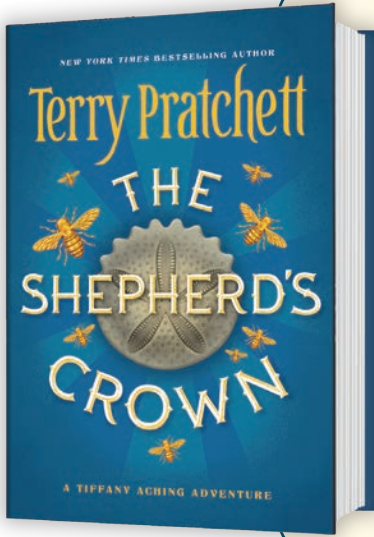


# THE SHEPHERD'S CROWN

by Terry Pratchett

Discussion  
Guide



## About the Book

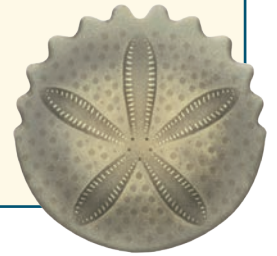
Deep in the Chalk, something is stirring. The owls and the foxes can sense it, and Tiffany Aching feels it in her boots. An old enemy is gathering strength.

This is a time of endings and beginnings, old friends and new, a blurring of edges and a shifting of power. Now Tiffany stands between the light and the dark, the good and the bad.

As the fairy horde prepares for invasion, Tiffany must summon all the witches to stand with her. To protect the land. *Her* land.

There will be a reckoning. . . .

*The Shepherd's Crown* is Terry Pratchett's final Discworld novel, and the fifth to feature the witch Tiffany Aching.



## Discussion Questions

1. Geoffrey proclaims, "I want to be a witch" (p. 16 and p. 120) while Tiffany muses, "Being a witch is a man's job: that's why it needs women to do it" (p. 92). How is being a witch defined in terms of gender roles? How do both Geoffrey and Tiffany challenge those roles? [RL.8-12.1-3](#); [SL.8-12.1-3](#)
2. "A witch stands on the very edge of everything, between the light and the dark, between life and death, making choices, making decisions so that others may pretend no decisions have even been needed" (p. 28). Discuss how aptly this quote (and its reiteration on p. 165) describes the role of a witch. [RL.8-12.1-3](#); [SL.8-12.1-3](#)
3. Reread the conversation between Death and Granny Weatherwax (pp. 28-30). Poignant in its own right, the dialogue takes on additional emotional resonance due to the recent passing of Terry Pratchett. What is the measure of a life well lived? [RL.8-12.1-3](#); [SL.8-12.1-3](#)
4. Tiffany doubts her leadership ability, but Nanny Ogg reassures her, "Years ain't what's important here. Granny Weatherwax said to me as you is the one who's to deal with the future. An' bein' young means you've got a lot of future" (p. 56). Do youth and inexperience preclude leadership? [RL.8-12.1-3](#); [SL.8-12.1-3](#)
5. Tiffany gives this counsel to the negligent mother of triplets: "Your son's your son until he takes a wife, but your daughter is your daughter all of your life" (p. 72). Does this statement ring true? What is the true value of a daughter? [RL.8-12.1-3](#); [SL.8-12.1-3](#)
6. Tiffany has some big shoes to fill, but she comes to an important realization: "I want to do it my way. Not how the other witches think it should be done. I can't be Granny Weatherwax for them. I can only be me, Tiffany Aching" (p. 98). How does Tiffany come into her own? [RL.8-12.1-3](#); [SL.8-12.1-3](#)
7. Geoffrey has a calming, peaceful influence on people. "Crying babies began to gurgle instead of howl, grown-ups stopped arguing, and the mothers became more peaceful and took his advice" (p. 135). How does this ability serve him as a witch? What other qualities are necessary? [RL.8-12.1-3](#); [SL.8-12.1-3](#)
8. "I know a part of me does want to be with Preston—and it would make my family so happy!—but I also want to be a witch. And I'm *good* at it. I can't *not* do it" (p. 150). Can Tiffany eventually juggle both a career and a family? [RL.8-12.1-3](#); [SL.8-12.1-3](#)
9. Preston tells Tiffany, "I've got a talent and it would be criminal not to use it," to which she responds, "That's the story of my life as well. Our skills, you will find, could be our jailers" (p. 153). How do our talents and abilities dictate the course of our lives? [RL.8-12.1-3](#); [SL.8-12.1-3](#)

Discussion Questions continued on the next page . . .

Aligns with Common Core State Standards for Grades 8–12



## Discussion Questions (continued)

10. "And Tiffany knew that if a witch started thinking of anyone as *'just'* anything, that would be the first step on a well-worn path that could lead to, oh, to poisoned apples, spinning wheels, and a too-small stove . . . and to pain, and terror, and horror, and the darkness" (p. 194). Does power corrupt us? Does it inevitably lead us to marginalize other people as things? *RL.8-12.1-3; SL.8-12.1-3*
11. Nightshade learns quite a bit about humans in her brief time as the deposed Queen. "The wizards call it empathy. That means putting yourself in the place of the other person and seeing the world from their point of view" (p. 208). What else does Nightshade observe about the human condition? *RL.8-12.1-3; SL.8-12.1-3*
12. Letitia tells Queen Magrat, "But I am the Baroness. I am a lady. I can't be a witch" (p. 219). Just as Tiffany struggles with the idea of being a wife and a witch, Letitia struggles with the dual role of witch and baroness. Discuss the tension between these responsibilities. Is the role of a witch really so all-consuming? *RL.8-12.1-3; SL.8-12.1-3*
13. Loyalty is a strong theme that runs throughout *The Shepherd's Crown*. Discuss how this factors into the relationship between leaders and followers, between a witch and her people, between the Nac Mac Feegle and their kelda, the elves and their Queen, Tiffany and the other witches, and the baron and his tenant farmers. *RL.8-12.1-3; SL.8-12.1-3*
14. In the afterword, Rob Wilkins writes, "If Terry had lived longer, he would almost certainly have written more of this book. There are things we all wish we knew more about. But what we have is a remarkable book, Terry's final book, and anything you wish to know more about in here, you are welcome to imagine for yourself" (p. 276). What do you wish you knew more about? *RL.8-12.1-3; SL.8-12.1-3*

## Extension Activities

1. **Trailers Aren't Just for Movies Anymore.** Using the video camera on your cell phone or computer tablet, create a very brief book trailer for *The Shepherd's Crown* and upload the finished product to YouTube. *RL.8-12.2, 7; W.8-12.6; SL.8-12.2, 5*
2. **Podcast It.** Recruit a friend who has also read the book, script out some basic discussion points, and record your conversation (once again using your cell phone or computer tablet). You can then share your wit and wisdom with the world. *RL.8-12.1-3; W.8-12; SL.8-12.1-6*
3. **Discworld Diorama.** Make a three-dimensional representation of some important Discworld settings (such as the Chalk or Lancre) using arts and crafts supplies. You may also design your diorama virtually in places like Minecraft or Second Life. *RL.8-12.3, 7; W.8-12.8*
4. **Fossil Fascination.** Fossils are the remains or traces of plants and animals from the remote past; the shepherd's crown is a fossil. Find out how fossils are formed, how they are found, and what kinds are in your area. Use papier-mâché and paint to make a replica of the shepherd's crown. *RI.8-12.7, 9; W.7, 8*
5. **Tiffany Timeline.** Make an annotated timeline for *The Shepherd's Crown*, including events alluded to in previous Tiffany Aching books. Even better, if you have read those previous books, create a master timeline for the entire sequence. Bonus points for visually appealing embellishments. *RL.8-12.2; W.8-12.2, 3*



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## About the Author

**Sir Terry Pratchett**, OBE, was the author of more than seventy books, including the internationally bestselling Discworld series of novels. His books have been adapted for stage and screen, and he was the winner of multiple prizes, including a Printz Honor, the *Boston Globe-Horn Book Award*, the *LA Times Book Prize* for YA Literature, and Britain's Carnegie Medal. In January 2009, Pratchett was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II in recognition of his services to literature. Sir Terry, who lived in England, died in March 2015 at the age of sixty-six.

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Discussion Guide written by Jonathan Hunt, the Coordinator of Library Media Services at the San Diego County Office of Education.

