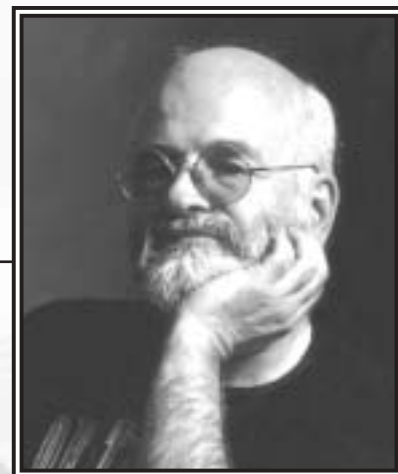


A GUIDE TO TEACHING Terry Pratchett



A Hat Full of Sky
The Wee Free Men
The Amazing Maurice and His Educated Rodents



A Hat Full of Sky

Tr 0-06-058660-5

Lb 0-06-058661-3

Au 0-06-074768-4

Ages 12 up • Grades 7 up

Tiffany Aching—the boldest heroine ever to swing a frying pan against the forces of evil—is back, and so are the Wee Free Men. But when Tiffany is attacked by an insidious monster, even her little blue allies are unable to save her!

About This Guide

The book descriptions, pre-reading activities, and discussion questions are intended to spark discussion about these thought-provoking books.



The Wee Free Men

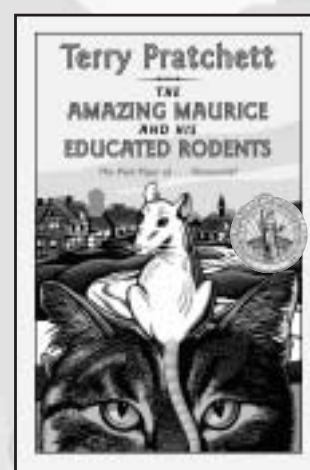
Tr 0-06-001236-6 • Lb 0-06-001237-4

Pb 0-06-001238-2 • Au 0-06-056625-6

Ages 12 up • Grades 7 up

- ❖ An ALA Notable Book
- ❖ An ALA Best Book for Young Adults
- ❖ *Horn Book* 2003 Fanfare List
- ❖ A *Kirkus Reviews* 2003 Editors' Choice
- ❖ A *School Library Journal* Best Book of 2003
- ❖ A *Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books* Blue Ribbon Book
- ❖ A New York Public Library "100 Titles for Reading and Sharing" Book
- ❖ A Book Sense 76 Pick
- ❖ Received five starred reviews

"This is a funny and thought-provoking fantasy, with powerful visual scenes and characters that remain with readers."—*School Library Journal*
(STARRED REVIEW)



The Amazing Maurice and His Educated Rodents

Tr 0-06-001233-1

Lb 0-06-001234-X

Pb 0-06-001235-8

Ages 12 up • Grades 7 up

- ❖ Carnegie Medal Winner
- ❖ An ALA Best Book for Young Adults
- ❖ New York Public Library Books for the Teen Age
- ❖ VOYA Best Science Fiction, Fantasy, and Horror
- ❖ Bank Street College Children's Book Committee Book of Outstanding Merit

"Excruciatingly funny, ferociously intelligent."—*Kirkus Reviews*
(STARRED REVIEW)

THE WEE FREE MEN

About the Book

Tiffany, an intelligent (she's read the dictionary) young farm girl armed with a frying pan and Granny Aching's book on sheep ailments, enters Fairyland to find that her spoiled younger brother has been taken by the Queen of the Fairies. But there is more to Tiffany than meets the eye, as she is also going to be a witch-in-training. At her side, or, perhaps better said, by her feet are the Nac Mac Feegle, often referred to as the Wee Free Men, a group of fierce six-inch-tall blue picties who want nothing more than a good fight. They will need to use all their skills to defeat the evil Queen.

Discussion Questions

1. Bands of teachers go from village to village delivering lessons on various subject areas, and Tiffany visits the teachers to ask about Jenny Green-Teeth. Who or what is Jenny Green-Teeth, and why does Tiffany want to know? Which teacher has the answer for her, and what information does she provide? What secret is she hiding that Tiffany is able to see right through (pp. 15–24)?
2. Why does Tiffany want to be a witch, and what does the *Goode Childe's Book of Faerie Tales* have to do with her view of witches? How does Granny Aching influence Tiffany's definition of a witch (pp. 25–29)? Why is Miss Tick so amazed that Tiffany just might be a "chalk witch" (pp. 38–39)?
3. After the Nac Mac Feegle help her against the headless horseman, Tiffany searches for Miss Tick to get answers about the strange happenings but finds the talking toad instead. Tiffany insists on knowing what is going on. When he tells her that "another world is colliding with this one," how does she react (pp. 58–60)? Is it the typical reaction of a young farm girl?
4. The toad is adamant that Tiffany has "First Sight and Second Thoughts." How does the kelda explain the meaning of First Sight to Tiffany (p. 112)? When Tiffany is proclaimed the new kelda, she has a problem with one of the major rules. What choice is Tiffany supposed to make, and how does she diplomatically deal with it (pp. 132–36)?
5. Who is Roland, and how did he get into Fairyland? What role does he play to help Tiffany find Wentworth and escape from the Queen of the Fairies? Later in the book, what happens between Roland and Tiffany when he visits her in the dairy to explain why the villagers are saying he rescued them (pp. 259–61)?
6. As she lies in the mud with the Queen laughing at her, Tiffany remembers that the Queen told her all witches are selfish. Tiffany suddenly decides that isn't necessarily a bad quality. "Tiffany's Third Thoughts said: Then turn selfishness into a weapon!" (p. 232). With this new realization of her power, what does Tiffany do to quell the storm? Who is there to help her? What does Tiffany do when she has the Queen at her mercy? Do you agree with her decision?
7. Mistress Weatherwax tells Tiffany that in witchcraft, you first get the test and then you spend years finding out how you passed it. She then compares witchcraft to life (p. 253). What does she mean by this comparison? Do you agree with her?



A HAT FULL OF SKY

About the Book

In the second adventure of Tiffany and the Wee Free Men, Tiffany, now a true witch-in-training, is sent to live with Miss Level, a witch with two bodies. By using her powers when she shouldn't, Tiffany draws a hiver to her. The hiver is a disembodied presence that seeks out and craves power. It senses how powerful Tiffany is and waits until she is vulnerable to take over her mind. But it can't take over quite all of it: There is a tiny part of Tiffany's mind crying out for rescue, and the Wee Free Men are on their way to help her.

Discussion Questions

1. In the first chapter, who stops Tiffany and Miss Tick as they are heading out of the village? How does Tiffany react to his appearance and his offering of a gift? What role does this gift play in the story?
2. Much to Tiffany's relief, the Nac Mac Feegle, also known as the Wee Free Men, have a new kelda, who has married Rob Anybody. Why does the new kelda initially refuse to let Rob Anybody go after Tiffany when he realizes she is in danger? Does the new kelda consider Tiffany an adversary?
3. Who or what is Oswald? How did Miss Level come up with that name (pp. 63–64)? Would you picture an ondageist living in your house as Miss Level imagines Oswald? If not, what or who would your ondageist look like?
4. Annagramma is the "leader" of the group of young witches, even though witches claim they never have a leader. She intimidates the others into doing what she wants by belittling them. How does Tiffany react to Annagramma at her first meeting with the sharp-tongued witch? Why does Tiffany think of sheep when Annagramma starts drilling her as to her magical abilities (p. 106)? Do the witches believe what Tiffany tells them? How would you have reacted in Tiffany's place?
5. What does Tiffany do to bring the hiver directly to her? Why is she so vulnerable at that moment (p. 116)? How do Oswald and the animals react to Tiffany after the hiver has taken control? She becomes free of it for one moment when she leaves her body to see herself, but the hiver strikes and kills. Whom does it kill?
6. Tiffany and the Wee Free Men battle the hiver together and win. Though they scare it away, what does it leave behind? How does Mistress Weatherwax help Tiffany find herself again (pp. 186–90)?
7. Is the hiver actually an evil being? If not, why does it end up killing people? What does it not understand about humans? How does Tiffany help it find a peaceful end, and where does she have to take it? Who helps Tiffany return to the Witch Trials?



The Bromeliad Trilogy

Truckers • Diggers • Wings

Tr 0-06-009493-1

Lb 0-06-054855-X

Ages 10 up • Grades 5 up

TRUCKERS

0-06-009496-6 • \$5.99

DIGGERS

0-06-009494-X • \$5.99

WINGS

0-06-009495-8 • \$5.99

If your students thought the Wee Free Men were small, introduce them to Pratchett's *Bromeliad Trilogy*: *Truckers*, *Diggers*, and *Wings*, together in one volume. This book is about four-inch-tall nomes who are forced to rethink their whole worldview when the department store they have called home for generations is being demolished, and they have to start a new life. Many of the young nomes have never seen the sky or felt the rain. Led by a small group of nomes from the Outside, they steal a truck and escape into the country, but a mysterious black box called the Thing tells them that they are from the stars and their ship waits for them. While most of the nomes try to make a home in a quarry, a small group journeys to Florida so the Thing can communicate with the space shuttle computers and contact the ship.

THE AMAZING MAURICE AND HIS EDUCATED RODENTS

About the Book

After eating scraps from the trash heap behind a university for wizards, a group of rats discover that they can both speak and read. Maurice the cat also gains this intelligence when he feasts on one of the rats. Maurice, a kid named Keith, and the rats are conducting a Pied Piper scam in the villages. The rats are getting tired of it but agree to one more scam in Bad Blitz. The village lives up to its name, however, and they discover, with the help of Malicia, the granddaughter and grandniece of the Sisters Grim, that there are unscrupulous rat catchers already in town, and the tunnels beneath the houses are full of rat poison, traps—and a sinister presence with evil intentions.

Pre-Reading Activity

This novel is derived from a very old folktale called “The Pied Piper of Hamelin.” Discuss with the students how stories reappear in varied formats throughout time, and have them brainstorm other folktales that have been rewritten as novels. Read a picture-book version of “The Pied Piper of Hamelin” to the class and discuss the elements of the tale in preparation for reading Pratchett’s novel.


Discussion Questions

1. Maurice feels badly about the intelligent rat he ate who gave him the ability to speak and read. He now asks any rodent he is about to eat whether it can speak, especially a rat. Why did the intelligent rat not speak up before Maurice ate him (pp. 172–74)?
2. Hamnpork, the rat leader, doesn’t like the changes that have happened since the rats became intelligent. He misses the days when a rat leader just had to be big and mean (pp. 22–23). How does he react when the younger rats begin to take leadership roles? How do they respond to Hamnpork as their leader? Do they respect him?
3. Peaches knows that most rats can’t read human writing, but she has come up with an iconic style of communication that normal rats should be able to understand. Without reading the text on pages 62–63 and 67, do you think you could have figured out what Peaches is trying to say? Where do we use icons or pictures, rather than words, to communicate?

4. When Malicia’s father learns that she has been telling stories, he locks her out of her room. Why does he lock her *out* of rather than *into* her room (pp. 87–88)? Who created the stories she loves? Do you think Malicia learns that it is dangerous to think the real world is like a fairy tale?
5. What is Spider? Who created this creature, and why (pp. 216–17)? How does it control the other tunnel inhabitants? What is Maurice’s reaction to this creature? Why is it so feared?
6. When Spider asks Dangerous Beans if he realizes “that there is a race in this world that steals and kills and spreads disease and despoils what it cannot use” (p. 256), what is the young rat’s reply? And how does he also reply to Spider’s request to join forces with him (pp. 256–64)?
7. Dangerous Beans appears to have died, but when the Grim Squeaker comes for the rat, Maurice jumps on him. Who pulls Maurice off of the Bone Rat, and why does the cat fear him? Have they met before, and if so, why? What favor does Maurice ask of the visitor (pp. 274–77)?
8. Maurice and the rats come up with a splendid idea about how they can guard the larders of the homes of Bad Blitz and also be productive citizens. What do the rats do to make this village a tourist attraction?
9. Darktan and the mayor have a philosophical conversation about the qualities of a leader. What does Darktan learn (p. 332)? Do you think it is possible for rats and humans to work together?



Visit our website at www.harperteacher.com and sign up to Be a Harper Teacher! Click on “Free Posters and Newsletter.”

 HarperCollins *Children's Books*

1350 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10019

Teaching ideas prepared by Ruth Cox, assistant professor
in the School of Education, University of Houston