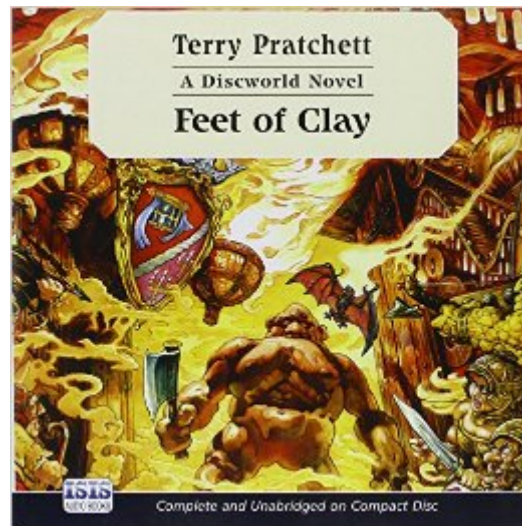


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Feet Of Clay



Synopsis

Who's murdering harmless old men? Who's poisoning the Patrician? As autumn fogs hold Ankh-Morpork in their grip, the City Watch have to track down a murderer who can't be seen. Maybe the golems know something -- but the solemn men of clay, who work all day and night and are never any trouble to anyone, have started to commit suicide...Whom can you trust when there are mobs on the street and plotters in the night and all the clues point the wrong way?In the gloom of the night, Watch Commander Sir Samuel Vimes finds that the truth may not be out there after all

Book Information

Audio CD

Publisher: Isis; Unabridged edition (October 1, 2000)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0753107449

ISBN-13: 978-0753107447

Product Dimensions: 6.1 x 1.3 x 6.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 12.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (215 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #2,799,426 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #41 in [Books > Books on CD > Authors, A-Z > \(P \) > Pratchett, Terry](#) #1721 in [Books > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Fantasy > Humorous](#) #1802 in [Books > Books on CD > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Science Fiction](#)

Customer Reviews

It is interesting to see how golems evolve from Pratchett's Discworld novel, "Feet of Clay" (1996), where they are speechless slaves of clay, to "Going Postal" (2004) where a well-educated but humorless golem serves as body guard and lecturer-in-morals to the new Post Master. This is where it all begins...Commander Sir Samuel Vimes, of Ankh-Morpork's Night Watch pays a visit to the Dragon King of Arms at the urging of his new wife, who thinks Sam needs his own coat-of-arms now that he's been knighted. Unfortunately, one of Sam's ancestors was a regicide so his descendent is denied an armorial bearing by the College of Heraldry. He does learn that one of his watchmen is actually the Earl of Ankh: the inimitable Corporal Nobbs, who is forced to carry around a piece of paper signed by Ankh-Morpork's Patrician certifying that he's really human. Well, this is a bit of a come-down for Sir Sam, but he's got more important matters on his mind, including the murders of two harmless old men. One of them was beaten to death by a loaf of Dwarf bread. His body was discovered by Captain Carrot and Corporal Angua, the only werewolf in the Night Watch,

when they visited the Dwarf Bread Museum on their day off. The only link between the two corpses is a trace of white clay at both murder scenes. Subplots zigzag every which-way through "Feet of Clay." Corporal 'Earl of Ankh' Nobbs is being courted by a group of well, nobbs who haven't given up on the notion that Ankh-Morpork should be ruled by a king. Captain Carrot, hereditary king of Ankh-Morpork who wisely refused the crown in "Men at Arms," is busy tracking murderers and emancipating golems. Sargeant Colon is about to retire if he lives through a trip through the sewers with Wee Mad Arthur.

If pressed to choose a favourite Pratchett, it would likely be this book. Nearly every element is here, delivered with Pratchett's finest prose and wit. This a bit of a wonder, as it's a murder mystery, a genre I rarely delve into. Still, it's a Pratchett and goes from being worth a look to something to be cherished, its chief character a man to be admired. Sam Vimes, who we first encountered in a sodden gutter, soddin' drunk, has risen to a knight's rank and is now Commander of the City Watch. He maintains a careful balance between being the Patrician's favourite and his nemesis. Vetanari knows he cannot truly control Vimes, yet for all Sam's resistance to the Patrician's deviousness, knows too that he cannot dispense with The Stoneface Policeman. Especially this time when its Vetanari himself who is the victim of a murder plot. An unsuccessful one, as it happens. Sam's entered the realm of matrimony, a step which elevates him almost more than the promotions the Patrician has granted. Lady Sybil, however, remains at the periphery of Sam's focus. He's still a copper and one of the biggest cases of all confronts him in this book. First, foremost and throughout this book, Sam Vimes is tasked with guarding his own back. Vimes is "a jumped-up copper to the nobbs, and a nob to the rest", which gorges the ranks of his enemies. His thwarting of an Assassin is pure Pratchett; pure Vimes, for that matter. One can't help but wonder why Vetanari doesn't assign Vimes some bodyguards. Instead he gets a sedan chair - which he "drives" himself. There are murders in this book, unusual in Pratchett. Two deaths arouse the City's ire against new Pratchett figures, the golems.

Terry Pratchett's Discworld series is a mirror of our world, but it's a funhouse mirror, with our world reflected back in a distorted way. The distortions are both amusing - sometimes hysterically funny - and thought-provoking. Sometimes the reflection is barely recognizable, and sometimes it is so close to ours that it cuts like a knife. His logic is rigorous, but skewed, and the twists reveal a great deal about the assumptions we make every day. This is a quintessential police procedural novel, as reflected by Pratchett's mirror, combined with a Frankenstein theme. Instead of detectives and

police, we have the Night Watch. Commander Sam Vimes is a classic recovering drunk and Sergeant Colon is fat and lazy - recognizable as stock characters; but another cop is a female werewolf with pre-lunar tension, the captain is a six foot, six inch human who thinks he is a dwarf, a third is a troll and the forensics expert is an out of the closet dwarf trying to get in touch with her feminine side. Someone has killed two old men, and someone is trying to poison the Patrician, the closest thing the city of Ankh-Morpork has to a ruler. The suspects appear to be golems, the artificial men of Hebrew mythology, but golems can't kill. Golems are the perfect slave, only able to do the things they are told, the "words in their head." And how is it that Corporal Nobby Nobbs, a constable who carries a certificate establishing he is probably human, can be the long-lost Earl of Ankh and the heir apparent to the throne? All these plot threads and more come together in the finest Pratchett tradition, in one of his best and most satisfying conclusions. Women have their biggest roles yet in a Night Watch novel, and the complex relationship between the Patrician and Sam Vimes continues to evolve.

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