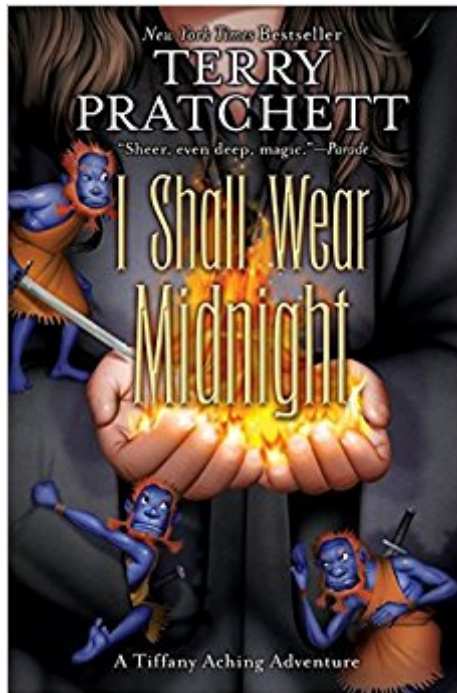




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I Shall Wear Midnight (Tiffany Aching)



Synopsis

The fourth in a series of Discworld novels starring the young witch Tiffany Aching. As the witch of the Chalk, Tiffany Aching performs the distinctly unglamorous work of caring for the needy. But someone—or something—is inciting fear, generating dark thoughts and angry murmurs against witches. Tiffany must find the source of unrest and defeat the evil at its root. Aided by the tiny-but-tough Wee Free Men, Tiffany faces a dire challenge, for if she falls, the whole Chalk falls with her. . . .

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Gr 7 Up—This is the final adventure of the young witch, Tiffany Aching, and her obnoxious, fawning, and yet lovable small blue companions, the Nac Mac Feegles. In many ways it's a coming-of-age novel, as Tiffany is now on her own. Known as "The Hag O'the Hills," she spends her time tending to the messy, menial, everyday things that no one else will take care of, such as fixing bones or easing the pain of a dying man. But as she tries to serve the people of the Chalk hills, she senses a growing distrust of her, and a loss of respect for witches in general. Along with the Nac Mac Feegles, she has to seek out the source of this growing fear. Tiffany discovers she may have been responsible for waking an evil force when she kissed the winter in Wintersmith (HarperTempest, 2006). The Cunning Man is in need of a host body and is searching for Tiffany. Pratchett combines gut-busting humor and amusing footnotes with a genuine poignancy as Tiffany tries to decide what her future should be. Fans of the author's "Discworld" series

(HarperCollins) books will enjoy the connections with the larger series, particularly the inclusion of Granny Weatherwax. Simply put, this fourth and final book in the series is an undisputed triumph. —Tim Wadham, St. Louis County Library, MO (c) Copyright 2010. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Pratchett returns to the terra firma of his popular, sprawling Discworld series, the young-reader corner of which centers around teen witch Tiffany Aching. Being a good witch mostly means tending to the locals' minor aches, pains, and kerfuffles—which she does with as much aplomb as anyone could be expected to muster—but to become a great witch, she'll have to contend with the malevolent ghost of an ancient witch-burner. Yet even that might not be as terrifying as trying to keep the peace between the humans and the wee Nac Mac Feegles (whose primary skills are drinking, brawling, having Scottish brogues, brawling a bit more, and stealing every scene they're in) and, shudder, getting wrapped up in the wedding of her childhood friend, who is suddenly a very myopic baron. The action never picks up much more momentum than a determined amble, but readers won't care a whit because in terms of pure humor per square word, Pratchett may be the cheeriest writer around. Now that Tiffany Aching's adventures are concluded, readers can explore the nearly three decades' worth of other Discworld books. Grades 8-12. --Ian Chipman --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

An absolutely beautiful book. It actually brought me to tears on three separate occasions (I will admit to being a bit of a sap) I have been reading Terry Pratchett's books for 16 years since I first discovered 'Sourcery' in my high school library and then went back and caught up with the others and I truly believe this is his best. At least, it resonated the most with me. Considering at the point he wrote it his Alzheimer's had reached the point where he could no longer type but needs to dictate his words, this is an incredible achievement. The man is still sharp as a whip and an incredible storyteller to boot. I haven't loved one of his books this much since I read 'Maskerade' and I loved that book an awful lot.. as I did 'Witches Abroad' so maybe I'm just partial to the witch related stories? Nevertheless if you are a fan, you owe it to yourself to read this. After reading the previous three Tiffany Aching books of course as they all tie in together. Once again, I love this book and it has made my top ten of favourite books ever. As far as the Kindle edition goes, it was just fine. Formatting was great, easy to read, all the illustrations translated quite nicely and only one spelling mistake.

This is the latest entry in Pratchett's four-book sub-series about a young witch, Tiffany Aching, as she grows up and learns, appropriately enough for her trade, to be a wise woman. (There are upwards of thirty or forty "Discworld" books total, which cluster into subgroups around individual characters). While you could certainly start here if you wanted to, new readers might find it more rewarding to begin with *The Wee Free Men*, the first in Tiffany's sub-series, followed by *A Hat Full of Sky* and then *Wintersmith*, before proceeding to this one. This is billed as a children's / young adult book, although little sets it apart from Pratchett's other fantasy except for some (very) slight bowdlerizations; primarily, this is a young adult book because the heroine is a young adult, and it deals with issues that young adults have to deal with. Like the Harry Potter books, the content and tone of the Tiffany series have been maturing ever so slightly with each book to match the advancing maturity of the protagonist, and while this one's still suitable for younger readers, it definitely contains a few jokes likely to fly over their heads (at least unless some other source has educated them). Tiffany herself is portrayed as very mature for her age - a portrayal deliberate on Pratchett's part, I believe, as Tiffany is exactly as mature as most people that age tend to think they are, and almost as mature as she herself wants to be. Each volume in the series sets Tiffany a particular problem to resolve; here the problem (s) are innuendo, rumour, gossip, romantic rivalries, and pointless mob hatred, things that many if not most teenage girls will identify with (even if in Tiffany's case the "witch hunt" she has to deal with is somewhat more literal). Tiffany's prior romance with Roland, the son of the local Baron, has clearly ended, and Roland's is about to marry Letitia, the daughter of a (very obnoxious) Duchess; meanwhile, some of the residents of the Chalk are stirring up hatred and accusations against Tiffany, and stalking her is the Cunning Man, a personification of suspicion, envious rage, hatred, mob violence, and the witch hunt. Pratchett's typical mastery is still present here, his wit and his wisdom; the only real sign of his advancing illness is that there's a sense, especially in the novel's conclusion, that this may be the final Tiffany Aching novel and the final novel of his Witches series (if only because it features a cameo appearance from a character we haven't seen since the very first Witches-series novel, *Equal Rites*, first published twenty-plus years ago). All in all, it's an excellent book, fully as good as anything else he's written, and a book that will definitely please fans of the series and new readers alike.

I don't know for sure that *I Shall Wear Midnight* is the final Tiffany Aching story, but it certainly feels as though it could be. After all, this has been a series about young Aching's ascent into full-blown

witchhood, and as she faces down a truly horrific challenge in *Midnight*, there's a sense that she's completed that transition and passed with flying colors by the end. And while I won't lie and say that I wouldn't love to see more Aching stories, at least if Pratchett has ended this arc, he's ended it with an absolute masterpiece, giving us not only the best Aching book, but one of the best Discworld books, period. As always, Pratchett turns some amazing and hilarious phrases here, and it's hard to count all the times I laugh out loud from just his wry narration, to say nothing of the absolute anarchy provided by the Nac Mac Feegles that constantly follow Tiffany around. But *Midnight* is also fascinatingly, horrifyingly dark at times, with the plot being set into motion by a man who has beaten his daughter so badly that he's caused a miscarriage, and a lynch mob rising up against him. That's heavy stuff for a nominally young-adult novel, and it's to Pratchett's credit that he faces up to this darkness and shows what people - no matter what their age - must do if such darkness is to be put down into its place. As always, in fact, there are a lot of quiet lessons being taught in a Discworld book, from the importance of fighting against ignorance to the way that authority is often as much about appearance as it is power, but they never turn the book didactic. Instead, Pratchett creates his usual effortlessly funny, charming, and absolutely involving story, threading together dozens of plotlines into an ending that doesn't just tie up the book, but gives us a good sense of closure for Tiffany herself. As always, the worst part of a Pratchett book is having to end it, and that goes doubly here; Aching is one of Pratchett's most winning and wonderful creations, and whether she's attempting to settle an angry town or negotiating with tiny tattooed hooligans, her charm, wit, intelligence, and courage makes her a role model for any gender (but the fact that she's such a strong feminine role model is only another testament to why I love this book). I hope there's more Aching to come, but if not, it's gone out in the best way it possibly could, and that's something in of itself.

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