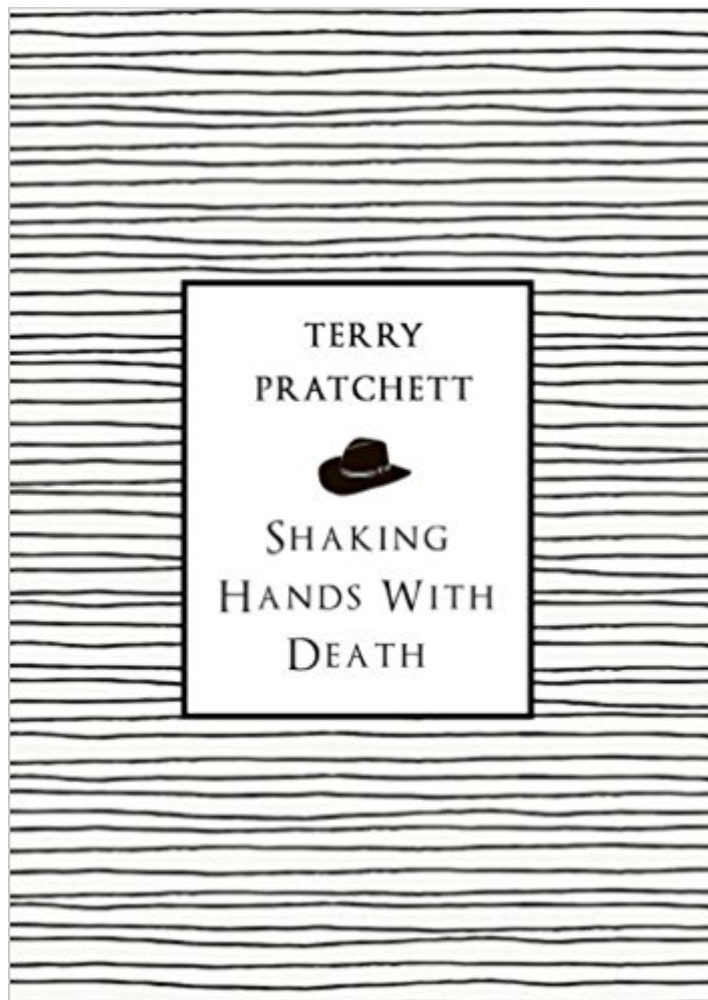


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# Shaking Hands With Death



## Synopsis

Terry Pratchett on our right to a good life and a good death -- the text of his landmark BBC Richard Dimbleby Lecture. Why we all deserve a life worth living and a death worth dying for. Most men don't fear death. They fear those things -- the knife, the shipwreck, the illness, the bomb -- which precede, by microseconds if you're lucky, and many years if you're not, the moment of death. When Terry Pratchett was diagnosed with Alzheimer's in his fifties he was angry -- not with death but with the disease that would take him there, and with the suffering disease can cause when we are not allowed to put an end to it. In this essay, broadcast to millions as the BBC Richard Dimbleby Lecture 2010, he argues for our right to choose - our right to a good life, and a good death too.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

TERRY PRATCHETT was the acclaimed creator of the global bestselling Discworld series, the first of which, *The Colour of Magic*, was published in 1983. His fortieth Discworld novel, *Raising Steam*, was published in 2013. His books have been widely adapted for stage and screen, and he was the winner of multiple prizes, including the Carnegie Medal, as well as being awarded a knighthood for services to literature. He died in March 2015.

I was first introduced to the work of Sir Terry back in 1990, and so for a couple of decades I enjoyed the man's work as a writer of fiction, both within and without the Discworld. And so it was that Sir Terry got his wretched diagnosis, and I continued to follow his journey, watch some of his speeches

before various Alzheimer's associations, and so on. This essay, which I later watched since it had been recorded, is a powerful statement on the subject of the dignity of being able to choose to die as it relates to a scenario wherein the patient absolutely will deteriorate. The man was a genius when writing fiction, and his argumentative style reflects his mastery of the language. Even if you're entirely opposed to his argument, it is worthy of being read simply because of the respect he has for the subject while being almost playful in the face of his own pending demise. The world lost a genius. This read, though short, begins to capture the essence of that genius.

Thought-provoking.

A thoughtful essay on life, death and we deal with all of this.

Not up to Terry's normal standard. It felt like he wrote it in a hurry, it was a bit formulaic. Not bad though, but not as good as his earlier writings.

this is an amazing piece of writing from a master of the written word regarding his life since the diagnosis of a rare form of Alzheimer's. Sir Terry Pratchett was asked by the family of the late Richard Dimbleby in 2009 if he would give the annual address televised by the BBC. Given the nature of his condition it was a monumental task and he rose to the challenge with the help of family and close friends. The result is this fantastic essay on how he felt at the diagnosis, the anger that threatened to consume him, the fear of an undignified exit and the pain that his family would endure throughout. He speaks passionately for the option of assisted death being legalised to allow everyone the right to decide how far they went on the road to losing themselves. This is a piece of work that will pitch people from one side of the argument against the opposite faction quite literally. He speaks out about the reality of the condition and how it affects even the smallest things we take for granted being able to do. His fervent wish to be allowed the dignity of physical death before the cognitive death that Alzheimer's grants its victims is heartbreaking coming from a man who has entertained us for many years with his brilliant works about the disc world and others.

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