

Light Fantastic discussion questions

- Did you like the book? What was your initial reaction?
- Which character would you most like to meet?
- Which one would you like to be your mentor/whose class would you like to take?
- Who is the smartest character?
- Who is the most devious character?
- What was your favorite part of the book?
- Why did _____ do _____?
- What would have happened if _____?
- What did you like or not like about the ending? Could it have played out any differently?
- If the book were made into a movie, who would play the character of _____?
- Does the university seem like a place you would like to be? Why/why not?
- What was the funniest/scariest/thought-provoking/enlightening part of the book?

Plot summary

After the wizard Rincewind has fallen from the edge of the Discworld, the Octavo magic book saves his life and he lands back onto the world. Meanwhile, the wizards of Ankh-Morpork discover that the Discworld will soon be destroyed unless the eight spells of the Octavo are read: the most powerful spells in existence, one of which hides in Rincewind's head. Consequently, several orders of wizards try to capture Rincewind, led by Trymon, a former classmate of Rincewind's, who wishes to obtain the power of the spells for himself.

After Rincewind, who has met again with Twoflower, escapes them, it becomes apparent that Great A'Tuin, the giant turtle that carries the Discworld, has set a new course that leads it directly into a red star with eight moons. Rincewind and Twoflower are accompanied by Cohen the Barbarian, a toothless, aging hero, and Bethan, a sacrificial virgin saved by Cohen, with assistance from Rincewind and Twoflower.

Rincewind becomes one of the very few people ever to enter Death's Domain whilst still alive. He is nearly killed when he meets Death's adopted daughter Ysabell, but is saved by the quick-acting Luggage. The group also encounter people who, anticipating the apocalypse, are heading for the mountains (not for protection, but because they will have a better view). As well as this, they happen upon the kind of shop where strange and sinister goods are on sale and inexplicably vanish the next time a customer tries to find them. The existence of these shops is explained as being a curse by a sorcerer upon the shopkeeper for not having something in stock.

As the star comes nearer and the magic on the Discworld becomes weaker, Trymon tries to put the seven spells still in the Octavo into his mind, in an attempt to save the world and gain ultimate power. However, the spells prove too strong for him and his mind becomes a door into the "Dungeon Dimensions", whence strange, horrible creatures try to escape into reality. After winning a fight against them, Rincewind is able to read all eight spells aloud; whereupon the eight moons of the red star crack open and reveal eight tiny world-turtles that follow their parent A'Tuin on a course away from the star. The Octavo is then eaten by Twoflower's Luggage.

The book ends with Twoflower and Rincewind parting company, as Twoflower decides to return home, leaving The Luggage with Rincewind as a parting gift.

https://discworld.fandom.com/wiki/The_Light_Fantastic

Noteworthy quotes

“...the little man's total obliviousness to all forms of danger somehow made danger so discouraged that it gave up and went away.”

“It's not that he doesn't appreciate beauty, he just appreciates it in his own way. I mean, if a poet sees a daffodil he stares at it and writes a long poem about it, but Twoflower wanders off to find a book on botany.”

“The barbarian chieftain said: “What then are the greatest things that a man may find in life?” This is the sort of thing you're supposed to say to maintain steppecred in barbarian circles.”

“Take a tartan. Sprinkle it with confetti. Light it with strobe lights. Now take a chameleon. Put the chameleon on the tartan. Watch it closely. See?”