



Going Postal by Terry Pratchett

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS & PROMPTS

Please see below for questions that we'll use to loosely guide our discussion on April 17th.

- ❖ Is this a book you were expecting to enjoy? If you are already invested in Pratchett's writing, what draws you to him? Do you have a favorite Pratchett novel?
- ❖ What were your first impressions of Moist? When he agrees to the position of Postmaster and to get the Postal Service up and running again, did you think he would follow through?
- ❖ As his first act as Postmaster, Moist delivers the S.W.A.L.K letter. His second act is, with the help of Mr. Pump, to get back the missing letters from the Post Office sign. Out of all the things that needed to happen, why do you think Pratchett decided that these would be Moist's first steps towards getting the postal service running again? What do you see is the larger symbolism of that choice?
- ❖ If you were in Moist's shoes, what would your first actions be as Postmaster?
- ❖ Pratchett is a master wordsmith and plays with language throughout the book, but *Going Postal* itself also carries themes around the value of words to society. How would you describe the book's attitude towards words?
- ❖ After his initiation into the guild, Moist debuts his golden Postmaster uniform, complete with a hat. The hat is mentioned at the very beginning of the book when Ventinari is explaining the position (he says he thinks Moist gets a hat) and the night that Groat is wearing Moist's hat, Groat is mistaken to be Moist and is attacked. Uniforms are clearly an important part of *Going Postal*. Why do you think Pratchett spends time discussing and writing so much about uniforms? What role have uniforms played in your life? How does clothing allow us to step into or remove different identities?
- ❖ In Ankh-Morpork, the choices in which to send a message are through the postal service, or through the clacks. Neither are perfect. In what ways did the dichotomy between the clacks and the postal service cause you to think about the institutions you choose to use in your life?
- ❖ The "clacks" can represent a lot of things. What are some connections you can make between the role of the clacks and real-life equivalents?
- ❖ What images does Moist choose to emphasize on stamps? What stood out to you about those images?
- ❖ How much do you notice or think about the images on stamps in our world? Do you pay attention to them? Has this book changed how you think about stamps and mail?
- ❖ How do Moist's motivations change throughout the novel? What parts of the old criminal Moist remain and what parts melt away? Do you think those changes are realistic for his character to undergo in such a short period of time?
- ❖ How does Terry Pratchett treat female characters in the book? Did you like how those characters were written? Why or why not?
- ❖ In many of Moist's internal dialogues throughout the book, he recalls one of his old schemes of switching out a glass ring for a diamond. Where else does this idea of "things are not always what they seem" show up in *Going Postal*? Does their truth blind or enlighten the characters?