

VIMES

In a manner of speaking. But you're not allowed to arrest anyone. Even if they're breaking the law. Understand?

CARROT

Yes. I'll read my book then.

(Vimes, Sgt Colon and Cpl Nobbs exit. Carrot opens his book and starts to read. The Librarian enters and crosses to him)

Ah, er, sorry. I'm supposed to stop anyone from looking at . . .

LIBRARIAN

Oook.

CARROT

Hello.

LIBRARIAN

Oook!

CARROT

Sorry?

LIBRARIAN *(with a heavy sigh)*

OOOK!

(He beckons at Carrot to follow him)

CARROT

I'm sorry. I can't leave here. I've had orders.

Someone hasn't committed a crime have they?

LIBRARIAN

Oook.

CARROT

A bad crime?

LIBRARIAN

Oook.

CARROT

Like murder?

LIBRARIAN

Eeek!

CARROT

Worse than murder?

LIBRARIAN

EEEEK!

(The Librarian grabs at Carrot's book and starts to run off)

CARROT

Hey!

(The Librarian brings back the book, and repeats the mime)

Oh. Oh, I see. A book has been taken. From your Library?

(The Librarian nods vigorously.)

A BOOK has been taken? You're bothering the City Watch because a book has been taken? You think that's worse than murder?

This is practically a criminal offence, wasting Watch time. Why don't you just tell the head wizards at the University?

(The Librarian does a brief mime)

Oh, I see. They couldn't find their bums with both hands.

(The Librarian nods.)

Well, I don't see what I can do about it. What's the book called?

(The Librarian scratches his head. Then, charade-style, he puts his palms together, and then folds them open)

Yes, I know it's a book. What's its name?

(The Librarian sighs heavily. He holds up four fingers)

Oh. Four words? First word.

(The Librarian holds two fingers close together.)

Small word? A, The, Fo—

LIBRARIAN

Oook!

CARROT

The? The. Second word . . . third word? Small word.
The? A? To? Of? Fro . . . Of? Of. The something of
something. Second word. What? Oh, first syllable.
Fingers? Touching your fingers? Thumbs?

(The Librarian growls theatrically and tugs at its ear)

Oh, sounds like. Er . . . Bum . . . Come . . . Dumb . . .
Gum . . .

*(The lights fade down to indicate the passage of some time.
'Music While You Work' plays briefly. Lights up again.)*

. . . Numb . . . Plum . . . Rum . . . Sum . . . Sum. Sum!
Second syllable. Small. Very small syllable. A. In. Un.
On. On! Sum. On. Sum On. Summon! Summon-er?
Summon-ing? Summoning. Summoning. The
Summoning of Something. This is fun, isn't it! Fourth
word. Whole word.

(The Librarian attempts to mime the word 'dragons')

Big thing. Huge big thing. Flapping. Great big flapping,
leaping thing. Teeth. Huffing. Blowing. Great big huge
blowing flapping thing. Sucking fingers. Sucking
fingers thing. Burnt. Hot. Great big hot blowing
flapping thing . . . Politician?

(The Librarian sighs very heavily)

A great big hot blowing flapping thing. I give up. It could
be anything. It could be a dragon, for all I know. Dragon!
Dragons! That's it!

The Summoning of Dragons!

(The Librarian raises its arms to heaven in thanks)

This is serious! Come on, we've got to tell the Captain!

(They exit as the lights black out)

SCENE 10 – LADY RAMKIN'S HOUSE

Lady Ramkin is on stage. She is holding Errol. There are boxes behind her from which smoke rises gently. Vimes enters.

VIMES

Er, Lady Ramkin?

LADY RAMKIN

Ah. Hello. You don't know anything about matin', do yer?

VIMES

I, er, 'fraid not, my Lady. I'm Captain Vimes of the Night Watch. Ma'am.

LADY RAMKIN

Oh. Pity. Havin' a spot of trouble with this one. Goodboy Bindle Featherstone of Quirm. Can't cut the mustard ye'see. Wings're too small.

VIMES

Wings?

LADY RAMKIN

Yes. Dragons mate in the air dontcherknow. This poor chap just can't get airborne. One tries to breed for a good flame, depth of scale, correct colour and so on. One just has to put up with the occasional total whittle.

VIMES

Poor sod. Sorry, ma'am. Nice pets though.

LADY RAMKIN

Sound nice, grant yer. Then people realise it means soot burns in the shagpile, frizzled hair and crap all over yer furniture. Then they think it's getting too big and smelly and next thing it's either down to the Morpork Sunshine Sanctuary for Lost Dragons or the heave-ho into the river with a brick tied to yer neck, poor little buggers.

Now then. Captain Vimes was it?

Such a dashin' title, I've always felt. I mean, colonels are always so stuffy, majors are pompous, but one always feels somehow that there is something delightfully dangerous about a captain. What was it you wanted me for, Captain?

VIMES

Well, ma'am. I wondered. I was wondering, I mean, erm, how big swamp dragons grow?

LADY RAMKIN

I seem to recall that Gayheart Talontrust of Ankh stood fourteen thumbs high, toe to matlock.

VIMES

Er . . .

LADY RAMKIN

About three foot six inches.

VIMES

No bigger than that?

LADY RAMKIN

Golly no. He was a bit of a freak, actually. Most don't grow much bigger than eight thumbs.

VIMES

Two feet?

LADY RAMKIN

Well done. That's cobbs of course. The hens would be smaller.

What's that you're carryin', Captain?

VIMES

Oh. Yes. This is a sketch I had made from some footprints we found in the Shades. There's a human footprint next to it to show the scale. Well, one of Corporal Nobbs's, anyway. Does it remind you of anything?

LADY RAMKIN

Large wadin' bird, p'raps?

VIMES

Oh.

LADY RAMKIN (*laughing*)

Or a really big dragon. Someone's been playin' tricks on you, old chap.

VIMES

Perhaps. But the prints were by a section of wall which had been vitrified by some great heat, and seemed to have completely carbonised three local citizens in the

process. We were close by when it happened. Saw nothing except this very bright light. But we heard a sound like great leathery wings, and a great roar.

LADY RAMKIN (*hoarsely*)

Draco nobilis. The noble dragon. As opposed to these fellows, draco vulgaris the lot of 'em. But the big ones are all gone, yer know. Beautiful things. Weighed tons.

(The sound of leathery wings has been increasing throughout her speech, and there have been noises of scuffling from the 'cages'. We hear noises of distant roaring, screams, and fire crackling. Flame effect)

Biggest things ever to fly. No-one knows how they . . .

(She points out into the fourth wall)

My God! There it is! I would never have believed it if . . .

Do you realise we're seeing something which no-one has seen for centuries?

VIMES

Yes. Some bloody great lizard, setting fire to my city.

Of all the cities in all the world it could have flown into, it's flown into mine.

(Carrot and the Librarian enter, followed by Cpl Nobbs and Sgt Colon)

CARROT

Have you seen it? Have you seen it?

SCENE 12 – A STREET IN ANKH-MORPORK

On stage is Cut-Me-Own-Throat Dibbler, and a couple of warriors. They have just concluded their business with CMOT and are examining a poster. Vimes enters.

DIBBLER (*nodding in the direction of the warriors*)
Mornin' Captain. News spread quickly, eh?

VIMES

Morning Dibbler. What're you selling this time?

DIBBLER

Genuine article, Captain. Can't afford to be without it. Anti-dragon cream. Personal guarantee. If you're incinerated.

VIMES

What you're saying, if I understand you correctly, is that if I am baked alive by the dragon, you'll refund my money?

DIBBLER

Upon personal application. One dollar a jar, and I'm cutting me own throat. It's a public service, really.

VIMES (*reading the label*)

You've got to hand it to those ancient monks. Brewing it up so quickly.

So what's happening, Dibbler? Who're the guys with the swords?

DIBBLER

Dragon hunters, Captain. The Patrician's offering a reward of fifty thousand dollars to anyone who brings him the dragon's head. Not attached to the dragon. He's no fool.

VIMES

Fifty thousand dollars. I'm surprised you're not joining in.

DIBBLER

Ah well, I'm more what you might call the service sector. Here's my product list.

(He gives Vimes a piece of paper)

VIMES *(reading)*

Anti-dragon mirror shields, five hundred dollars . . .

Portable lair detectors, two hundred and fifty dollars . . .

Dragon-piercing arrows, one hundred dollars each . . .

Sacks, one dollar . . . Why sacks?

DIBBLER

On account of the dragon's hoard.

VIMES

Oh. Of course. And what are these?

(He points to a length of stiff wire with a small piece of wood attached to the end)

DIBBLER

Dragon detectors.

VIMES

How do they work?

DIBBLER

Well . . . you see this piece of wood at the end . . .

VIMES

Yes.

DIBBLER

Well, when that's burned through, you've found your dragon.

VIMES

Intriguing. Practical, whilst at the same time, almost completely useless. Well, good luck, Dibbler.

DIBBLER (*exiting*)

Thanks, Captain. I can do special rates for our boys in brown.

VIMES (*crossing to the warriors*)

What's all this?

FIRST WARRIOR

Cheap job. Fifty Thousand? Well below the going rate. Should be half his kingdom and his daughter's hand in marriage.

VIMES

But he's not a king, he's a Patrician.

FIRST WARRIOR

Well, half his patrimony then. What's his daughter like?

VIMES

He's not married. He hasn't got a daughter.

SECOND WARRIOR

No daughter? Wants people to kill dragons and he hasn't got a daughter?

VIMES

He's got a little dog he's very fond of.

FIRST WARRIOR

Bleeding disgusting, not having a daughter. And what's fifty thousand dollars these days, eh? You spend that much on nets.

SECOND WARRIOR

Right. Fifty thousand dollars? He can stuff it.

FIRST WARRIOR

Yeah. Cheapskate.

SECOND WARRIOR

Let's go and have a drink.

FIRST WARRIOR

Right.

(They start to exit. Then they stop, and the First Warrior turns round)

FIRST WARRIOR

What sort of dog?

VIMES

What?

FIRST WARRIOR

I said, what sort of dog?

VIMES

A small wire-haired terrier, I think.

(The two warriors exchange glances)

FIRST WARRIOR

Nah.

(And they exit)

VIMES

He's got an aunt in Pseudopolis, I believe.

(The Librarian enters)

LIBRARIAN

Oook?

VIMES

Oh. Hello. No, no luck yet, I'm afraid. I tell you what, you get back to the Library and see what you can find. I'll send word if we come up with anything.

(At the Unicorn, we became aware now that the rest of the Watch were in the on-stage balcony, separately lit so

that they appeared to be on the roof of one of the city's buildings. On a flat stage, this could be achieved with separately lighted areas, providing Vimes looks up when talking, as though addressing the men high up on a building, and the Watch look down when speaking to Vimes)

You men seen anything yet?

(The Librarian exits)

And you can put that away for a start.

SGT COLON

But, sir—

VIMES

You know longbows are forbidden. Wait there.

(He makes his way up to them)

CARROT

That's right. The Projectile Weapons (Civic Safety) Act, 1634.

SGT COLON

Don't you keep on quoting all that sort of stuff. We don't have any of them laws any more! That's all old stuff! It's all wosname now. Pragmatic.

CARROT

Yes, but Captain Vimes says that he's not having his guards shooting citizens. We're here to protect and serve.

(Vimes enters)

Isn't that right, Captain?

VIMES

Er, yeah. Yes, that's right.

Anything?

CPL NOBBS

Nah. Bigger this for a game of soldiers. It's been scared off.

SGT COLON

Looks like it.

CARROT

And it's starting to get chilly. Maybe we ought to be getting down, sir? Lots of other people are.

VIMES *(who is staring fixedly at something)*

Hmm?

CARROT

Could be coming on to rain, too.

VIMES *(gently grabbing Colon's shoulder)*

Can you see anything odd about the top of that tower?

SGT COLON

Well, it looks like there's a dragon sitting on it, don't it?

VIMES

Yes, that's what I thought.

SGT COLON

Only, only, when you sort of look properly, you can see it's just made out of shadows and clumps of ivy and that. I mean, if you half-close one eye, it looks like two old women and a wheelbarrow.

(They all try this)

VIMES

Nope. It still looks like a dragon. A huge one. Sort of hunched up, and looking down. Look, you can see its wings folded up.

SGT COLON

Beg pardon, sir. That's just a broken turret giving that effect.

VIMES *(after a pause)*

Tell me, Sergeant – I ask in a spirit of pure enquiry – what do you think's causing the effect of a pair of huge wings unfolding?

SGT COLON

I think that it's caused by a huge pair of wings, sir.

VIMES

Spot on, Sergeant.

CPL NOBBS

Sodding arseholes!

VIMES

You are in uniform, Corporal Nobbs.

CPL NOBBS

Sorry, Captain. Sodding arseholes, sir.

VIMES

It shouldn't be that big. It's as long as a street . . .

(Sound of leathery wings)

CPL NOBBS

Look at it go!

CARROT

It's coming straight at us! Jump for it!

(Carrot grabs the Captain and they all dive as we hear a roar and the light flares)

(Black out)

SCENE 1 – THE PROLOGUE

The dwarf mines. Dark and gloomy. A number of vertically challenged people cross the stage, whistling, and carrying picks, lanterns, shovels, etc. At the end of the line is Carrot.

CARROT'S DAD (*off stage*)

Carrot! (*entering*) Ah, Carrot, lad. Erm, good.

CARROT

Hello, Dad. Mam said you wanted a word with me.

(They are now standing next to each other, Carrot's Dad on his knees – Toulouse-Lautrec style – Carrot a good six feet plus)

CARROT'S DAD

Er, yes. Erm. Well now, Carrot, er, I expect you've noticed that you are not like other dwarfs.

CARROT

How do you mean?

CARROT'S DAD

I . . . er, now look, lad, I don't want to make a big thing out of this. I mean, your mam and me thought you'd just grow out of it, see?

CARROT

Grow out of what?

CARROT'S DAD

Growing. But you didn't. So we thought you should spend more time with your own kind.

CARROT

But you're my own kind.

CARROT'S DAD

Nay, lad. I'm sorry to be short with you [*NOTE Yes, these are the jokes!*], but the fact is . . . you're human.

CARROT

What, like Mr Varneshi, you mean? (*Carrot's Dad nods*)
But I can't be. You're a dwarf, Mam's a dwarf. I've GOT to be a dwarf.

CARROT'S DAD (*clearing throat*)

The thing is . . . we found you in the woods, see. When you was a baby. There'd been a robbery. You was lying in the verge next to a burned-out cart, see.

CARROT

So I'm not a dwarf, then?

CARROT'S DAD

Only by adoption. Sorry.

Anyway, I asked Mr Varneshi for his advice. You know, what sort of job we should get you, with humans an' that. He said that a career in the Ankh-Morpork City Watch would make a man of you.

CARROT

But—

SCENE 22 – A TOWER OVERLOOKING THE PLAZA

On stage are Carrot, Sgt Colon and Cpl Nobbs. The noise of the procession can be heard.

CPL NOBBS

Doesn't seem right. The Captain should be down there, on the Plaza, for the coronation. It's his right. He's a Captain.

SGT COLON

Yes, but he's not, is he? Old Poncy Wonse made him hand in his badge, didn't he. Told you that. It's up to us. We got to do what he would've done. Guard the City. Watch for the dragon. I was looking forward to lining the streets. Bloody Day Watch got that job.

CPL NOBBS

I've never seen the Captain in such a filthy temper. I liked it better when he was on the drink. I reckon he's—

CARROT

You know, I reckon Errol is really ill.

SGT COLON

Yeah. Mebbe you're right, boy.

Still. We've got a good view from up here. If that dragon's alive, then it'll have got the hell away from here, I'm telling you. Not the right sort of place for dragons,

a city. It'll have gone off somewhere where there's high places and plenty to eat, you mark my words.

CARROT

Somewhere like the city, you mean?

COLON/NOBBS

Shut up!

CPL NOBBS

Wind's getting up.

SGT COLON

Good. What was I saying?

CPL NOBBS

You were saying the dragon'll be miles away.

SGT COLON

Oh, right. Stands to reason, doesn't it? I mean, I wouldn't be hanging around here if I could fly away. If I could fly, I wouldn't be sitting on a roof on some manky statue, I'd—

CPL NOBBS

What statue?

SGT COLON

This one (*he gestures upwards with his thumb*). Up here. And don't try to give me the willies, Nobby, there's loads of old statues on the roof of this old dump.

CPL NOBBS

There's not, you know. They was all taken down last month when they re-leaded the roof.

(They all turn and look upwards. Dragon noise. They turn and watch it fly out over the square)

CARROT

Shouldn't we run and warn people? The King?

SGT COLON

Shouldn't bother. I think he'll soon find out.

(We hear the king call to the dragon. 'Now then, you vile dragon, what is the—' There is a roar and a bright flash. Silence (or perhaps just a faint crackling noise, as of frying bacon?))

Nothing left. Just a wisp of smoke. Talk about king for a day.

CPL NOBBS

Got a new king now, by the look of it.

CARROT

The king is dead. Long live the dragon.

(Black out)

**SCENE 23 – A ROOM IN THE PATRICIAN’S, yes
all right, THE KING’S PALACE**

A group of four local worthies, including the Chief Assassin and the Archchancellor of Unseen University, are on stage.

FIRST WORTHY

The way I see it, a dragon as king may not be a bad thing.
When you think it through.

SECOND WORTHY

It definitely looked very gracious. Sort of, well, sleek.
Nice and smart. Not scruffy. Takes a bit of pride in
itself. The trouble with people today is they don’t take
pride in themselves.

CHIEF ASSASSIN

Well, speaking on behalf of the Guild of Assassins, we
can see some benefits in the area of foreign policy.

FIRST WORTHY

How d’you mean?

CHIEF ASSASSIN

Diplomacy.

FIRST WORTHY

I don’t know about that. I mean, your actual dragon, it’s
got these, basically, two sort of ways of negotiation,
hasn’t it? I mean it’s either roasting you alive, or it isn’t.
Correct me if I’m wrong.

CHIEF ASSASSIN

That's my point. Say the ambassador from Klatch comes along. You know what an arrogant bunch they are. Suppose he says, we want this, we want that, we want the other thing.

Well, what we say is, shut your face unless you want to go home in a jar.

(Lupine Wonse enters. He looks a little crazed)

LUPINE WONSE

Ah, good, you're all here. Shall we all sit?

FIRST WORTHY

Er . . . the note mentioned, lunch?

LUPINE WONSE

Yes, later.

FIRST WORTHY

With a dragon?

LUPINE WONSE

Good grief, you didn't think it would eat you, did you? What an idea!

FIRST WORTHY

Never crossed my mind. The very idea. Hahaha.

SECOND WORTHY

Haha.

CHIEF ASSASSIN

Hoho. The very idea.

LUPINE WONSE

No, I expect you're all far too stringy. Haha.

ARCHCHANCELLOR

Haha.

CHIEF ASSASSIN

Ahaha.

LUPINE WONSE

I'm sorry things are a little . . . different, but the king hopes you will bear with it until matters can be more suitably organised.

SECOND WORTHY

The, er . . .

LUPINE WONSE (*his voice one dribble away from madness*)

The king.

(He nods at the fourth wall. The Dragon is hanging from the ceiling of the hall in which they are meeting. All look up) [Perhaps your backstage people could provide some dragon breathing noises]

SECOND WORTHY

Oh. The king. Right. Didn't see it there . . . er . . . Long life to him, I say.

LUPINE WONSE

The king graciously desires it to be known that it would be pleased to receive coronation gifts from the population at large. Nothing complex of course. Simply any precious gems or gold that they might have by them and can easily spare.

I should stress that this is in no way compulsory.

(The Chief Assassin resignedly starts to take off his rings. The two worthies also hand over their jewellery)

ARCHCHANCELLOR

Um . . . The king is no doubt aware that the Wizards' University has traditionally been exempt from taxes—

LUPINE WONSE

My dear sir . . . this is no tax. Any tribute would be entirely voluntary. I hope this is clear?

ARCHCHANCELLOR *(taking off rings)*

As crystal. And these contributions go—

LUPINE WONSE

On the hoard. The king recognises that there is little gold in Ankh-Morpork, but it intends to adopt a rigorous foreign policy to remedy this.

Privy Councillors . . . would of course be generously rewarded with lands and property seized.

CHIEF ASSASSIN

No doubt the, er, Privy Councillors would then respond with even greater generosity in the matter of, for example, treasure?

LUPINE WONSE

I am sure such considerations had not even crossed the king's mind. But the point is well made.

(Wonse swallows hard, and continues)

Which brings us on to a further matter of some delicacy, which I am sure well-travelled, broad-minded, ladies and gentlemen such as yourselves will have no difficulty in accepting.

I am referring . . . to the matter of . . . the king's . . . diet.

(A silence)

FIRST WORTHY *(in a hollow voice)*

Diet.

LUPINE WONSE

Yes.

ARCHCHANCELLOR

Er, we thought, that the dr—, the king, well, must have been arranging matters for himself, as it were.

LUPINE WONSE

Ah, but poor stuff, poor stuff. Stray animals and so forth. Obviously, as a king, such makeshifts are no longer acceptable.

SECOND WORTHY

Er, how often is the king hungry?

LUPINE WONSE

All the time. But it eats once a month. It's really more of a ceremonial occasion.

FIRST WORTHY

And, er, when did the king last eat?

LUPINE WONSE

I'm sorry to say it hasn't eaten properly since it came here.

FIRST WORTHY

Oh.

LUPINE WONSE

You must understand that merely waylaying people like a common assassin—

CHIEF ASSASSIN

Excuse ME—

LUPINE WONSE

Some common murderer, I mean . . . there is no . . . satisfaction there. The whole essence of the king's feeding is that it should be . . . an act of bonding between the king and its subjects.

ARCHCHANCELLOR

The exact nature of this meal . . . are we talking about young maidens here?

LUPINE WONSE

Sheer prejudice.

The age is immaterial. Marital status is, however, important. As is social standing.

It has to do with the flavour, I believe.

(He leans forward and whispers. His voice now pain-filled and urgent and, for the first time, genuinely his own)

Please consider it! After all, just once a month! The families of people of use to the king, Privy Councillors, for example, would of course be exempt.

And when you think of the alternatives.

(He leans back, speaking again for the dragon's benefit)

Well, gentlemen, perhaps we can consider all this over lunch.

CHIEF ASSASSIN

Er, perhaps not. Erm, urgent matters to deal with back at the Guild, you know. Some other time.

ARCHCHANCELLOR

Yes. Er, we'll let you have our decision soon.

LUPINE WONSE

Today.

ARCHCHANCELLOR

Today. Goodbye, Wonse.

CHIEF ASSASSIN

Goodbye.

(Wonse grabs the Chief Assassin's arm)

KNOWLESSMAN

Sorry, did you say Elucidated Brethren? Sorry, sorry, wrong Society, I'm afraid. Must have taken a wrong turning. I'll just be going then, if you'll excuse me . . .

(and he shuffles out)

LUPINE WONSE

And his figgin placed upon a spike. Are we quite finished? Any more knowlessmen happen to drop in on their way somewhere else? Right. Fine. So glad. Perhaps we can get on with it.

(Klaxon. Footnote enters. Action freezes)

FOOTNOTE

A figgin is described in the *Dictionary of Eye-Watering Words* as a 'small short-crust pastry containing raisins'. The dictionary would have been invaluable to the Supreme Grand Master when he thought up the Brotherhood's oaths, since it also includes welchet: 'a type of waistcoat worn by clock-makers', gaskin: 'a shy, grey-brown bird of the coot family' and moules: 'a game of skill and dexterity, involving tortoises'.

(Klaxon. Footnote exits, action continues)

LUPINE WONSE

Brethren, tonight we have matters of profound importance to discuss. The good governance, nay, the very future of our city, the great city of Ankh-Morpork, lies in our hands.

Do we not know that the city is in thrall to men who wax fat on their ill-gotten gains while better men are held back and forced into virtual servitude?

Yet it was not always thus. There was once a golden age, when those worthy of respect were justly rewarded. (*Brother Watchtower puts up his hand*) An age of chivalry, an age— yes, Brother Watchtower?

BROTHER WATCHTOWER

Are you talking about when we had kings?

LUPINE WONSE

Yes, very good, Brother Watchtower.

BROTHER WATCHTOWER

There aren't any more kings, is the point I'm making.

LUPINE WONSE

HOWEVER . . . it may not be the ancient line of Kings of Ankh-Morpork is as defunct as often imagined. My researches in the ancient scrolls reveal this.

(*Brother Watchtower puts up his hand*)

Yes?

BROTHER WATCHTOWER

Are you saying there's some sort of heir to the throne hanging around somewhere?

LUPINE WONSE

That may be the case, yes.

BROTHER PLASTERER

Yeah, there used to be some old prophecy or something
. . . 'Yea, the King will come, bringing Law and
Justice . . .'

BROTHER WATCHTOWER

Nah, you can't trust old legends.

BROTHER DUNNYKIN

Why not?

BROTHER WATCHTOWER

Cos they're legendary, that's why.

BROTHER DOORKEEPER

Of course, in the old days it was easy.

BROTHER WATCHTOWER

Why?

BROTHER DOORKEEPER

He just had to kill a dragon.

LUPINE WONSE

Aah. What an interesting idea.

BROTHER WATCHTOWER

Wouldn't work. There's no big dragons these days.

LUPINE WONSE

But . . . there could be.

BROTHER WATCHTOWER

What, the real thing? Great big scales and wings? Breath like a blast furnace? Them big claw things on his feet?

LUPINE WONSE

Talons? Oh yes, as many as you want.

BROTHER WATCHTOWER

What do you mean, as many as I want?

LUPINE WONSE

I would hope it's self-explanatory, Brother Watchtower. If you want dragons, you can have dragons. YOU can bring a dragon here. Now. In the city.

BROTHER WATCHTOWER

Me?

LUPINE WONSE

All of you, I mean us. And it would obey your every command. (*pause*) You can control it. You can make it do whatever you want.

BROTHER PLASTERER

What? A real dragon?

LUPINE WONSE

Yes, a real one. Not a little pet swamp dragon. The genuine article.

BROTHER PLASTERER

But I thought they were, you know, miffs.

LUPINE WONSE

They were *myths* and they were real. When I was undergoing my tuition by the Secret Masters, among the many secrets from the Heart of Being was the current location of noble dragons. And they can be summoned from it. Did you manage to acquire that item from the magic library in the Wizards' University, Brother Fingers?

BROTHER FINGERS

Yes, Supreme Grand Master

(He hands it over. At this stage, the audience still can't see that the back of the book is badly fire-damaged)

LUPINE WONSE

Excellent. This book . . . gives specific instructions.

BROTHER PLASTERER

It's just in a book?

LUPINE WONSE

No ordinary book. This is the only copy. It's in the handwriting of Tubul de Malachite, a great student of dragon lore. He summoned dragons of all sizes. And so can you.

BROTHER WATCHTOWER

Um. *(pause)* Sounds a bit like, you know . . . magic to me. I mean, not wishing to question your supreme wisdomship and that, but . . . well . . . you know . . . magic . . .

BROTHER PLASTERER

Yeh.

BROTHER DUNNYKIN

Huh. Wizards. What do they know about a day's work.

BROTHER DOORKEEPER

It's only waving your arms and chanting, when all's said and done.

(A general chorus of agreement.)

LUPINE WONSE

Then we are agreed then, Brethren? You are prepared to practise magic?

BROTHER PLASTERER

Oh practise. I don't mind practising. So long as we don't have to do it for real.

LUPINE WONSE *(thumping the book)*

I mean carry out real spells! Put the city back on the right lines! Summon a dragon!!

BROTHER DOORKEEPER

And the, if we get this dragon, the rightful king'll turn up . . . just like that?

LUPINE WONSE

Yes.

BROTHER WATCHTOWER

Yeah. Stands to reason. 'Cos of destiny and so on.

BROTHER PLASTERER

We-ell. It won't get out of hand, will it?

LUPINE WONSE

I assure you, Brother Plasterer, that you can give it up any time you like. Now, Brethren, you have all brought the items as requested?

(General murmuring)

Place them in the Circle of Conjunction. What is this?

BROTHER DUNNYKIN

's a amulet. 's very powerful. Bought it off a man. Guaranteed. Protects you against crocodile bites.

LUPINE WONSE

Are you sure you can spare it?

(A few titters)

Less of that, brothers. Bring magical things, I said. Not cheap jewellery and rubbish. Good grief, this city is lousy with magic! What are these things, for heaven's sake?

BROTHER PLASTERER

They're stones.

LUPINE WONSE

I can see that. Why're they magical?

BROTHER PLASTERER

They've got holes in them, Supreme Grand Master. Everyone knows that stones with holes in them are magical.

LUPINE WONSE (*wearily*)

Right, fine, OK. If that's how we're going to do it, that's how we're going to do it. If we get a dragon six inches long we'll all know the reason why. Won't we, Brother Plasterer. Brother Plasterer? Sorry, I didn't hear what you said? Brother Plasterer?

BROTHER PLASTERER

I said yes, Supreme Grand Master.

LUPINE WONSE

Very well. So long as that's understood. And now, if we are all quite ready . . .

BROTHER WATCHTOWER

But you haven't told us what to do yet, Supreme Grand Master.

LUPINE WONSE

Well it's obvious. You have to focus your concentration. Think hard about dragons. All of you.

BROTHER DOORKEEPER

That's all, is it?

LUPINE WONSE

Yes.

BROTHER DOORKEEPER

Don't we have to chant a mystic prune or something?

(Brother Dunnykin puts up his hand)

LUPINE WONSE *(after a short pause)*

You can if you like. Now . . . I want you— YES WHAT IS IT BROTHER DUNNYKIN?

BROTHER DUNNYKIN

Don't know any mystic prunes, Supreme Grand Master. Not to what you might call chant . . .

LUPINE WONSE

HUM! Right *(opens book)* Here we go . . . *(reads aloud)*
Wonsu Otem Ocnogard Elbir Rettubta Ergo!

(Black out. Sound of leathery wings. Klaxon. Enter Footnote)

FOOTNOTE

It was about to be the worst night of his life for Zebbo Mooty, thief third class, and it wouldn't have made him feel any better to have known that it was also going to be his last. The rain was keeping people indoors and he was way behind on his thieving quota.

(We cross-fade to a street in Ankh-Morpork. Zebbo Mooty creeps on, dagger outstretched before him. He peers out towards the audience, he spies something . . .)

ZEBBO MOOTY

Right, mate, give us your— ooh, shi—

(There is a terrible roar. The stage is swamped with light. All blacks out. Zebbo falls to the ground. As the lights come up again, he gets to his feet. Death is now on stage. Zebbo is confused and at first does not see Death)

DEATH
HELLO.

ZEBBO MOOTY
What was that?

DEATH
A DRAGON, I THINK.

ZEBBO MOOTY
'Ere, who're you?

DEATH
DON'T YOU KNOW?

ZEBBO MOOTY *(noticing the 'body' at his feet)*
Oh, I'm dead, then, am I?

DEATH
'FRAID SO.

ZEBBO MOOTY
I thought you didn't turn up for the likes of me.

DEATH
I TURN UP FOR EVERYONE.

ZEBBO MOOTY

No, no, I mean in person, like.

DEATH

SOMETIMES. ON SPECIAL OCCASIONS,
PERHAPS.

ZEBBO MOOTY

Right. Being killed by a dragon counts as a special occasion, I suppose.

DEATH

YES.

ZEBBO MOOTY

'Ere, when I was a kid a fortune-teller told me I'd die in me own bed, surrounded by grieving great-grandchildren. What do you think of that?

DEATH (*after a moment's pause*)

I THINK SHE WAS WRONG.

(Lights cross-fade back to the Brethren)

LUPINE WONSE

We did it! The dragon! It came! I felt it!

BROTHER PLASTERER

We never saw nothing.

BROTHER WATCHTOWER

I might of seen something—

LADY RAMKIN

Do call again. If ever you're in the area. I'm sure Errol would like to see you.

VIMES

Yes. Well, goodbye, then.

LADY RAMKIN

Goodbye, Captain Vimes.

(He exits. She sighs, and crosses to Errol)

Men!

(There is a knock at the door. She crosses to it)

Why, Captain Vimes, this is . . . who the hell are you?

(She re-enters with two guards)

Out with it. Don't just stand there. What do you want?

FIRST GUARD *(an incredulous tone in his voice)*

Lady Sybil Ramkin?

LADY RAMKIN

Use your eyes, young man. Who do you think I am?

FIRST GUARD

Well, I've got a summons for Lady Sybil Ramkin.

LADY RAMKIN

What do you mean, a summons?

FIRST GUARD

To attend upon the palace, like.

LADY RAMKIN

I can't imagine why it should be necessary at this time of the morning.

SECOND GUARD

If you don't come, we've been ordered to take steps.

LADY RAMKIN

If you think you'll lay a hand on me . . .

SECOND GUARD

No . . . but your pets might come to some harm.

FIRST GUARD

If they wasn't looked after properly, like.

LADY RAMKIN

You wouldn't!

I see. That's the way of it, is it? Two of you to fetch one feeble woman?

Very well.

(She lashes out and punches the First Guard in the stomach. The Second Guard grabs her and holds her until the First Guard gets his breath back)

FIRST GUARD

Bloody Hell! And the Dragon wants to eat HER?

SECOND GUARD

Yeah, well, she fits the bill. She's got to be the highest born lady in the city. I don't know about maiden, but I ain't asking!

(Klaxon. Footnote enters, etc)

FOOTNOTE

A number of religions in Ankh-Morpork still practised human sacrifice, except that they didn't really need to practise any more because they were so good at it. City law said that only condemned criminals should be used, but that was OK, because in most religions refusing to volunteer for sacrifice was an offence punishable by death.

(Klaxon. She exits)

SECOND GUARD

Come on.

FIRST GUARD

Weren't we supposed to kill her pet dragons?

SECOND GUARD

Nah, that was just a threat we was supposed to make. The king's hardly likely to want us to go around killing his kinsmen, is he?

FIRST GUARD

People do.

SECOND GUARD

Ah, that's different. That's 'cos WE'RE intelligent, innit.

(Lights out as they exit)

VIMES

Yes.

LADY RAMKIN

But tomorrow will do. You need the rest.

VIMES

You're being very helpful. Look, erm, can I use your . . .
er . . .

LADY RAMKIN

Yes, yes, of course. Through there. Can you manage?

VIMES (*with a hint of panic*)

Yes! Thank you!

(He limps off)

LADY RAMKIN (*sighing*)

What a charming man.

(There is a loud knocking at the door)

What on earth?

(She crosses to the door. A small group of townspeople enter. They are carrying dragon detectors and makeshift weapons)

Hwhat, is the meaning of this?

FIRST CITIZEN

Worl, it's the dragon, innit?

LADY RAMKIN

Hwhat about it?

FIRST CITIZEN

Worl. It's bin burning the city. They don't fly far. You got dragons here. Could be one of them, couldn't it?

SECOND CITIZEN

Yeah.

LADY RAMKIN (*grabbing a pitchfork*)

One step nearer, and you'll be sorry.

FIRST CITIZEN

Yeah? And what'll you do, eh?

LADY RAMKIN

I shall summon the Watch!

FIRST CITIZEN

Well, that's too bad. That's really worrying me, you know that? Makes me go all weak at the knees, that does.

SECOND CITIZEN

Yea. Stand aside, lady, because . . .

(There is a flash – theatrical flash pod)

VIMES (*entering with Errol*)

Hold it right there! This is Goodboy Bindle Featherstone of Quirm. The hottest swamp dragon in the City. It could burn your head clean off.

Now I know what you're all thinking. You're wondering, with all this excitement, has it got enough flame left

for another shot? And y'know, I ain't so sure meself. What you've got to ask yourselves is . . . am I feeling lucky?

FIRST CITIZEN

Now look, er, there's no call for anything like that.

VIMES

Drop it. Or you're history.

(All but the First Citizen drop their weapons)

Go ahead, punk, make my day.

(First Citizen drops his weapon)

But before you all disperse and go about your lawful business, just take a look at this dragon. Does he look sixty feet long? Would you say he's got an eighty foot wingspan?

SECOND CITIZEN

Who are you anyway?

VIMES

I'm Captain Vimes, City Watch.

VOICE IN THE CROWD

Night shift, is it?

VIMES *(realising he's in nightshirt and slippers)*

Right! Out with you! Go on!

FIRST CITIZEN

Right, right, we're going. No big dragons here, right enough. Sorry to have troubled you.

LADY RAMKIN

But before you go . . .

(She produces a collecting box marked 'The Sunshine Sanctuary for Sick Dragons'. The crowd all put money in as they exit.)

That was jolly brave of you.

(Vimes is stroking the dragon.)

I rather think he likes you.

VIMES

I thought you were going to get rid of him?

LADY RAMKIN

Well, yes, I suppose . . .

(A pause. Then they speak together)

LADY RAMKIN

You don't think you might like . . .

VIMES

How would it be if . . .

LADY RAMKIN

It'd be the least I could do. Please accept Goodboy as a gift, from a friend.

(She crosses to Vimes and strokes the dragon as the Lights black out)

SCENE 15 – CARROT’S ROOM

Carrot is on stage, writing a letter. Again we hear his voice over the speakers.

CARROT’S VOICE

Dear Father, Talk about a turn up for the books. Twice today groups of people have tried to search the cellars here for the dragon. It is amazing. And digging up people’s privvies and poking into attics, it is like a Fever.

Sergeant Colon says when you’re out on your Rounds and shout Twelve of the Clock and All’s Well, while a dragon is melting the street, you feel a bit of a Burke.

This morning I went for a walk with Reet. She said I am different to anyone she’s ever met. This afternoon we’re going out with Captain Vimes and his new pet dragon to see if it can sniff out the other dragon. The Captain’s dragon’s got a really long name, but Nobby says it looks like his cousin Errol, so that’s what we call it now.

I’ll write again soon, Your loving son, Carrot.

(Lights out)

SCENE 16 – A STREET IN ANKH-MORPORK

Vimes enters with Errol. Also with him are Lady Ramkin, Carrot and Sgt Colon.

SGT COLON

Dint work.

CARROT

Worth a try, though.

LADY RAMKIN

It could be all the rain, and people walking about, I suppose.

VIMES

We'd better get back.

(Cpl Nobbs enters)

CPL NOBBS

Some loony is going to fight it! Oh, sorry, begging your pardon, ma'am.

SGT COLON

I thought someone'd have a go. Poor bugger'll get baked in his own armour.

(Noise of a trumpet)

Look, there he is! Other side of the square! Smart sword, that. Go and see what's happening, Carrot.

(Carrot exits. A few citizens enter and also look out of the fourth wall at the other side of the square. They are followed by Cut-Me-Own-Throat Dibbler)

DIBBLER

Peanuts! Figgins! Sausages! Hallo, lads! Hello, Captain Vimes! Milady. In at the death, eh?

VIMES

What's going on, Dibbler?

DIBBLER

Some kid's ridden into the city and said he's goin' to kill the dragon.

(Klaxon. Action freezes. Footnote enters)

FOOTNOTE

The people of Ankh-Morpork had a straightforward, no-nonsense approach to entertainment. While they were looking forward to seeing a dragon slain, they'd be happy to settle instead for seeing someone being baked alive in his own armour. It would be something for the children to remember.

(Klaxon. She exits. Action re-starts. A crowd starts to gather)

DIBBLER

Got a magic sword, he says.

VIMES

Has he got a magic skin?

DIBBLER

You've got no romance in your soul, Captain. He says he's the rightful heir too. You know, heir to the throne.

VIMES

What throne?

DIBBLER

The throne of Ankh, of course. You know. Kings and that. Wish I could remember his name. I got an order in for two thousand coronation mugs. Gonna be a real bugger if I have to paint them all in by hand.

He made a big speech about how he was going to kill the dragon, overthrow the usurpers and right all wrongs. Everyone cheered. Sausage? Two for a dollar. Buy one for the lady? Made of genuine pig.

CARROT (*re-entering*)

Don't you mean pork?

DIBBLER

Manner of speaking. Certainly your actual pig products. No?

(He moves over to the rest of the crowd, who, with Vimes and co., come gradually downstage to watch the 'king' (off in the fourth wall))

Get your pig sausages! Five for two dollars!

VIMES

It's all gone mad. What's going on, Carrot?

CARROT

There's this lad in the middle of the plaza. He's got a glittery sword. Doesn't seem to be doing much, though.

VIMES (*to Lady Ramkin*)

Kings. Of Ankh. And Thrones. Are there?

LADY RAMKIN

Oh yes. There used to be.

VIMES

Righting wrongs. What wrongs is he going to right? Eh?

FIRST CITIZEN

We-ell. There's taxes. They're wrong for a start.

SECOND CITIZEN

That's right. And the gutter of my house leaks something dreadful and the landlord won't do nothing. That's wrong.

FIRST CITIZEN

And premature baldness. That's wrong, too. Kings can cure that.

SECOND CITIZEN

They can't answer back, you know. That's how you can tell they're royal. Completely incapable of it. Has to do with being gracious.

FIRST CITIZEN

Money too. They don't carry it. That's how you can tell a king.

CPL NOBBS

Why? It's not that heavy.

FIRST CITIZEN

And. One of the main problems of being a king is the risk of your daughter getting a prick . . .

(Vimes and co. hold their breaths, and glance at Lady Ramkin)

. . . and falling asleep for a hundred years.

ALL

Aah!

CPL NOBBS

'Ere, we'd be in the ROYAL guard then. Plumes on our hats and all.

FIRST CITIZEN

Oh yes, pageantry. Very important that. Lots of spectacles.

SECOND CITIZEN

What, free?

FIRST CITIZEN

We-ell, I think maybe you have to pay for the frames.

VIMES

You're all bloody mad! You don't know anything about him, and he hasn't even won yet! It's a fire-breathing dragon! And he's just a guy on a horse, for goodness sake!

LADY RAMKIN

Dodgy buggers, kings. Some of them were fearful oiks. Wives all over the place, and choppin' people's heads off and so on. Not our sort of people at all.

(Dragon noise. Flapping and roaring)

VIMES

Oh, my god, this is it!

(They all stare out front, horrorstruck. Noise of dragon landing. The 'king's' wimpy voice can be faintly heard: 'Now then, you vile and evil dragon, oh my word yes, take that!' The dragon roars, then the noise stops, suddenly, with a 'pop'.)

(A moment's pause, as the crowd take in what has happened, and then they all cheer)

(Black out)

SCENE 2 – A STREET IN ANKH-MORPORK. NIGHT

It is raining heavily. Hissing down. Through the rain comes a robed figure (Brother Fingers), huddled against the weather, and carrying a book. He approaches a door and takes out of his pocket a small book which he refers to while he executes a 'complicated' knock: Page one – knock (check book again, turn page) Page two – knock, knock (check book again, turn page) Page three – knock, knock, knock, and so on up to about 'seven' when a grille in the door opens suddenly and a face peers through.

VOICE

Yes?

BROTHER FINGERS

The significant owl hoots in the night.

VOICE

Yet many grey lords go sadly to the masterless men.

BROTHER FINGERS

Hooray, Hooray for the spinster's sister's daughter.

VOICE

To the axeman, all supplicants are the same height.

BROTHER FINGERS

Yet verily, the rose is within the thorn.

VOICE

The good mother makes bean soup for the errant boy.

BROTHER FINGERS (*after a pause*)

What?

VOICE

The good mother makes bean soup for the errant boy.

BROTHER FINGERS (*after another pause*)

Are you sure the ill-built tower doesn't tremble mightily
at a butterfly's passage?

VOICE

Nope. Bean soup it is. Sorry.

BROTHER FINGERS

What about the caged whale?

VOICE

What about it?

BROTHER FINGERS

It should know nothing of the mighty deeps, if you must
know.

VOICE

Oh, the caged whale. You want the Elucidated Brethren
of the Ebon Night. Three doors down.

BROTHER FINGERS

Who're you then?

VOICE

We're the Illuminated and Ancient Brethren of Ee.

BROTHER FINGERS

I thought you met over in Treacle Street.

VOICE

Yeah, well, you know how it is. The fretwork club have the room Tuesdays. There was a bit of a mix-up.

BROTHER FINGERS

Oh? Well, thanks anyway.

VOICE

My pleasure.

(The grille slams shut. Brother Fingers makes his way over to the other door [or, in our case, made his way around the stage and back to the same door again]. He repeats the 'knock' business up to about 'three' when the grille opens and another face looks out)

BROTHER DOORKEEPER

Yes?

BROTHER FINGERS

Look, The significant owl hoots in the night, all right?

BROTHER DOORKEEPER

Yet many grey lords go sadly to the masterless men.

BROTHER FINGERS

Hooray, Hooray for the spinster's sister's daughter, OK?

SCENE 5 – THE PATRICIAN’S PALACE

The Patrician and Urdo Van Pew, President of the Thieves’ Guild, are on stage.

PATRICIAN

He did what?

VAN PEW

Marched me through the streets. Me – Urdo Van Pew, President of the Thieves’ Guild! In broad daylight! With my hands tied together!

You know very well that we have kept within the budget. To be humiliated like that! Like a common criminal!

(He starts to wag his finger at the Patrician. Klaxon. Action freezes. The Footnote enters)

FOOTNOTE

You need a special kind of mind to rule a city like Ankh-Morpork, and Lord Vetinari had it.

He appeared to have no vice whatsoever. Where other lords dined on larks’ tongues, Lord Vetinari considered a glass of boiled water and half a slice of dry bread was an elegant sufficiency.

Under his hand, for the first time in a thousand years, Ankh-Morpork operated. It might not be fair or

particularly democratic, but it worked. It was said he could tolerate absolutely anything except anything threatening the city.

(she starts to exit)

Oh. And mime artists. A strange aversion, but there you are. Anyone in baggy trousers and a white face who tried to ply their art in Ankh-Morpork would very quickly find themselves in the scorpion pit, on one wall of which was painted the advice: Learn The Words.

(Klaxon. Action restarts. Footnote exits)

VAN PEW

I have brought Captain Vimes here with me. There had better be a full apology, or you will have another strike on your hands.

(The Patrician continues to gaze at Van Pew's finger with cold disdain. Van Pew becomes aware of the impropriety and withdraws the offending digit.)

PATRICIAN

And you say this was one person?

VAN PEW

Yes! Er, that is . . .

PATRICIAN

But there are hundreds of you in the Guild building. Thick as, you should excuse the expression, thieves.

VAN PEW

Yes, but it was the way he just strode in as if he owned the place that fooled people. That and the fact he kept hitting people and telling them to mend their ways.

PATRICIAN

I shall deal with the matter momentarily.

VAN PEW

Does that mean 'now', or just 'briefly'?

(The Patrician just looks at him)

Er, a full apology, mark you. I have a position to maintain.

PATRICIAN

Thank you. Do not let me detain you.

VAN PEW

Right. Good. Thank you. Very well.

PATRICIAN *(pointedly)*

After all, you have such a lot of work to do.

VAN PEW

Well of course, this is the case. *(Hoping for a clue)* Er?

PATRICIAN

With so much business being conducted, that is.

VAN PEW

Er, I still don't quite follow.

PATRICIAN

Curious choice of targets (*referring to a piece of paper*) 'A crystal ball belonging to a fortune teller in Sheer Street, A small ornament from the Temple of Offler the Crocodile God.' And so on. Trinkets.

VAN PEW

I'm afraid I really don't know . . .

PATRICIAN

No unlicensed thieving, surely?

(Klaxon. Action freezes. The Footnote enters)

FOOTNOTE

Sorry to butt in again so soon. One of the Patrician's remarkable innovations was to form the city's thieves into a formal Guild and to make them responsible for theft. Thus, in return for an agreed level of crime per annum, and an undertaking to allow the City Watch to be wound down, the thieves saw to it that unauthorised crime was firmly stamped out. With crime levels agreed annually in advance, everyone could plan ahead, said Lord Vetinari, and part of the uncertainty had been removed from the chaos that is life.

The Watch hadn't liked it, but the fact was that the Thieves' Guild were far better at controlling crime than the Watch. After all, the Watch had to work twice as hard to cut crime by just a little, whereas all the Thieves' Guild had to do was to work less.

(Klaxon. Action unfreezes as the Footnote exits)

VAN PEW

Unlicensed thieving? Not while I remain President of the Thieves' Guild. We are most strict about that. I shall look into it directly. Depend upon it!

PATRICIAN

I'm sure I can. Thank you for coming to see me. Don't hesitate to leave.

(As Van Pew exits, he meets Lupine Wonse entering)

VAN PEW *(sotto voce to Wonse)*

It happens every time. You come here with a perfectly reasonable complaint. Next thing you know, you're shuffling out relieved to be simply getting away with your life!

LUPINE WONSE *(also sotto voce)*

You certainly have to hand it to the Patrician. If you don't, he sends men round to come and get it!

(Van Pew exits. Lupine Wonse crosses to the Patrician.)

PATRICIAN

The Watch appears to be having some difficulty with the Thieves' Guild. Van Pew was here claiming that a member of the Watch arrested him.

LUPINE WONSE

What for, sir?

PATRICIAN

Being a thief, apparently.

SCENE 18 – DARK STAGE

We hear the voice of the Dragon over the speakers

DRAGON

Insolent fools! How dare they? How dare they? The power; the wind on my wings; the pleasure of the flame. And – what an interesting world: clear skies, and strange running creatures on the ground, to chase and incinerate.

And then! Then! Just as I was beginning to really enjoy it all, they cripple me – stop me from flaming – whip me back like some hairy canine animal.

They banished me, but there is still a path back. I can sense their leader's mind. The voice so full of its own diminutive importance; a mind almost like that of a dragon, but on a tiny scale.

I'll be back.

INTERVAL

SCENE 19 – A BAR IN ANKH-MORPORK

Cpl Nobbs, Sgt Colon, the Librarian and Carrot are on stage. The table in front of them is full of empty beer tankards. Carrot is still sober. Also on stage is the Footnote; she speaks first, while the scene behind remains frozen.

FOOTNOTE

Ankh-Morpork was celebrating. Street parties, knees-ups, pub crawls, posh banquets and balls. Lord Vetinari seldom had balls. In fact, there was a popular song about it. But now it would be balls all the way.

(Klaxon. She exits)

SGT COLON

It's at times like this . . . threat to the city destroyed, reason to celebrate . . . times like this, I wish old G . . .

CPL NOBBS

Don't say it. You agreed. We wouldn't say nothin'. No good talking about it.

SGT COLON

He was a righteous man, our Gaskin.

CPL NOBBS

We couldn't of helped it.

CARROT

What happened, then?

CPL NOBBS

He died . . . in the hexecution of his Duty.

LIBRARIAN

Oook!

SGT COLON

I told him. I said, Slow Down, You'll do yourself a chissmeef, erm, mischief. Dunno what got into him, running ahead like that.

CPL NOBBS

I blame the Thieves' Guild. Letting people like that on the streets . . .

SGT COLON

There was this bloke we saw done a robbery. Right in front of us! And Captain Vimes said Come On and we run. Only the point is, you shouldn't run too fast, see? Else you might catch them. Leads to all sorts of problems, catching people . . .

CPL NOBBS

They don't like it.

SGT COLON

They don't like it. But Gaskin went and forgot. He ran on, went round the corner and . . . well, this bloke had a couple of his mates waiting—

LIBRARIAN

Eeek!

CPL NOBBS

It was his heart really.

SGT COLON

Well anyway. And there he was. Captain Vimes was very upset about it.

You shouldn't run fast in the Watch, lad. You can be a fast guard, or you can be an old guard, but you can't be a fast old guard. Poor old Gaskin.

CARROT

It didn't ought to be like that.

LIBRARIAN

Oook!

SGT COLON

But it is.

CARROT

But it didn't ought to be.

LIBRARIAN

Oook!

SGT COLON

Well, it is.

(Someone enters, carrying a box of bunting)

CPL NOBBS

What's goin' on?

BUNTING CARRIER

Who wants to know, tiddler?

CARROT (*rising*)

We do, actually.

BUNTING CARRIER

Oh. Well, it's the coronation, innit? Got to get the streets ready; got to get the flags out. Reminders of our noble heritage.

CPL NOBBS

How long have we had a noble heritage, then?

BUNTING CARRIER

Since yesterday, of course.

(And he exits with his box)

CARROT

You can't have heritage in a day. It takes years.

SGT COLON

If we haven't got one, I'll bet we'll soon have had one. My wife left me a note about it. All these years, and she turns out to be a monarchist!

Huh! A man knocks his pipes out for thirty years to try and put a bit of meat on the table, and all she can talk about is some boy who gets to be king for five minutes' work. Know what I had for my tea last night? Bloody beef dripping sandwiches!

SCENE 21 – THE PATRICIAN’S, sorry, KING’S
PALACE. LUPINE WONSE’S OFFICE

Lupine Wonse is on stage. A servant enters.

SERVANT

There’s a Captain Vimes to see you, sir.

LUPINE WONSE

Vimes of the City Watch?

SERVANT.

Yes, sir.

LUPINE WONSE

Tell him to come back another day.

(Vimes and Carrot enter)

VIMES

Good of you to see us.

LUPINE WONSE

Since you’re here . . .

(Vimes chucks his helmet on Lupine Wonse’s desk and sits down)

. . . take a seat.