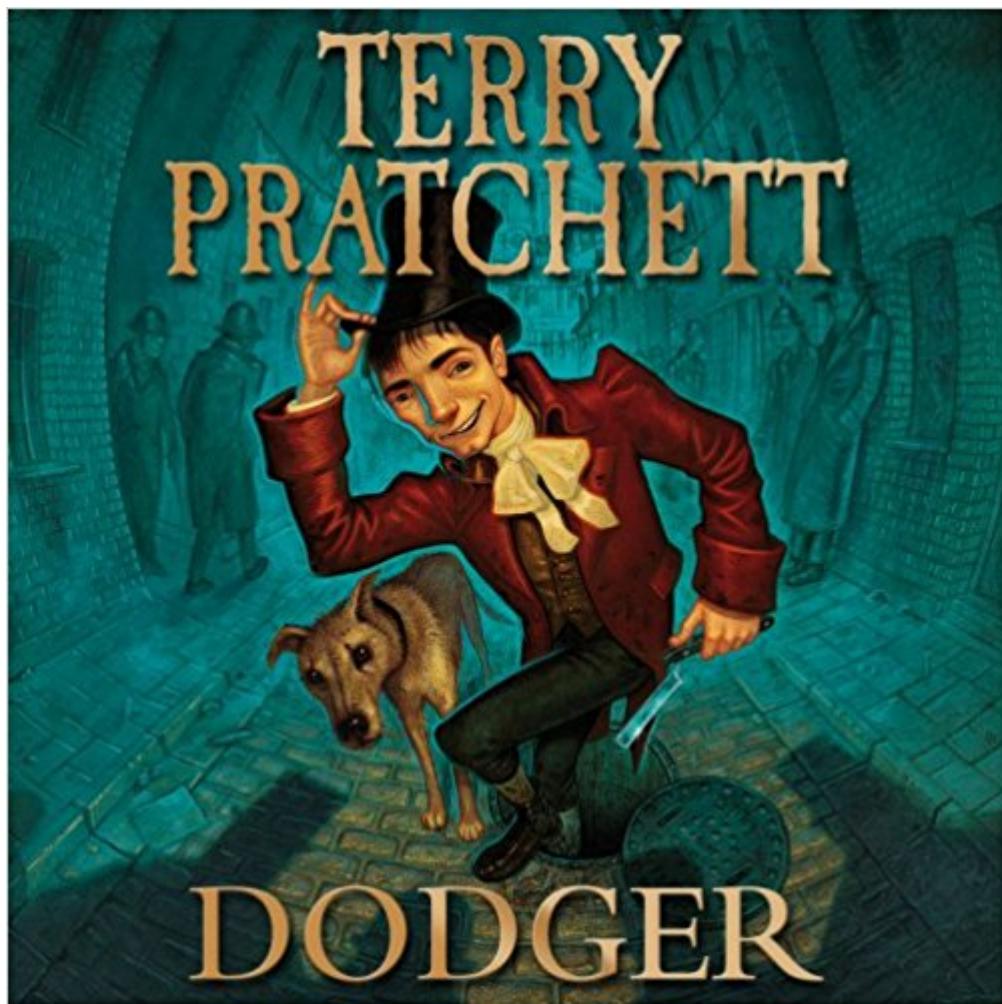


The book was found

Dodger



Synopsis

A storm. Rain-lashed city streets. A flash of lightning. A scruffy lad sees a girl leap desperately from a horse-drawn carriage, in a vain attempt to escape her captors. Can the lad stand by and let her be caught again? Of course not, because he's... Dodger!

Book Information

Audio CD

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Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 562 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #3,399,519 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #45 in Books > Books on CD > Authors, A-Z > (P) > Pratchett, Terry #1128 in Books > Books on CD > Children's Fiction > Fantasy #1676 in Books > Books on CD > Children's Fiction > General

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

Starred Review On a stormy night in early Victorian London, an able young man named Dodger rises from the sewers in response to a scream, fights off two thugs, and rescues a damsel in distress. Dodger continues to rise throughout the novel, as his love for the mysterious lady motivates this tosher (scavenger for lost coins and other treasures in London's sewers) to elevate himself and leads him to a closer acquaintance with a string of historical figures, including Dickens, Disraeli, and ultimately, the queen and her consort. While most writers would be well advised not to include such characters in their books, Pratchett manages to humanize them without diminishing them or throwing the story off-kilter. However lowly Dodger's origins, he remains the most memorable character in the book. Living by his wits and unencumbered by conventional morality, this trickster hero expertly navigates the underbelly of his city as he carries out a bizarre scheme resulting in justice and mercy. The temptation to quote sentences, whole paragraphs, and possibly entire chapters is almost irresistible, because the pleasure of reading the novel is in the language as much as in the characters and well-researched period setting. Often

amusing, this Victorian romp of a novel is lovingly crafted and completely enjoyable. Grades 8-12.

--Carolyn Phelan --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"Here, once again, is the mark of a great writer . . . we are captivated by ingenious word-building on every page . . . As Dodger's triumphant path ultimately brings him honour from the very highest rank of society, we cannot help but cheer not only for his success, but also for the success of this ebullient, funny and delightful novel." * *Guardian* * "Wonderful." * *Daily Mail* * "Dodger feels fresh, vibrant and full of energy, a triumph that should be celebrated as yet another glorious gift from *Narrativia*." * *SFX* * "[A] superb novel . . . full of eccentric characters and carefully detailed London scenes, the tale embodies both Dickens's love for the common man and a fierce desire for social justice." * *Publishers Weekly* * "It's a masterwork from a treasure and hero of a writer, and it will delight you." -- *Cory Doctorow*

C'mon, everybody, be thankful that Sir Terry is alive, much less producing books. We lost Robert Jordan a couple of years ago and now we must settle for a 'ghost' writer.'Not disappointed' a reviewer wrote. So sad. 'Damned by faint praise' to quote somebody. It's a feel-good book and no mistake. Just sit back and enjoy Dodger et al. If you are expecting the kind of genius level creativity he exhibited in his earlier books, well, who of that age is capable of that? Twain wasn't. I have all of his books, most them read more than twice and I will come back to this one someday, though I am 70 and it may have to be soon. I go to libraries, pick up a few books and read maybe 50 pages before sighing and getting some more. At the very least, Pratchett is reliable, funny, satiric, full of puck and good humor and understands people as well as any writer since.....well, nearly all of them. If I die while reading or re-reading one of his, I'll die happy. My favorite author of all time.

While I had vaguely heard of Terry Pratchett, I had never read any of his books. I had seen a quirky English miniseries based on his book "Going Postal" and loved it so I thought I would try one of his books. I ordered it for my Kindle but for various reasons didn't read it immediately. Earlier this week while travelling on business I needed to unwind for a few minutes before trying to go to sleep so decided to start just a few pages of Dodger. I was immediately hooked. I finally managed to put it down at 3:00 a.m. because I had to get at least a few hours sleep before my next day's work. As soon as I returned to my hotel room the next evening I picked it up again and didn't put it down until I had finished it. I absolutely loved the book and now intend to go back and read the rest of Pratchett's books. The story takes place in early Victorian England and weaves actual historical

characters with fictional ones that capture the multiple layers of London society from the drawing rooms of the political elite to the teeming slums. The novelist Charles Dickens who is just starting his career as a young Fleet Street reporter plays a continuing key role in the novel as an observer/catalyst and Pratchett uses many of the most interesting characters as suggested sources of inspiration for Dickens characters in his later great novels such as Oliver Twist and Great Expectations. Dodger isn't exactly a fantasy genre novel in the sense of including magic or dragons or other extraordinary creatures, but it is fantastical historical fiction with a fairy tale quality. I loved it and highly recommend it to anyone who loves quirky historical fiction.

I've read nearly everything Sir Terry wrote and he never ceases to surprise me. Dodger is a thoroughly likeable young fellow who has become very good at surviving on the dangerous streets of 19th century London ... or perhaps I should say 'under them' for Dodger is a Tosher who makes his living finding what is lost in London's sewers. He sleeps in the rooms of his friend, a Jewish jeweler by the name of Soloman, and his curious, and wonderfully malodorous dog Onan. One night a twist of fate puts him in place to rescue a young woman from the hands of brutal henchmen in the pay of her husband, an unknown nobleman. This act of bravery sets him on a path to unexpected places where he meets such notables as Charles Dickens (Mister Charlie), "Ben" Disraeli, Joseph Bazalgette and Henry Mayhew. Dodger's rise from the dark underworld of London to earn honor from those in high places is a hisorical fantasy/adventure and thoroughly satisfying romp threaded through with surprises. This is another example of Terry Pratchett's amazing skill and humor, so grab a cup of tea and find a comfy corner because I doubt you'll be unable to put it down once you've started this amazing tale.

You could be forgiven, I suppose, for spending all of your time reading the works of the late Terry Pratchett simply exploring the wonders of the Discworld. And, to be sure, that would be a deeply satisfying way to spend your time (and I recommend it). But to do that would be to ignore some of the great books that Pratchett wrote outside of that series, like the remarkable Bromeliad Trilogy, the thought-provoking Nation, and now, Pratchett's foray into 18th century England (and the world of Charles Dickens), Dodger. Despite what the title might suggest, there's no direct connection between Dodger and the works of Charles Dickens; even if there were a book that happened to feature a character with a similar name, that's more because Pratchett's an imaginary tosher (a slang term for those who root for treasures among the drainage and sewers of England) could be an inspiration

for Dickens' imagination. But Dodger is undeniably a purely Pratchett creation: a streetwise, playful, cynical (yet soft-hearted) rogue who makes a living for himself, feels a bit larger than life, and who can't help but want to improve the world as he sees it, even if he can't deny that. More than that, he is a richly and undeniably researches character, one whose dialogue is full of 18th century slang, who feels like a genuinely street-educated child rather than an author playing dumb, and whose actions feel of a piece with his complicated morality. That goes doubly for the rich, marvelous world that Pratchett creates, thanks (according to the author himself) in no small part to the research of Henry Mayhew, a contemporary of Dickens who researched conditions among the working poor in London at the time. In

Pratchett's hands, Dodger brings to life a city defined by a massive social and economic divide, to say nothing of the intrigue of the upper classes, the scars of a recent war, and more. It is a vivid, wondrous tapestry that Pratchett has created, and he populates it with characters both non-fictional (Dickens and Mayhew both make appearances, as does Robert Peel, and other various figures) and fictional, including an infamous

"demon-barber of the time that Pratchett uses as the centerpiece for one of his most effective, quietly powerful points. And not content to only use the creations of others, Pratchett does his usual magnificent character building work, with my favorite being Dodger's Jewish protector, teacher, and friend Solomon Cohen. The only weakness of Dodger's well, maybe it is more of a flaw, because there is really nothing bad about the book, just an aspect that is not as strong as the rest. It is the plot, which is serviceable, but really just functions as a way to string together the various incidents of the novel. That

Pratchett's style, of course is what makes the Discworld books so incredible and joyous but Dodger feels a little more focused by virtue of its single main character, and the wandering story sometimes feels a little sloppy.

There are some fascinating aspects, mind you, and the central hook in which Dodger saves a young woman from a beating, only to discover that it is involved him in some massive intrigue on a governmental level is a good one. But the final showdown feels a bit silly, involving an ultra-capable government assassin character who feels out of step with the rest of the novel. And yet, that is a flaw of the book, but it is a minor one, and one that certainly doesn't take away from the joy of the book. As always, Pratchett is a master of commenting on the world around him through the medium of his writing and fiction, and

Dodger is no exception, using 18th-century England as a way of commenting on how little things may have changed over the years. More than that, Dodger is another reminder of Pratchett's wonderful, magical prose, which brings characters to life through little more than their remarkable, distinct voices. And adding that to the rich world creation he's doing here, well, it all makes for a great read, even with that flaw. But do you really expect anything else from Pratchett?

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