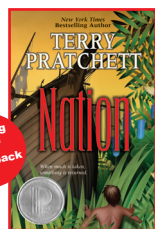


# Books by Terry Pratchett

## A Selected Biography

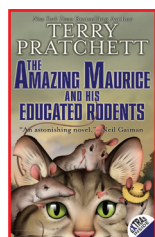


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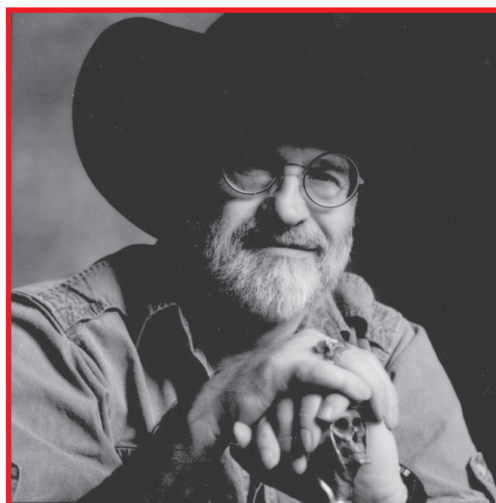
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Robin Matthews

## About the Author

Terry Pratchett's books have sold more than 55 million copies worldwide. In addition to his hit novels about the fantastical flat planet Discworld, he has written many award-winning children's books, including the Johnny Maxwell trilogy and the bestselling Tiffany Aching Adventures. He won a Michael L. Printz Honor for *Nation* and received Britain's highest honor for a children's novel, the Carnegie Medal, for *The Amazing Maurice and His Educated Rodents*. In 2009, Sir Terry Pratchett was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II. He has a grown-up daughter and lives in England with his wife and many cats. You can visit him online at [www.terrypratchettbooks.com](http://www.terrypratchettbooks.com).

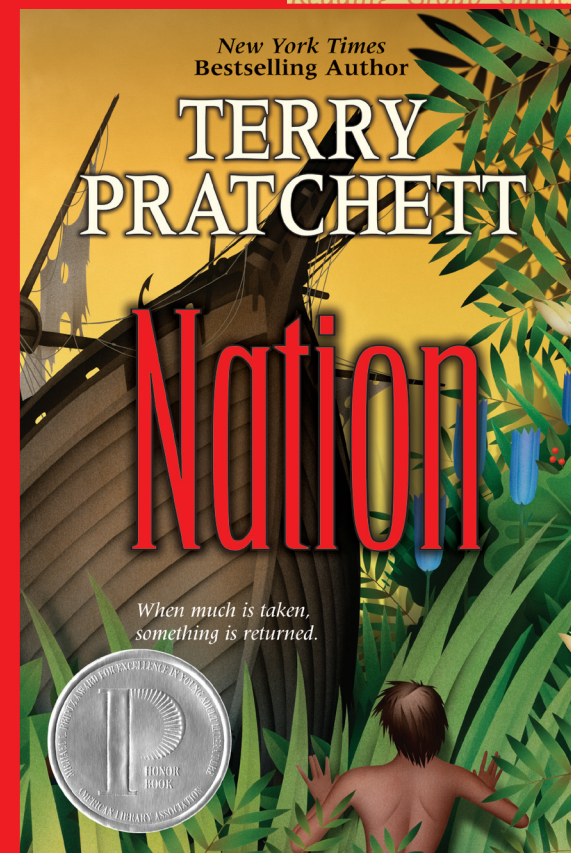
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Guide created by HarperCollins Children's Books and Joshua Polster, M.S. in teaching and Teach for America alumnus, New York City.

## Reading Group Guide



Printz Honor Book  
*Nation*  
By Terry Pratchett

## About the Book

Only two survivors remain after a giant wave crashes upon an island. Mau's village is destroyed and the voices of his Grandfathers demand that he rebuild everything just as it was. Daphne's ship has run aground and the voice of her grandmother reminds her that she is just 138 people away from being an English princess—she should *not* be mucking around on an island. In Terry Pratchett's Printz Honor Book *Nation*, Mau and Daphne hear these voices and have to decide whether or not to listen. . . .

## Discussion Questions

1. What is the importance of starting this novel off with a myth? How does the myth influence Mau's living situation and outlook on life? Are there any myths that have shaped your life?
2. What, if anything, do the English and the islanders have in common regarding religion and lifestyle? What role does religion play in their lives? Do their different gods cause them to have different values?
3. Why does Mau throw his spear through the porthole when he first visits Daphne on the *Sweet Judy* (p. 64)? What other examples of misunderstanding can you find in the novel? As an outside observer, how do you react to these situations?
4. What expectations do the Grandfathers place on Mau? How does Mau respond to these expectations? What expectations do adults place on you?
5. What is a stereotype? How do stereotypes dictate the way the English view the islanders? Are their assumptions correct and do the islanders hold any stereotypes of their own?
6. Ataba tells Mau that "belief is a complicated matter" (p. 172). What does Mau learn about belief in the course of the story? What beliefs do Mau and Daphne share? How do you respond when you meet someone who has beliefs different from yours?
7. What is the purpose of manners? How do they help or hinder Daphne's interactions with Mau and the other characters? Are there manners that transcend different cultures?

8. According to Daphne, a metaphor is “a kind of lie to help you understand what’s true” (p. 324). Use this definition to explain Mau’s musing early in the novel that he is a single piece of papervine (p. 44). What other examples of metaphor can you find in *Nation*?
9. Mau reflects that “one of the Right Things for a man was: Don’t ask silly questions” (p. 50). What other characteristics or tasks are considered “Right Things” for men on the island? What “Right Things” are expected of women? How do these responsibilities compare to what is expected of women in Daphne’s world? Are there certain things that are considered either men’s or women’s work today?
10. What does it mean to be ethical? Is Daphne’s killing of Foxlip ethical? Does the ruling of the court affect your opinion of Daphne’s ethics? Why or why not?
11. Mau tells Daphne, “There are rules,” referring to the interaction between the Nation and the Raiders (p. 300). Yet during his battle with Cox, Mau thinks “you can’t cheat when there are no rules” (p. 313). Should there be rules in war? Do you think Mau cheats?
12. The old man says, “Religion is not an exact science. Sometimes, of course, neither is science” (p. 366). What are the functions of religion and science in *Nation*? Are religion and science similar? How do they help people?
13. When Daphne shows her father the god cave, he says, “All this belongs in a museum!” (p. 330). Why does Daphne disagree? Should special objects be placed in museums, or should they be left where they are found?
14. Daphne decides to return to England with her father. Does she make the right decision? What would you have done in her situation?
15. Even though the traditional ceremony where Mau is to become a man never takes place, does he become a man anyway? When does a child become an adult? How do you define the difference between children and adults?

## Extension Activities

1. **Not Just a Party.** Compile a list of the Nation's rituals for becoming a man. Research coming of age traditions from other cultures, such as the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, Communion, Quinceañera, Seijin shiki, and Walkabout. Compare and contrast these traditions with those of the Nation.
2. **Mapping the Nation.** Draw a map showing the many island locations described in *Nation*, including the Women's Place, the god cave, the *Sweet Judy* wreckage, the beach, and the lagoon. Label each location and create a map key that includes a list of events from the novel that happen at each site.
3. **Dear Grandma.** Daphne often imagines what her grandmother would say about the things she does on the island. Write a letter from Daphne's perspective to her grandmother that describes some of her island adventures. Experiences you may want to write about include delivering a baby, having Mau for tea, making beer, and interacting with Mrs. Gurgle. Use your imagination to provide details about the stories you relate. After everyone in your group has completed their letters, exchange with a partner. Write a response to your partner's letter from the perspective of Daphne's grandmother.
4. **Water Fall.** Cox is not able to shoot Mau because the water slows down his bullet. Experiment further with the properties of water. Fill a deep clear bowl or other container with water and drop in various objects. Which objects float and which sink? Hypothesize and test the qualities you think determine buoyancy. For the objects that sink, do different ones take different lengths of time to sink to the bottom of the container? How does the time a given object takes to sink compare to the time it takes for it to fall the same distance through the air?
5. **Gold Diggers.** Daphne tells her father that she can prove no European has ever been to the god cave before because the gold is still there (p. 336). Evaluate the logic behind Daphne's theory by researching examples of Europeans taking gold and other valuables from various parts of the world. Examples may include Egyptian treasure hunters, the Crusaders, Spanish Conquistadors, or South African diamond harvesters.

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