

The Fifth Elephant

Written by Ed

The Ankh-Morpork City Watch is continuing to grow, the latest development being the new traffic control section on which Sergeant Colon and Corporal Nobbs are running. Also, the development of Clacks towers, which relay messages by means of semaphore, have improved communications across the continent.

Commander Sir Samuel Vimes, Duke of Ankh-Morpork, is called to see the Patrician, Lord Vetinari. He is told that the new head of the dwarfs, the Low King, is to be crowned in the mysterious and savage country of Uberwald, ruled mostly by werewolves and vampires. As Ankh-Morpork has a large dwarf community, Vimes is to be sent to the coronation as an ambassador. He is to take with him as a retinue Sergeant Angua, Sergeant Detritus and Corporal Littlebottom. All three officers come from races that possess ethnic majority status in Uberwald.

Meanwhile, Sergeant Angua has received a message that her family of werewolves are causing trouble in Uberwald, and sets off to stop them.

Before Vimes leaves, however, a crime occurs; the replica Scone of Stone is stolen from the Dwarf Bread Museum. The Scone is a replica of the real thing that lies in Uberwald and will play an integral part in the coronation. Although it is only a fake, Vimes is suspicious that it should go missing so soon to the coronation. Captain Carrot, dwarf by adoption, tells of problems surrounding the king. His name is Rhys Rhysson, and he is a controversial choice. A lot of dwarfs were expecting Albrecht Albrechtson to accede to the Scone. Albrechtson is an old fashioned dwarf, and would term any dwarfs living in human cities such as Ankh-Morpork non-dwarfs. This would undoubtedly cause more riots.

Soon afterwards, the manufacturer of rubber goods is found dead in his own vat. Soon after that, the replica Scone is found again. Vimes, his servants, wife and retinue (minus Angua) set off for Uberwald. With them is Inigo Skimmer, an adviser and clerk to Vimes. Vimes is immediately suspicious of him, and sends a secret message to Ankh-Morpork requesting confirmation of a theory. It is later revealed to be true.

Carrot receives a personal message from his girlfriend, Angua, and sets off to find her. He takes Gaspode, a dog with the ability to talk. This leaves Colon in charge of the Watch, and his ineptitude brings it to its knees.

Vimes and his retinue enter the wintry country and are soon attacked by bandits. They are fought off mainly by Inigo, who is in fact an assassin. The coaches continue to the town of Bonk (pronounced Beyonk) where the embassy is.

Carrot and Gaspode, acting on information received, head off into the pine forests of Uberwald. There they almost die of the cold, but are rescued by Angua who is travelling with a pack of wolves led by Gavin, who is an old friend. Wolves hate werewolves; it is important to remember that to a werewolf an ordinary wolf means the same as a human. The werewolves are causing trouble, and the ringleader is Angua's brother, Wolfgang.

Vimes receives a report from the Clacks that the REAL Scone has been stolen, without which the coronation cannot go ahead. This will cause a civil war that Albrechtson will almost certainly win.

They arrive at the embassy after some trouble at the gates of Bonk, where the guards do not like the idea of a troll (Detritus) and a female dwarf (Littlebottom). The servant, Igor, requests information on Ankh-Morpork agent Wando Sleeps, who has been missing for some time.

After settling into the embassy Vimes and his retinue, minus Inigo, head off for his diplomatic appointments. The first appointment is with the Low King himself, and the retinue travels to the underground dwarf city. There the "Ideas Taster" for the King, Dee, becomes agitated at the mention of the Scone theft and Vimes is sent away as quickly as possible.

The next appointment is with Lady Margalotta, a teetotal vampire. With her he discusses the Scone theft.

Next is Angua's family. They too become agitated over the scone, and usher Vimes out quickly.

Returning to the embassy, Vimes discovers that Igor has been hurt. Detritus especially refuses to believe that it was an accident. Vimes decides to request help from Ankh-Morpork, and heads to the nearest Clacks tower.

There, he finds the controls have been smashed. He also finds Inigo, who reports that he found the tower like that. He says that as soon as night falls he will launch a distress flare. Vimes returns to the embassy.

There he discovers a hidden room containing secret data, which was where Inigo and Wando Sleeps were receiving their information. He discovers that in the chaos caused by the Scone theft the werewolves are planning a putsch.

That night Inigo launches the flare, but is caught by Angua's brother and his pack, and is killed.

The dwarfs are holding a reception, to which Vimes and the retinue are invited. There, Vimes finally manages to get Dee to admit that the Scone is gone, and is taken to see where it should be. He discovers that the security is bad as no one expected the Scone to be stolen. He also realises that no dwarf will work out how it was done.

Back at the reception, chaos ensues when an unseen assailant lets down one of the huge chandeliers. Vimes leaps to save the King, but is subsequently imprisoned.

In his pitch-dark cell, Dee explains to Vimes that he is under arrest for trying to kill the king. Inigo's body was found in the chandelier gantry; someone is trying to frame him.

When two dwarfs bring him food, Vimes lights a match. The light blinds the dwarfs and Vimes escapes. He finds himself at the bottom of a huge shaft. He almost dies trying to climb it, but is rescued by Lady Margalotta, who brings him to the surface. Vimes heads to the forests to find shelter for the night.

In the morning Vimes bathes in a thermal spring but is caught by the sadistic Wolfgang and his pack of werewolves. There the plan is revealed:

The replica Scone was stolen in Ankh-Morpork and a mould made of it. This was used to make a new Scone, which was brought to Uberwald in Vimes' coach. Igor was injured by a werewolf to stop him discovering the Scone when he unloaded the coach.

Meanwhile, a dwarf agent removed the real Scone. Rhys Rhysson, the new Low King, then would have to abdicate or war would begin. If he abdicated the wolves would give the Scone to the Albrechtson. He would then cause trouble in Ankh-Morpork and in the chaos the werewolves would take over. If he did not abdicate, war would begin and the wolves would again take over.

Vimes is then made to play The Game—he is to be chased by the werewolves back through the forests to the embassy. If he outruns the werewolves he will be given money and the charges against him dropped. If he is caught he will be killed. As he has no choice, Vimes agrees.

He runs to a boathouse, where he kills a werewolf with an axe. Although they can only be truly killed by silver or fire, he does manage to temporarily incapacitate it.

He finds a boat and heads downriver, but loses his craft in a waterfall. He manages to "kill" two more werewolves before he is caught by one of them. Carrot and Angua rescue him, though.

They return in secret to the embassy, where they release Littlebottom and Detritus who have been placed under house arrest. Captain Tantony of the Bonk Watch says that Vimes' wife Sybil is in the house of the werewolves. In order to win him over, Vimes reveals the plan to Tantony. The retinue, flanked by Gavin and his wolves, go to the house to rescue her. When they get there, however, she has already escaped.

The werewolves hold all the cards, however, as it is Vimes who is the fugitive. He does manage to get the replica Scone. Tantony arrives, however, and attempts to arrest the werewolves. Wolfgang instantly cuts him down. Carrot then attacks, and has his arm

broken. Next to attack are Gavin and the talking dog Gaspode. All three animals jump off the castle drawbridge and into the river far below.

Gaspode survives, but Gavin is killed. Wolfgang is nowhere to be found.

The retinue returns to the dwarf city with the Scone, where an angry Dee proclaims it to be a fake. The authority on the Scone, Albrechtson, proclaims it to be real. The fact the Dee knew it was not the real Scone, however, is proof that he was the one who removed the old one.

It transpires that the real Scone was not stolen at all, but destroyed. The new Scone was proclaimed real because in fact the true Scone was a fake as well; dwarf bread may be hardy, but it can't last for fifteen hundred years. Dee's reason for doing it was his bitterness that dwarfs like Littlebottom are allowed to show that they are female whereas he, or rather she, is still subject to the strict Uberwald dwarf law. The werewolves took advantage of his gender complex.

They return to the embassy.

The next day, Vimes is preparing for the coronation. He reflects on the fate of Wolfgang, and the more he thinks about it the less likely it seems that he is dead. A sensible person in his position would have left the country. Unfortunately, Wolfgang is not a sensible person. Vimes becomes very nervous. To try and take his mind off it, Sybil announces that she is pregnant, a piece of news she has hitherto been unable to break to him.

His reaction for this is short lived, however, as Wolfgang arrives and kills Igor. He is about to kill Carrot when Angua attacks him. Wolfgang is still injured from his fall and Angua is able to defeat him. She knows, however, that he will only be gone as long as it takes for his wounds to heal. Vimes quickly prepares himself and heads off to face him down.

He follows the trail of destruction to the Bonk Square, where he tricks Wolfgang into admitting resisting arrest. He fires a cut-down distress flare into the air, knowing that a cross between a human and a wolf is a dog. Wolfgang catches it out of the air with his mouth. It promptly explodes, killing him instantly. Vimes is given a lift back to the embassy by Lady Margalotta, who admits that she was the one who helped him back up the rapids.

The coronation is successful, with the Low King making history by shaking hands with Littlebottom and Detritus.

Gaspode returns to Ankh-Morpork on a barge. Carrot and Angua, with a new recruit in the form of Igor's nephew, travel back to Ankh-Morpork by coach. Vimes decides to take a few weeks holiday before returning, giving Carrot a little time to repair the damage that Sergeant Colon has done.

