

It was quite possibly the first time in his memory that he could recall Sybil being speechless. Actually speechless. At a complete loss for words, even if it was just for a second. She was a woman, though, who could accept a bunch of dead rats graciously. You didn't knock her off kilter for long. She blinked and recovered herself. "I'm sorry... you want to do *what*, exactly?"

There was some complicated gesturing and some soft "ook" noises. A couple of soulful dark eyes looked up earnestly from a soft innertube of a face that looked a size too big for the owner.

"Well... I suppose you can feel free to try. I can't guarantee anything will happen, though," Sybil admitted, putting down the empty punch cup and moving her arms back to her sides. A large, hairy hand with long fingers rested lightly on the prominent round swell of Sybil's belly and the Librarian's face settled into careful concentration and stillness. He had the serious air of a safe cracker. After nearly a minute, there was an "ook" of faint surprise and his eyebrows lifted.

Seemingly satisfied, the Librarian solemnly took Sybil's right hand, laid it against her belly again and gave it a friendly, sympathetic pat with a hand that felt like an old and worn leather glove. He looked up at Vimes, peeled back rubbery lips from the large yellow teeth in what was a vaguely disconcerting smile and handed him a banana before knuckling off through part of the reception crowd.

"I suppose it's the equivalent of a congratulatory cigar..." Sam said weakly, holding it up.

"I suppose it is, dear. The things one gets used to," she added, shaking her head with an indulgent smile.

"Like?" Sam prompted.

"Everyone wanting to grope you, for starters," Sybil said mildly. "At least he asked. Most people just help themselves."

"Mmm, I see," Sam murmured, tucking the banana into a pocket absentmindedly.