

IN A DISTANT AND second-hand set of dimensions, in an astral plane that was never meant to fly, the curling star-mists waver and part . . .

See . . .

Great A'Tuin the Turtle comes, swimming slowly through the interstellar gulf, hydrogen frost on his ponderous limbs, his huge and ancient shell pocked with meteor craters. Through sea-sized eyes that are crusted with rheum and asteroid dust He stares fixedly at the Destination.

In a brain bigger than a city, with geological slowness, He thinks only of the Weight.

Most of the weight is of course accounted for by Berilia, Tubul, Great T'Phon and Jerakeen, the four giant elephants upon whose broad and star-tanned shoulders the disc of the World rests, garlanded by the long waterfall at its vast circumference and domed by the baby-blue vault of Heaven.

Astropsychology has been, as yet, unable to establish what they think about.

The Great Turtle was a mere hypothesis until the day the small and secretive kingdom of Krull, whose rim-most mountains project out over the Rimfall, built a gantry and pulley arrangement at the tip of the most precipitous crag and lowered several observers over the Edge in a quartz-windowed brass vessel to peer through the mist veils.

The early astrozoologists, hauled back from their long dangle by enormous teams of slaves, were able to

bring back much information about the shape and nature of A'Tuin and the elephants but this did not resolve fundamental questions about the nature and purpose of the universe.

For example, what was A'Tuin's actual sex? This vital question, said the astrozoologists with mounting authority, would not be answered until a larger and more powerful gantry was constructed for a deep-space vessel. In the meantime, they could only speculate about the revealed cosmos.

There was, for example, the theory that A'Tuin had come from nowhere and would continue at a uniform crawl, or steady gait, into nowhere, for all time. This theory was popular among academics.

An alternative, favoured by those of a religious persuasion, was that A'Tuin was crawling from the Birthplace to the Time of Mating, as were all the stars in the sky which were, obviously, also carried by giant turtles. When they arrived they would briefly and passionately mate, for the first and only time, and from that fiery union new turtles would be born to carry a new pattern of worlds. This was known as the Big Bang hypothesis.

Thus it was that a young cosmochelonian of the Steady Gait faction, testing a new telescope with which he hoped to make measurements of the precise albedo of Great A'Tuin's right eye, was on this eventful evening the first outsider to see the smoke rise hubward from the burning of the oldest city in the world.

Later that night he became so engrossed in his studies he completely forgot about it. Nevertheless, he was the first.

There were others . . .

THE COLOUR
OF MAGIC

FIRE ROARED THROUGH THE bifurcated city of Ankh-Morpork. Where it licked the Wizards' Quarter it burned blue and green and was even laced with strange sparks of the eighth colour, octarine; where its outriders found their way into the vats and oil stores all along Merchants Street it progressed in a series of blazing fountains and explosions; in the streets of the perfume blenders it burned with a sweetness; where it touched bundles of rare and dry herbs in the store-rooms of the drugmasters it made men go mad and talk to God.

By now the whole of downtown Morpork was alight, and the richer and worthier citizens of Ankh on the far bank were bravely responding to the situation by feverishly demolishing the bridges. But already the ships in the Morpork docks – laden with grain, cotton and timber, and coated with tar – were blazing merrily and, their moorings burnt to ashes, were breasting the river Ankh on the ebb tide, igniting riverside palaces and bowers as they drifted like drowning fireflies towards the sea. In any case, sparks were riding the breeze and touching down far across the river in hidden gardens and remote rickyards.

The smoke from the merry burning rose miles

high, in a wind-sculpted black column that could be seen across the whole of the discworld.

It was certainly impressive from the cool, dark hilltop a few leagues away, where two figures were watching with considerable interest.

The taller of the pair was chewing on a chicken leg and leaning on a sword that was only marginally shorter than the average man. If it wasn't for the air of wary intelligence about him it might have been supposed that he was a barbarian from the Hubland wastes.

His partner was much shorter and wrapped from head to toe in a brown cloak. Later, when he has occasion to move, it will be seen that he moves lightly, cat-like.

The two had barely exchanged a word in the last twenty minutes except for a short and inconclusive argument as to whether a particularly powerful explosion had been the oil bond store or the workshop of Kerible the Enchanter. Money hinged on the fact.

Now the big man finished gnawing at the bone and tossed it into the grass, smiling ruefully.

'There go all those little alleyways,' he said. 'I liked them.'

'All the treasure houses,' said the small man. He added thoughtfully, 'Do gems burn, I wonder? 'Tis said they're kin to coal.'

'All the gold, melting and running down the gutters,' said the big one, ignoring him. 'And all the wine, boiling in the barrels.'

'There were rats,' said his brown companion.

‘Rats, I’ll grant you.’

‘It was no place to be in high summer.’

‘That, too. One can’t help feeling, though, a – well, a momentary—’

He trailed off, then brightened. ‘We owed old Fredor at the Crimson Leech eight silver pieces,’ he added. The little man nodded.

They were silent for a while as a whole new series of explosions carved a red line across a hitherto dark section of the greatest city in the world. Then the big man stirred.

‘Weasel?’

‘Yes?’

‘I wonder who started it?’

The small swordsman known as the Weasel said nothing. He was watching the road in the ruddy light. Few had come that way since the Deosil Gate had been one of the first to collapse in a shower of white-hot embers.

But two were coming up it now. The Weasel’s eyes, always at their sharpest in gloom and half-light, made out the shapes of two mounted men and some sort of low beast behind them. Doubtless a rich merchant escaping with as much treasure as he could lay frantic hands on. The Weasel said as much to his companion, who sighed.

‘The status of footpad ill suits us,’ said the barbarian, ‘but as you say, times are hard and there are no soft beds tonight.’

He shifted his grip on his sword and, as the leading rider drew near, stepped out onto the road with a hand held up and his face set in a grin

nically calculated to reassure yet threaten.

‘Your pardon, sir—’ he began.

The rider reined in his horse and drew back his hood. The big man looked into a face blotched with superficial burns and punctuated by tufts of singed beard. Even the eyebrows had gone.

‘Bugger off,’ said the face. ‘You’re Bravd the Hublander,¹ aren’t you?’

Bravd became aware that he had fumbled the initiative.

‘Just go away, will you?’ said the rider. ‘I just haven’t got time for you, do you understand?’

He looked around and added: ‘That goes for your shadow-loving fleabag partner too, wherever he’s hiding.’

The Weasel stepped up to the horse and peered at the dishevelled figure.

‘Why, it’s Rincewind the wizard, isn’t it?’ he said in

¹ The shape and cosmology of the disc system are perhaps worthy of note at this point.

There are, of course, two major directions on the disc: Hubward and Rimward. But since the disc itself revolves at the rate of once every eight hundred days (in order to distribute the weight fairly upon its supportive pachyderms, according to Reforgule of Krull) there are also two lesser directions, which are Turnwise and Widdershins.

Since the disc’s tiny orbiting sunlet maintains a fixed orbit while the majestic disc turns slowly beneath it, it will be readily deduced that a disc year consists of not four but eight seasons. The summers are those times when the sun rises or sets at the nearest point on the Rim, the winters those occasions when it rises or sets at a point around ninety degrees along the circumference.

Thus, in the lands around the Circle Sea, the year begins on Hogs’ Watch Night, progresses through a Spring Prime to its first mid-summer (Small Gods’ Eve) which is followed by Autumn Prime and,

tones of delight, meanwhile filing the wizard's description of him in his memory for leisurely vengeance. 'I thought I recognized the voice.'

Bravd spat and sheathed his sword. It was seldom worth tangling with wizards, they so rarely had any treasure worth speaking of.

'He talks pretty big for a gutter wizard,' he muttered.

'You don't understand at all,' said the wizard wearily. 'I'm so scared of you my spine has turned to jelly, it's just that I'm suffering from an overdose of terror right now. I mean, when I've got over that then I'll have time to be decently frightened of you.'

The Weasel pointed towards the burning city.

'You've been through that?' he asked.

The wizard rubbed a red-raw hand across his eyes. 'I was there when it started. See him? Back there?' He pointed back down the road to where his travelling

straddling the half-year point of Crueltide, Winter Secundus (also known as the Spindlewinter, since at this time the sun rises in the direction of spin). Then comes Secundus Spring with Summer Two on its heels, the three quarter mark of the year being the night of Alls Fallow – the one night of the year, according to legend, when witches and warlocks stay in bed. Then drifting leaves and frosty nights drag on towards Backspindlewinter and a new Hogs' Watch Night nestling like a frozen jewel at its heart.

Since the Hub is never closely warmed by the weak sun the lands there are locked in permafrost. The Rim, on the other hand, is a region of sunny islands and balmy days.

There are, of course, eight days in a disc week and eight colours in its light spectrum. Eight is a number of some considerable occult significance on the disc and must never, ever, be spoken by a wizard.

Precisely why all the above should be so is not clear, but goes some way to explain why, on the disc, the Gods are not so much worshipped as blamed.

companion was still approaching, having adopted a method of riding that involved falling out of the saddle every few seconds.

‘Well?’ said Weasel.

‘He started it,’ said Rincewind simply.

Bravd and Weasel looked at the figure, now hopping across the road with one foot in a stirrup.

‘Fire-raiser, is he?’ said Bravd at last.

‘No,’ said Rincewind. ‘Not precisely. Let’s just say that if complete and utter chaos was lightning, then he’d be the sort to stand on a hilltop in a thunderstorm wearing wet copper armour and shouting “All gods are bastards”. Got any food?’

‘There’s some chicken,’ said Weasel. ‘In exchange for a story.’

‘What’s his name?’ said Bravd, who tended to lag behind in conversations.

‘Twoflower.’

‘Twoflower?’ said Bravd. ‘What a funny name.’

‘You,’ said Rincewind, dismounting, ‘do not know the half of it. Chicken, you say?’

‘Devilled,’ said Weasel. The wizard groaned.

‘That reminds me,’ added the Weasel, snapping his fingers, ‘there was a really big explosion about, oh, half an hour ago—’

‘That was the oil bond store going up,’ said Rincewind, wincing at the memory of the burning rain.

Weasel turned and grinned expectantly at his companion, who grunted and handed over a coin from his pouch. Then there was a scream from the roadway,

cut off abruptly. Rincewind did not look up from his chicken.

‘One of the things he can’t do, he can’t ride a horse,’ he said. Then he stiffened as if sandbagged by a sudden recollection, gave a small yelp of terror and dashed into the gloom. When he returned, the being called Twoflower was hanging limply over his shoulder. It was small and skinny, and dressed very oddly in a pair of knee length britches and a shirt in such a violent and vivid conflict of colours that Weasel’s fastidious eye was offended even in the half-light.

‘No bones broken, by the feel of things,’ said Rincewind. He was breathing heavily. Bravd winked at the Weasel and went to investigate the shape that they assumed was a pack animal.

‘You’d be wise to forget it,’ said the wizard, without looking up from his examination of the unconscious Twoflower. ‘Believe me. A power protects it.’

‘A spell?’ said Weasel, squatting down.

‘No-oo. But magic of a kind, I think. Not the usual sort. I mean, it can turn gold into copper while at the same time it is still gold, it makes men rich by destroying their possessions, it allows the weak to walk fearlessly among thieves, it passes through the strongest doors to leach the most protected treasuries. Even now it has me enslaved – so that I must follow this madman wilynilly and protect him from harm. It’s stronger than you, Bravd. It is, I think, more cunning even than you, Weasel.’

‘What is it called then, this mighty magic?’

Rincewind shrugged. ‘In our tongue it is called

reflected-sound-as-of-underground-spirits. Is there any wine?’

‘You must know that I am not without artifice where magic is concerned,’ said Weasel. ‘Only last year did I – assisted by my friend there – part the notoriously powerful Archmage of Ymitury from his staff, his belt of moon jewels and his life, in that approximate order. I do not fear this *reflected-sound-of-underground-spirits* of which you speak. However,’ he added, ‘you engage my interest. Perhaps you would care to tell me more?’

Bravd looked at the shape on the road. It was closer now, and clearer in the pre-dawn light. It looked for all the world like a—

‘A box on legs?’ he said.

‘I’ll tell you about it,’ said Rincewind. ‘If there’s any wine, that is.’

Down in the valley there was a roar and a hiss. Someone more thoughtful than the rest had ordered to be shut the big river gates that were at the point where the Ankh flowed out of the twin city. Denied its usual egress, the river had burst its banks and was pouring down the fire-ravaged streets. Soon the continent of flame became a series of islands, each one growing smaller as the dark tide rose. And up from the city of fumes and smoke rose a broiling cloud of steam, covering the stars. Weasel thought that it looked like some dark fungus or mushroom.

The twin city of proud Ankh and pestilent Morpork, of which all the other cities of time and space are, as it were, mere reflections, has stood many assaults in

its long and crowded history and has always risen to flourish again. So the fire and its subsequent flood, which destroyed everything left that was not flammable and added a particularly noisome flux to the survivors' problems, did not mark its end. Rather it was a fiery punctuation mark, a coal-like comma, or salamander semi-colon, in a continuing story.

Several days before these events a ship came up the Ankh on the dawn tide and fetched up, among many others, in the maze of wharves and docks on the Morpork shore. It carried a cargo of pink pearls, milknuts, pumice, some official letters for the Patrician of Ankh-Morpork, and a man.

It was the man who engaged the attention of Blind Hugh, one of the beggars on early duty at Pearl Dock. He nudged Cripple Wa in the ribs, and pointed wordlessly.

Now the stranger was standing on the quayside, watching several straining seamen carry a large brass-bound chest down the gangplank. Another man, obviously the captain, was standing beside him. There was about the seaman – every nerve in Blind Hugh's body, which tended to vibrate in the presence of even a small amount of impure gold at fifty paces, screamed into his brain – the air of one anticipating imminent enrichment.

Sure enough, when the chest had been deposited on the cobbles, the stranger reached into a pouch and there was the flash of a coin. Several coins. Gold. Blind Hugh, his body twanging like a hazel rod in the presence of water, whistled to himself. Then he nudged Wa again, and sent him scurrying off

down a nearby alley into the heart of the city.

When the captain walked back onto his ship, leaving the newcomer looking faintly bewildered on the quayside, Blind Hugh snatched up his begging cup and made his way across the street with an ingratiating leer. At the sight of him the stranger started to fumble urgently with his money pouch.

‘Good day to thee, sire,’ Blind Hugh began, and found himself looking up into a face with four eyes in it. He turned to run.

‘!’ said the stranger, and grabbed his arm. Hugh was aware that the sailors lining the rail of the ship were laughing at him. At the same time his specialized senses detected an overpowering impression of money. He froze. The stranger let go and quickly thumbed through a small black book he had taken from his belt. Then he said ‘Hallo’.

‘What?’ said Hugh. The man looked blank.

‘Hallo?’ he repeated, rather louder than necessary and so carefully that Hugh could hear the vowels tinkling into place.

‘Hallo yourself,’ Hugh riposted. The stranger smiled widely then fumbled yet again in the pouch. This time his hand came out holding a large gold coin. It was in fact slightly larger than an 8,000-dollar Ankhian crown and the design on it was unfamiliar, but it spoke inside Hugh’s mind in a language he understood perfectly. My current owner, it said, is in need of succour and assistance; why not give it to him, so you and me can go off somewhere and enjoy ourselves?

Subtle changes in the beggar’s posture made the

stranger feel more at ease. He consulted the small book again.

‘I wish to be directed to an hotel, tavern, lodging house, inn, hospice, caravanserai,’ he said.

‘What, all of them?’ said Hugh, taken aback.

‘?’ said the stranger.

Hugh was aware that a small crowd of fishwives, shellfish diggers and freelance gawpers were watching them with interest.

‘Look,’ he said, ‘I know a good tavern, is that enough?’ He shuddered to think of the gold coin escaping from his life. He’d keep that one, even if Ymor confiscated all the rest. And the big chest that comprised most of the newcomer’s luggage looked to be full of gold, Hugh decided.

The four-eyed man looked at his book.

‘I would like to be directed to an hotel, place of repose, tavern, a—’

‘Yes, all right. Come on then,’ said Hugh hurriedly. He picked up one of the bundles and walked away quickly. The stranger, after a moment’s hesitation, strolled after him.

A train of thought shunted its way through Hugh’s mind. Getting the newcomer to the Broken Drum so easily was a stroke of luck, no doubt of it, and Ymor would probably reward him. But for all his new acquaintance’s mildness there was something about him that made Hugh uneasy, and for the life of him he couldn’t figure out what it was. Not the two extra eyes, odd though they were. There was something else. He glanced back.

The little man was ambling along in the middle of

the street, looking around him with an expression of keen interest.

Something else Hugh saw nearly made him gibber.

The massive wooden chest, which he had last seen resting solidly on the quayside, was following on its master's heels with a gentle rocking gait. Slowly, in case a sudden movement on his part might break his fragile control over his own legs, Hugh bent slightly so that he could see under the chest.

There were lots and lots of little legs.

Very deliberately, Hugh turned around and walked very carefully towards the Broken Drum.

'Odd,' said Ymor.

'He had this big wooden chest,' added Cripple Wa.

'He'd have to be a merchant or a spy,' said Ymor. He pulled a scrap of meat from the cutlet in his hand and tossed it into the air. It hadn't reached the zenith of its arc before a black shape detached itself from the shadows in the corner of the room and swooped down, taking the morsel in mid-air.

'A merchant or a spy,' repeated Ymor. 'I'd prefer a spy. A spy pays for himself twice, because there's always the reward when we turn him in. What do you think, Withel?'

Opposite Ymor the second greatest thief in Ankh-Morpork half-closed his one eye and shrugged.

'I've checked on the ship,' he said. 'It's a freelance trader. Does the occasional run to the Brown Islands. People there are just savages. They don't understand about spies and I expect they eat merchants.'

‘He looked a bit like a merchant,’ volunteered Wa. ‘Except he wasn’t fat.’

There was a flutter of wings at the window. Ymor shifted his bulk out of the chair and crossed the room, coming back with a large raven. After he’d unfastened the message capsule from its leg it flew up to join its fellows lurking among the rafters. Withel regarded it without love. Ymor’s ravens were notoriously loyal to their master, to the extent that Withel’s one attempt to promote himself to the rank of greatest thief in Ankh-Morpork had cost their master’s right-hand man his left eye. But not his life, however. Ymor never grudged a man his ambitions.

‘B12,’ said Ymor, tossing the little phial aside and unrolling the tiny scroll within.

‘Gorrin the Cat,’ said Withel automatically. ‘On station up in the gong tower at the Temple of Small Gods.’

‘He says Hugh has taken our stranger to the Broken Drum. Well, that’s good enough. Broadman is a – friend of ours, isn’t he?’

‘Aye,’ said Withel. ‘If he knows what’s good for trade.’

‘Among his customers has been your man Gorrin,’ said Ymor pleasantly, ‘for he writes here about a box on legs, if I read this scrawl correctly.’ He looked at Withel over the top of the paper.

Withel looked away. ‘He will be disciplined,’ he said flatly. Wa looked at the man leaning back in his chair, his black-clad frame resting as nonchalantly as a Rimland puma on a jungle branch, and decided that Gorrin atop Small Gods temple would soon be

joining those little deities in the multifold dimensions of Beyond. And he owed Wa three copper pieces.

Ymor crumpled the note and tossed it into a corner. 'I think we'll wander along to the Drum later on, Withel. Perhaps, too, we may try this beer that your men find so tempting.'

Withel said nothing. Being Ymor's right-hand man was like being gently flogged to death with scented bootlaces.

The twin city of Ankh-Morpork, foremost of all the cities bounding the Circle Sea, was as a matter of course the home of a large number of gangs, thieves' guilds, syndicates and similar organizations. This was one of the reasons for its wealth. Most of the humbler folk on the widdershins side of the river, in Morpork's mazy alleys, supplemented their meagre incomes by filling some small role for one or other of the competing gangs. So it was that by the time Hugh and Twoflower entered the courtyard of the Broken Drum the leaders of a number of them were aware that someone had arrived in the city who appeared to have much treasure. Some reports from the more observant spies included details about a book that told the stranger what to say, and a box that walked by itself. These facts were immediately discounted. No magician capable of such enchantments ever came within a mile of Morpork docks.

It still being that hour when most of the city was just rising or about to go to bed there were few people in the Drum to watch Twoflower descend the stairs. When the Luggage appeared behind him and started

to lurch confidently down the steps the customers at the rough wooden tables, as one man, looked suspiciously at their drinks.

Broadman was browbeating the small troll who swept the bar when the trio walked past him. 'What in hell's that?' he said.

'Just don't talk about it,' hissed Hugh. Twoflower was already thumbing through his book.

'What's he doing?' said Broadman, arms akimbo.

'It tells him what to say. I know it sounds ridiculous,' muttered Hugh.

'How can a book tell a man what to say?'

'I wish for an accommodation, a room, lodgings, the lodging house, full board, are your rooms clean, a room with a view, what is your rate for one night?' said Twoflower in one breath.

Broadman looked at Hugh. The beggar shrugged.

'He's got plenty money,' he said.

'Tell him it's three copper pieces, then. And that Thing will have to go in the stable.'

'?' said the stranger. Broadman held up three thick red fingers and the man's face was suddenly a sunny display of comprehension. He reached into his pouch and laid three large gold pieces in Broadman's palm.

Broadman stared at them. They represented about four times the worth of the Broken Drum, staff included. He looked at Hugh. There was no help there. He looked at the stranger. He swallowed.

'Yes,' he said, in an unnaturally high voice. 'And then there's meals, o'course. Uh. You understand, yes? Food. You eat. No?' He made the appropriate motions.

‘Fut?’ said the little man.

‘Yes,’ said Boardman, beginning to sweat. ‘Have a look in your little book, I should.’

The man opened the book and ran a finger down one page. Broadman, who could read after a fashion, peered over the top of the volume. What he saw made no sense.

‘Foood,’ said the stranger. ‘Yes. Cutlet, hash, chop, stew, ragout, fricasee, mince, collops, souffle, dumpling, blancmange, sorbet, gruel, sausage, not to have a sausage, beans, without a bean, kickshaws, jelly, jam. Giblets.’ He beamed at Broadman.

‘All that?’ said the innkeeper weakly.

‘It’s just the way he talks,’ said Hugh. ‘Don’t ask me why. He just does.’

All eyes in the room were watching the stranger – except for a pair belonging to Rincewind the wizard, who was sitting in the darkest corner nursing a mug of very small beer.

He was watching the Luggage.

Watch Rincewind.

Look at him. Scrawny, like most wizards, and clad in a dark red robe on which a few mystic sigils were embroidered in tarnished sequins. Some might have taken him for a mere apprentice enchanter who had run away from his master out of defiance, boredom, fear and a lingering taste for heterosexuality. Yet around his neck was a chain bearing the bronze octagon that marked him as an alumnus of Unseen University, the high school of magic whose time-and-space transcendent campus is never precisely Here or There. Graduates were usually destined for mageship

at least, but Rincewind – after an unfortunate event – had left knowing only one spell and made a living of sorts around the town by capitalizing on an innate gift for languages. He avoided work as a rule, but had a quickness of wit that put his acquaintances in mind of a bright rodent. And he knew sapient pearwood when he saw it. He was seeing it now, and didn't quite believe it.

An archmage, by dint of great effort and much expenditure of time, might eventually obtain a small staff made from the timber of the sapient peartree. It grew only on the sites of ancient magic. There were probably no more than two such staffs in all the cities of the Circle Sea. A large chest of it . . . Rincewind tried to work it out, and decided that even if the box were crammed with star opals and sticks of auricholatum the contents would not be worth one-tenth the price of the container. A vein started to throb in his forehead.

He stood up and made his way to the trio.

'May I be of assistance?' he ventured.

'Shove off, Rincewind,' snarled Broadman.

'I only thought it might be useful to address this gentleman in his own tongue,' said the wizard gently.

'He's doing all right on his own,' said the innkeeper, but took a few steps backward.

Rincewind smiled politely at the stranger and tried a few words of Chimeran. He prided himself on his fluency in the tongue, but the stranger only looked bemused.

'It won't work,' said Hugh knowledgeably. 'It's the book, you see. It tells him what to say. Magic.'

Rincewind switched to High Borogravian, to Vanglemesht, Sumtri and even Black Oroogu, the language with no nouns and only one adjective, which is obscene. Each was met with polite incomprehension. In desperation he tried heathen Trob, and the little man's face split into a delighted grin.

'At last!' he said. 'My good sir! This is remarkable!' (Although in Trob the last word in fact became 'a thing which may happen but once in the usable lifetime of a canoe hollowed diligently by axe and fire from the tallest diamondwood tree that grows in the noted diamondwood forests on the lower slopes of Mount Awayawa, home of the firegods or so it is said.')

'What was all that?' said Broadman suspiciously.

'What did the innkeeper say?' said the little man.

Rincewind swallowed. 'Broadman,' he said. 'Two mugs of your best ale, please.'

'You can understand him?'

'Oh, sure.'

'Tell him – tell him he's very welcome. Tell him breakfast is – uh – one gold piece.' For a moment Broadman's face looked as though some vast internal struggle was going on, and then he added with a burst of generosity, 'I'll throw in yours, too.'

'Stranger,' said Rincewind levelly. 'If you stay here you will be knifed or poisoned by nightfall. But don't stop smiling, or so will I.'

'Oh, come now,' said the stranger, looking around. 'This looks like a delightful place. A genuine Morporkian tavern. I've heard so much about them, you know. All these quaint old beams. And so reasonable, too.'