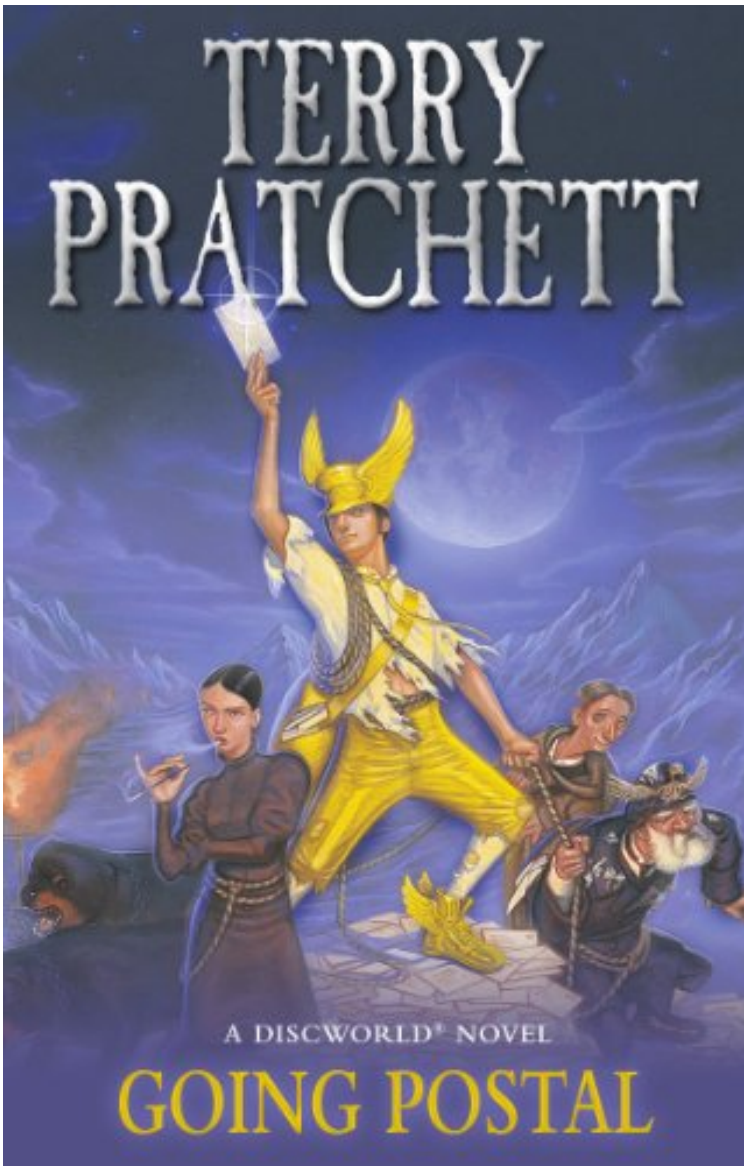


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Going Postal: (Discworld Novel 33)



Par Terry Pratchett
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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurThe post was an old thing, of course, but it was so old that it had magically become new again. Moist von Lipwig is a con artist and a fraud and a man faced with a life choice: be hanged, or put

Ankh-Morpork's ailing postal service back on its feet. Its a tough decision. The post is a creaking old institution, overshadowed by new technology. But there are people who still believe in it, and Moist must become one of them if he's going to see that the mail gets though, come rain, hail, sleet, dogs, the Post Office Workers Friendly and Benevolent Society, the evil chairman of the Grand Trunk Semaphore Company, and a midnight killer. Getting a date with Adora Bell Dearheart would be nice, too. Perhaps there's a shot at redemption in the mad world of the mail, waiting for a man who's prepared to push the

envelope...ExtraitChapter OneThe AngelIn which our Hero experiences Hope, the Greatest Gift The Bacon Sandwich of Regret Sombre Reflections on Capital Punishment from the Hangman Famous Last Words Our

Hero Dies Angels, conversations about Inadvisability of Misplaced Offers regarding Broomsticks An Unexpected Ride A World Free of Honest Men A Man on the Hop There is Always a ChoiceThey say that the prospect of being hanged in the morning concentrates a man's mind wonderfully; unfortunately, what the mind inevitably concentrates on is that it is in a body that, in the morning, is going to be hanged.The man going to be hanged had been named Moist von Lipwig by doting if unwise parents, but he was not going to embarrass the name, in so far as that was still possible, by being hung under it. To the world in general, and particularly on that bit of it known as the death warrant, he was Albert Spangler.And he took a more positive approach to the situation and had concentrated his mind on the prospect of not being hanged in the morning, and most particularly on the prospect of removing all the crumbling mortar from around a stone in his cell wall with a spoon. So far the work had taken him five weeks, and reduced the spoon to something like a nail file. Fortunately, no one ever came to change the bedding here, or else they would have discovered the world's heaviest mattress. It was the large and heavy stone that was currently the object of his attentions, and at some point a huge staple had been hammered into it as an anchor for manacles.Moist sat down facing the wall, gripped the iron ring in both hands, braced his legs against the stones on either side, and heaved.His shoulders caught fire and a red mist filled his vision but the block slid out, with a faint and inappropriate tinkling noise. Moist managed to ease it away from the hole and peered inside.At the far end was another block, and the mortar around it looked suspiciously strong and fresh.Just in front of it was a new spoon. It was shiny.As he studied it, he heard the clapping behind him. He turned his head, tendons twanging a little riff of agony, and saw several of the warders watching him through the bars.'Well done, Mr Spangler!' said one of them. 'Ron here owes me five dollars! I told him you were a sticker! He's a sticker, I said!' 'You set this up, did you, Mr Wilkinson?' said Moist weakly, watching the glint of light on the spoon.'Oh, not us, sir.

Lord Vetinari's orders. He insists that all condemned prisoners should be offered the prospect of freedom.'Freedom? But there's a damn great stone through there!' 'Yes, there is that, sir, yes, there is that,' said the warder. 'It's only the prospect, you see. Not actual free freedom as such. Hah, that'd be a bit daft, eh?' 'I suppose so, yes,' said Moist. He didn't say 'you bastards.' The warders had treated him quite civilly this past six weeks, and he made a point of getting on with people. He was very, very good at it. People skills were part of his stock-in-trade; they were nearly the whole of it. Besides, these people had big sticks. So, speaking carefully, he added: 'Some people might consider this cruel, Mr Wilkinson.' 'Yes, sir, we asked him about that, sir, but he said no, it wasn't. He said it provided-' his forehead wrinkled '-occ-you-pay-shun-all ther-rap-py, healthy exercise, prevented moping and offered that greatest of all treasures which is Hope, sir.' 'Hope,' muttered Moist glumly. 'Not upset, are you, sir?' 'Upset? Why should I be upset, Mr Wilkinson?' 'Only the last bloke we had in this cell, he managed to get down that drain, sir. Very small man.

Very agile.'Moist looked at the little grid in the floor. He'd dismissed it out of hand. 'Does it lead to the river?' he said.The warder grinned. 'You'd think so, wouldn't you? He was really upset when we fished him out. Nice to see you've entered into the spirit of the thing, sir. You've been an example to all of us, sir, the way you kept going. Stuffing all the dust in your mattress? Very clever, very tidy. Very neat. It's really cheered us up, having you in here. By the way, Mrs Wilkinson says ta very much for the fruit basket. Very posh, it is. It's got kumquats, even!' 'Don't mention it, Mr Wilkinson.' 'The Warden was a bit green about the kumquats 'cos he only got dates in his, but I told him, sir, that fruit baskets is like life: until you've got the pineapple offf the top you never know what's underneath. He says thank you, too.' 'Glad he liked it, Mr Wilkinson,' said Moist absent-mindedly. Several of his former landladies had brought in presents for 'the poor confused boy', and Moist always invested in generosity. A career like his was all about style, after all.'On that general subject, sir,' said Mr Wilkinson, 'me and the lads were wondering if you might like to unburden yourself, at this point in time, on the subject of the whereabouts of the place where the location of the spot is where, not to beat about the bush, you hid all that money you stole . . .?'The jail went silent. Even the cockroaches were listening.'No, I couldn't do that, Mr Wilkinson,' said Moist loudly, after a decent pause for dramatic effect. He tapped his jacket pocket, held up a finger and winked. The warders grinned back.'We understand totally, sir. Now I'd get some rest if I was you, sir, 'cos we're hanging you in half an hour,' said

Mr Wilkinson.'Hey, don't I get breakfast?' 'Breakfast isn't until seven o'clock, sir,' said the warder reproachfully. 'But, tell you what, I'll do you a bacon sandwich. 'cos it's you, Mr Spangler.'***And now it was a few minutes before dawn and it was him being led down the short corridor and out into the little room under the scaffold. Moist realized he was looking at himself from a distance, as if part of himself was

floating outside his body like a child's balloon ready, as it were, for him to let go of the string. The room was lit by light coming through cracks in the scaffold floor above, and significantly from around the edges of the large trapdoor. The hinges of said door were being carefully oiled by a man in a hood. He stopped when he saw the party arrive and said, 'Good morning, Mr Spangler.' He raised the hood helpfully. 'It's me, sir, Daniel

"One Drop" Trooper. I am your executioner for today, sir. Don't you worry, sir. I've hanged dozens of people. We'll soon have you out of here." "Is it true that if a man isn't hanged after three attempts he's reprieved, Dan?" said Moist, as the executioner carefully wiped his hands on a rag. "So I've heard, sir, so I've heard. But they don't call me One Drop for nothing, sir. And will sir be having the black bag today?" "Will it help?" "Some people think it makes them look more dashing, sir. And it stops that pop-eyed look. It's more a crowd thing, really. Quite a big one out there this morning. Nice piece about you in the Times yesterday, I thought. All them people saying what a nice young man you were, and everything. Er . . . would you mind signing the rope beforehand, sir? I mean, I won't have a chance to ask you afterwards, eh?" "Signing the rope?" said Moist. "Yessir," said the hangman. "It's sort of traditional. There's a lot of people out there who buy old rope. Specialist collectors, you could say. A bit strange, but it takes all sorts, eh? Worth more signed, of course." He flourished a length of stout rope. "I've got a special pen that signs on rope. One signature every couple of inches? Straightforward signature, no dedication needed. Worth money to me, sir. I'd be very grateful." "So grateful that you won't hang me, then?" said Moist, taking the pen. This got an appreciative laugh. Mr Trooper watched him sign along the length, nodding happily. "Well done, sir, that's my pension plan you're signing there. Now . . . are we ready, everyone?" "Not me!" said Moist quickly, to another round of general amusement. "You're a card, Mr Spangler," said Mr Wilkinson. "It won't be the same without you around, and that's the truth." "Not for me, at any rate," said Moist. This was, once again, treated like rapier wit.

Moist sighed. "Do you really think all this deters crime, Mr Trooper?" he said. "Well, in the generality of things I'd say it's hard to tell, given that it's hard to find evidence of crimes not committed," said the hangman, giving the trapdoor a final rattle. "But in the specificity, sir, I'd say it's very efficacious." "Meaning what?" said Moist. "Meaning I've never seen someone up here more'n once, sir. Shall we go?" There was a stir when they climbed up into the chilly morning air, followed by a few boos and even some applause. People were strange like that. Steal five dollars and you were a petty thief. Steal thousands of dollars and you were either a government or a hero. Moist stared ahead while the roll call of his crimes was read out. He couldn't help feeling that it was so unfair. He'd never so much as tapped someone on the head. He'd never even broken down a door. He had picked locks on occasion, but he'd always locked them again behind him. Apart from all those repossessions, bankruptcies and sudden insolvencies, what had he actually done that was bad, as such? He'd only been moving numbers around. "Nice crowd turned out today," said Mr Trooper, tossing the end of the rope over the beam and busying himself with knots. "Lot of press, too. What Gallows? covers 'em all, o' course, and there's the Times and the Pseudopolis Herald, prob'ly because of that bank what collapsed there, and I heard there's a man from the Sto Plains Dealer, too. Very good financial section - I always keep... Revue de presse" "His world, increasingly subtle and thoughtful, has become as allegorical and satirical as a painting by Bosch ... Pratchett's joy in his creations, in jokes, puns, the idea of letters and language itself makes GOING POSTAL one of the best expressions of his unstoppable flow of comic invention." (The Times) "Like many of Pratchett's best comic novels, it is a book about redemption ... There's a moral toughness here, which is one of the reasons why Pratchett is never merely frivolous." (Time Out) "With all the puns, strange names and quick-fire jokes about captive letters demanding to be delivered, it's easy to miss how cross about injustice Terry Pratchett can be. This darkness and concrete morality sets his work apart from imitators of his English Absurd school of comic fantasy." (Guardian) "Terry Pratchett is one of the great makers of what Auden called 'secondary worlds'. His inventiveness - with people with plots, with things - is seemingly inexhaustible ... Pratchett can make you giggle helplessly and then grin grimly at the sharpness of his wit. Twelve-year old boys love him, but he himself is grown up. He knows that terrible things exist and happen, and he invents a benign otherworld in which we can face them, and laugh." (A.S. Byatt, DAILY MAIL) "Pratchett ... is the missing link between Douglas Adams and J.K. Rowling. To non-initiates his work is gobbledygook, but dig deeper and you find the wit and imagination that have gained him a fanatical readership - among them is A.S. Byatt." (FT MAGAZINE)