's dropped a liquorice-flavoured ice cream cone.

THE EXPERT Agnes is the third member of a three-witch coven along with Granny Weatherwax and Nanny Ogg. Of whom more later. She took over as third witch—

The lights cross-fade from the spot on AGNES NITT to one on MAGRAT GARLICK, upstage left.

—from Magrat Garlick. Now Queen Magrat of Lancre. Although she's given up the witching, Granny and Nanny are sort of proud that she has married the king. Mind you, although they might agree that she'd done the best thing for her, you couldn't help feeling that, compared with witchcraft, they considered marrying a king very much the second prize

MAGRAT *harrumphs crossly.*

Sorry, ma'am, but you know it's true.

The spot on MAGRAT is cut.

Agnes had to take over from Magrat because, well, there is a narrative symmetry about there needing to be three witches. The Maiden, the Mother and the Crone. With fifteen children, Nanny Ogg was the only runner in the race for the position of Mother. Magrat had been the Maiden, but what with marriage, and then...well, a baby...she was, well, disqualified and Agnes was recruited. Granny Weatherwax

was never truly happy with having to be the Crone. But who else was there? (*He/she sighs*) Enough from me. For the time being. Let's get on with our play, shall we?

Blackout.

Scene Two

The Road to Lancre

*On stage, downstage right, is **BIG JIM BEEF**, the border troll.*

We hear a coach and horses approach and stop.

*The **COUNT**, **COUNTESS**, **VLAD** and **LACRIMOSA** enter upstage left.*

COUNT Ah, gateway to the world. Well, gateway to Lancre, anyway.

VLAD And entirely undefended.

COUNT On the contrary, it has some extremely effective defences. At least, until now...

COUNTESS The witches should be on our side.

COUNT *She* soon will be. Interesting family. Uncle used to talk about her grandmother. The Weatherwax women have always had one foot in the shadows. It's in the blood. And most of their power comes from denying it. However, she will soon find out on which side her bread is buttered.

COUNTESS Or her gingerbread is gilded. That's the penalty for being a Weatherwax woman. When they get older, they start to hear the clang of the oven door.

VLAD I've heard she's tough, though. A very sharp mind.

LACRIMOSA Let's kill her!

COUNTESS Really, Lacci, dear, you can't kill everything!

LACRIMOSA (*sulkily*) I don't see why not. You're so unfair!

COUNTESS We let you drop rocks on the pixies, dear. Life can't all be fun.

COUNT No. I rather like the idea of her being...useful. And she always sees things in black and white. That's always a trap

for the powerful. Oh yes, a mind like that is so easily led.
(He pulls his invitation from his pocket) And this. Can you believe it? They invited us!

VLAD There are other witches.

COUNT Oh yes, we hope to meet them. They could be entertaining. Igor!

COUNTESS *(to VLAD)* Do you have a handkerchief, dear?

VLAD *pulls out a hanky.*

Give it to me please.

He does so. The COUNTESS wipes VLAD's chin with the hanky.

You have a few specks of blood. I told you to be more careful with that highwayman

The COUNTESS hands VLAD back his hanky.

COUNT Igor!

IGOR *appears suddenly.*

(startled) For goodness' sake, Igor, don't do that.

IGOR No, marthter.

COUNT Igor, why have we actually stopped here?

IGOR A troll'th in the way, marthter.

LACRIMOSA Run it down!

IGOR The old count wouldn't have told me to run it down. But then, he wath a gentleman.

BIG JIM BEEF *waves. IGOR ambles across to him.*

BIG JIM BEEF Evenin'. Dis isa bit embarrassin'. You know a pole?

IGOR Pole?

BIG JIM BEEF You know, long wooden fing...

IGOR Yeth? Well?

BIG JIM BEEF I'd like you to imagine, right, dat dere's a black and yellow striped one across dis road, yeh? Only we've only got der one and it's bein' used up on der Copperhead road tonight.

COUNT Get a move on, man! Run it down!!!

BIG JIM BEEF I could go and get it, if you like. But it wouldn't be here'til tomorrow, right? Or you could pretend it's here right now, an' I could pretend to lift it and dat'd be OK, right?

IGOR Do it, then.

BIG JIM BEEF Only first I gotta stamp somethin'. Shows you bin passed, officially.

IGOR What happenth if we jutht drive through?

BIG JIM BEEF Er – then I don't lift der pole.

***IGOR** looks confused by this metaphysical conundrum.
He moves to the **COUNT**.*

IGOR It'th a border check, marthter. We need to get thomething thtamped.

*The **COUNT** hands **IGOR** the invitation. **IGOR** takes the invitation back to **BIG JIM BEEF**; he stamps it – with half a potato – and hands it back.*

What'th thith? What'th thith thtupid mark?

BIG JIM BEEF I couldn't manage the official seal on half a spud. It's a duck. Not bad, eh? (*He mimes opening the barrier*) Now, look, this me liftin' der pole. Dat means you can go.

IGOR Marthter, we can go.

***IGOR** exits back to the coach.*

COUNT Now, before we get back on the coach, I want you all to pay attention.

LACRIMOSA Father, we have done this before...

COUNT This point can't be hammered home enough. That is the Lancre River down there. Running water. We will cross running water. Your ancestors, although capable of undertaking journeys of hundreds of miles, nevertheless firmly believed they couldn't cross a stream. Hmmm? Cultural conditioning could be the death of us. Right? Let's go.

The DE MAGPYRS exit.

BIG JIM BEEF *watches them go.*

Blackout.

Scene Three Lancre Castle

The royal reception is in full swing. Everyone who is anyone is there, with host, KING VERENCE II, and guests chatting and servants (well, SHAWN OGG) serving wine. The guests include THE EXPERT and AGNES NITT.

NANNY OGG *bustles in, smoking a clay pipe. She moves to AGNES NITT.*

NANNY OGG Wotchagirl.

THE EXPERT *emerges from the crowd. While he/she speaks, the action on stage freezes.*

THE EXPERT Nanny Ogg is the head of a large family. She has fifteen children from three marriages. All three of her husbands passed happily, if energetically, to their well-earned rest. She lives in quite a modern house in the centre of Lancre, close to her family. She likes them to be near-at-hand in case of emergencies, such as wanting her floor scrubbed, or a cup of tea made. People often got the wrong idea about Nanny Ogg, and she took care to see that they did. One thing they often got wrong was the idea that she never thought further than the bottom of the glass. (*He/she rejoins the other guests*)

The action unfreezes.

AGNES NITT Lot of people here.

NANNY OGG Everyone got an invite. "Queen" Magrat was very gracious about that, I thought.

AGNES NITT Can't see Granny, though.

NANNY OGG She'll be somewhere, telling folks what to do.

AGNES NITT Haven't seen her around much at all, lately. Got something on her mind, I think.

NANNY OGG (*fiddling with her pipe*) You certainly notice things, don't you. Notice, notice, notice. We'll have to call you Miss Notice.

AGNES NITT I certainly notice you fiddle with your pipe whenever you're thinking thoughts you don't like thinking.

NANNY OGG She has been a bit quiet though, you're right. Best left to it, though.

AGNES NITT I thought she might be sulking about the priest they've got in to do the naming. King had one sent up from the Omnian Mission in Ohulan.

NANNY OGG He did what? An Omnian? Where is he?

AGNES NITT That's him.

THE QUITE REVEREND MIGHTILY OATS *enters and looks around. He has a prominent boil on his nose and carries a book.*

THE EXPERT *emerges from the crowd again.*

The action freezes.

THE EXPERT The Quite Reverend Oats was in two minds about most things. Getting ready for the naming, he wasn't sure whether he should or should not use the mirror in his room at the castle. Mirrors had led to one of the church's many schisms, one side saying that mirrors encouraged vanity which was bad and the other side saying that, since they reflected the goodness of Om they were holy. Oats has not quite formed his own opinion, being by nature someone who tries to see both sides of every question. Oh, that's the Book of Om he's carrying. He knows most of it by heart, but he still likes to use it for guidance, by allowing it to fall open as Om commands...

OATS *allows the book to fall open.*

OATS (*reading*) "...silence is an answer that begs three more questions. Seek and you will find, but first you should know what you seek." (*He shuts the book*) Oh, well.

THE EXPERT *rejoins the guests. The action unfreezes.*

SHAWN OGG *takes OATS across to introduce him to*
VERENCE.

NANNY OGG Omnians? Hah! Had a couple of them up here last year. Stuffed a leaflet under my door. It said "Repent!" Repent? Me? Cheek of it. I can't start repenting at my time of life, I'd never get anything done! Anyway, I ain't sorry for most of it. (*A new thought*) And they sets fire to people!

AGNES NITT That was a long time ago, Nanny...

NANNY OGG Hah! The leopard does not change his shorts, my girl! I'm going to have a word with young Verence. Just 'cos he's king's no reason for him to go round acting like royalty.

AGNES NITT I think it is, actually.

NANNY OGG Here – our Shawn!

SHAWN OGG *moves to NANNY OGG.*

SHAWN OGG Yes, Mum?

NANNY OGG You did deliver an invitation to Granny Weatherwax, didn't you?

SHAWN OGG Of course, Mum! And I dint just shove it under the door 'cos last year she give me an ear-bashing when the snails got that postcard. I wedged it in the hinges, good and tight.

NANNY OGG There's a good boy.

SHAWN OGG Erm...the queen would like a word with Miss Nitt, Mum.

AGNES NITT With me?

NANNY OGG It's a Royal Command, my girl. Off you go, then.

AGNES NITT *exits.*

Oh, and Shawn?

SHAWN OGG Yes, Mum?

NANNY OGG Be so kind as to let young Verence – His Majesty the King, I means – let him know that Mrs Ogg would welcome the grace of his presence over here. Chop, chop.

SHAWN OGG But I can't say tha... Yes, Mum. (*He scuttles over to VERENCE*)

The lights cross-fade to:

Scene Four

The Queen's Chamber

This scene takes place on the balcony.

MAGRAT GARLICK *is on stage, with the royal crib and the baby.*

MILLIE CHILLUM *enters and bobs a curtsy.*

MILLIE CHILLUM Miss Agnes Nitt, your majesty.

MILLIE *bobs again and exits.*

AGNES NITT *enters and bobs an uncertain curtsy.*

MAGRAT GARLICK Oh, hello, Agnes. You don't have to bob, you know. Millie does it all the time. Makes me quite sea-sick. Anyway, witches are supposed to bow. I just wanted a little talk. It's a bit... Look, I'm really very happy but, well... Millie's nice but she agrees with me all the time and Nanny and Granny still treat me as if I wasn't, well, you know, queen and everything – not that I want to be treated as queen all the time but, well, you know, I want them to know I'm queen but not treat me as one, if you know what I mean...

AGNES NITT I think so.

MAGRAT GARLICK Actually, Nanny's not too bad, but when Granny looks at me you can see her thinking "Oh, there's Magrat. Make the tea, Magrat". One day I swear I'll make a very cutting remark.

AGNES NITT I know what you mean.

MAGRAT GARLICK It's like they think this is some sort of hobby, and I'll get it out of my system and go back to witching. Is Granny here, yet?

AGNES NITT Haven't seen her.

MAGRAT GARLICK Ah, she'll be waiting for the right dramatic moment. Actually, no, not waiting. I mean, if it was you or me, we'd be hanging around in the hall or something, but she just walks in and it's the right time.

AGNES NITT She says you make your own time.

MAGRAT GARLICK Yes. But you say she's not here, yet? It was the first card we did! Verence got them to put on extra gold leaf. *(She sighs)* How are you at making tea?

AGNES NITT They always complain.

MAGRAT *nods.*

It's not as if they even give me tea money.

MAGRAT GARLICK It's not worth baking biscuits, either. I used to spend hours. You might just as well get them from the shop.

A pause.

She must have got the invitation, mustn't she?

AGNES NITT Shawn says he delivered it. And she probably said: "I can't be havin' with that at my time of life. I've never bin one to put meself forward. No one could ever say that".

MAGRAT GARLICK Gosh, that's clever. I even wrote a bit underneath asking her to be godmother. She's always secretly wanted to be one.

AGNES NITT That's something to wish on a child!

MAGRAT GARLICK Well, if it was a choice of wishing a child health, wealth or Granny Weatherwax on her side, I know which I'd choose. She'll never be beaten, you know? You wait til you see her in a tight corner. She's got that way of - putting part of herself somewhere safe. It's as if she gives a part of herself to someone else to keep hidden for a while. It's like that Borrowing she does.

THE EXPERT *enters; a spot comes up on him/her.*

THE EXPERT When there was nothing much else to occupy her time, Granny Weatherwax sent her mind Borrowing, letting it ride piggyback in the heads of other creatures. Seeing the world through the eyes of a badger, or a pigeon, or whatever. This practice meant, amongst other things, that Lancre people were less inclined to casual cruelty to animals on the basis that the rat you throw a brick at today may well turn out to be the witch you need to cure your toothache tomorrow. It also meant that people calling on her unexpectedly would find her stretched out apparently cold and lifeless, heart and pulse barely beating. To save embarrassment, she used to hold, in blue fingers, a little card. (*He/she holds up a card which reads: "I ATE'NT DEAD"*)

The spotlight goes out.

MAGRAT GARLICK It's like those magicians in Howondaland who keep their heart in a jar somewhere, for safety, so they can't be killed.

AGNES NITT Wouldn't have to be a very big jar.

MAGRAT GARLICK That's not very kind.

AGNES NITT What name are you giving the baby?

MAGRAT GARLICK You'll have to wait and see.

The lights cross-fade back to:

Scene Five

Lancre Castle: The Party

The party is more or less as we left it, except that the DE MAGPYRS are now on stage, observing the guests.

VERENCE *approaches* NANNY OGG.

NANNY OGG Ah, your majesty. Now look, I can't be havin' with Omnians doin'the namin', sire.

VERENCE With respect, Nanny, that really is a matter for the king to decide...

NANNY OGG They set fire to people! Witches!

VERENCE That was some time ago. They are much more tolerant, now, I understand...

NANNY OGG They say everyone starts out bad and only gets good by believin' in Om, which is frankly dam' nonsense. I mean. Look at your little girl – what's her name goin'to be...?

VERENCE Everyone will know soon enough, Nanny.

NANNY OGG Hah. Well, look, the worst she could put her hand up to would be a few sleepless nights and some grubby nappies. That's hardly sinful, to my mind.

VERENCE I think you're taking it too much to heart.

NANNY OGG Granny Weatherwax won't like it!

VERENCE Granny Weatherwax isn't king, Nanny. The world is changing. There is a new order. This is no longer a time when little kingdoms like ours need only worry about little concerns. We're part of a big world. New powers are emerging and we have to remain on good terms with them. That includes Omnia. I'm sure we'll not regret it.

The COUNT, behind VERENCE, makes a gesture, summoning him.

Excuse me. *(He moves across to the COUNT)*

The COUNT silently introduces his family to VERENCE under the following dialogue.

AGNES NITT and **MILLIE CHILLUM** enter in a rush and move straight to **NANNY OGG**.

NANNY OGG Sometimes I think the weight of that dam' crown is turning Verence's head.

AGNES NITT Magrat says "Is Granny Weatherwax coming or not?"

NANNY OGG She'll be here.

MILLIE CHILLUM Only, well, the queen says we'd better not hold things up and so, er, will you be godmother, Mrs Ogg?

NANNY OGG Tell you what. I'll come and sort of stand in until Granny gets here, shall I? You tell her majesty that.

MILLIE bobs and exits.

NANNY and **AGNES NITT** move to **OATS**.

OATS Good, um, evening. You must be some of these witches I've heard so much about.

NANNY OGG Hah.

OATS I am the...aah. (*He pinches the bridge of his nose to prevent a sneeze*) Sorry, the mountain air doesn't agree with me. I am the Quite Reverend Mightily Oats.

AGNES NITT Mightily?

OATS Well, it's really "Mightily-Praiseworthy-Are-Ye-Who-Exalteth-Om" Oats. It's much shorter in Omnian, of course.

NANNY OGG And we'll have none of your heathen ways, my good man. No sloshing oil or water or sand around or cutting any bits off. I'll be standing behind you with a pointy stick.

AGNES NITT What's got into you? That's the way Granny would act.

PERDITA Perhaps she thinks she's got to act that way because the old bat's not here!

OATS And what is your role, er, ma'am?

NANNY OGG I'm the godmother!

OATS Er – which god?

AGNES NITT It's an old Lancre word. Means “good mother” or somesuch.

MAGRAT and **MILLIE** enter with the baby.

VERENCE moves to **MAGRAT** and **MILLIE** and the royal party assemble for the naming. The group comprises **AGNES NITT**, **OATS** and (slightly behind him, pointy stick at the ready) **NANNY OGG**.

MAGRAT gives the baby to **OATS**.

VERENCE Please begin, reverend.

OATS I, um, did have a suitable homily on the subject of hope for the... (*He jerks forward slightly, in the manner of one prodded from behind with a sharp stick*) But alas, I fear we have no time. Hrrm. We are gathered here, in the sight of... (*Another prod from the stick*) um – one another...

VERENCE Are you all right, reverend?

OATS Oh yes, sire. Never better. And therefore I name thee – er... (*He hands the baby to MILLIE, removes his hat and consults a piece of paper inside it. He replaces the hat and takes the baby again*) I name you: Esmerelda Margaret Note Spelling of Lancre!

MAGRAT GARLICK } (together) Note spelling?
AGNES NITT

NANNY OGG Esmerelda?

The action freezes and THE EXPERT steps out of the crowd. Behind THE EXPERT, the onstage actors withdraw slightly to the sides.

The onstage curtains open to reveal GRANNY WEATHERWAX in her cottage. The lights come up on her. She sits staring fixedly ahead.

THE EXPERT You'll recall young Shawn Ogg confirming that he had delivered an invitation to Granny Weatherwax, the Discworld's most powerful witch. But an invitation delivered is not the same as an invitation received and, even in Lancre, things do get lost in the mail. Granny Weatherwax has spent a lifetime serving and terrorising the community. Never looked for any reward. And that's part of the problem.

THE EXPERT *rejoins the crowd.*

GRANNY WEATHERWAX They didn't ask me. Didn't even bloody ask me. It's a sign. I suppose I've expected it, sooner or later. Too much to expect gratitude. The reward for toil is always more toil. If you dig the best ditches, they give you a bigger shovel. And I got this. Bare walls, bare floor. This cold cottage. Didn't bloody ask me. All I've done for them and never asked anything in return. Trouble with that is, sometimes you get nothing. I've always tried to face the light. Difficult choices sometimes. And the harder you stare into the light, the stronger the temptation is to turn and see the long, rich, dark shadow, streaming away behind you... They didn't ask me. Well, they can bloody well do without me!

The lights go out on the cottage scene and the curtains close. The castle guests return to the positions they held before the cottage scene.

MAGRAT GARLICK Note Spelling?

NANNY OGG Definitely a bit tricky. Esmerelda, now that's a good one. Gytha would've been good, too, but can't argue with Esmerelda...

AGNES NITT Definitely.

NANNY OGG But you know kids. They'll be calling her Spelly.

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