

# **The Truth: A Novel of Discworld Study Guide**

**The Truth: A Novel of Discworld by Terry Pratchett**

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# Plot Summary

The Truth by Terry Pratchett follows the establishment by young William de Worde of Discworld's first newspaper and its baptism of fire, disproving charges of attempted murder and embezzlement against the Patrician, Lord Havelock Vetinari.

William de Worde earns a meager living writing things down, including a rumor that dwarfs can turn lead into gold. This proves a metaphor for movable type and William soon heads the Times, a full-fledged newspaper. Beyond Gunilla Goodmountain and his team of dwarf printers, William builds a core staff consisting of Sacharissa Cripslock, editor and headline writer, and Otto Chriekh, photographer and reformed vampire. Sales are surprisingly brisk as popular features are added, but the wealthy Engravers' Guild founds a rival paper called the Inquirer, intended to force William out of business as fast as possible. William however, follows the story of Lord Havelock Vetinari who is being arrested for attempted murder and embezzlement and unearths clues missed by the hapless City Watch (police) that suggest him innocent.

The plot is carried out by professionals Pin and Tulip, known as the New Firm. Their only mistake is letting Vetinari's terrier, Wuffles, escape. Everyone begins searching for Wuffles, either to receive the reward offered by the paper, or to obtain his testimony via a werewolf interpreter, or to eliminate him at a witness. When Otto captures a picture of the bad guys using black light, Pin sees the shades of victims waiting for him and his mind begins unraveling. He needs revenge before fleeing the city. They threaten William and Sacharissa when an accidental fire breaks out, consuming the Times' office. Determined that the big story must be told, they hijack the Inquirer's press. Vetinari is vindicated. Both Vetinari and Watch have no choice but to tolerate and perhaps cooperate with the Times.

During the investigation, William finds evidence that his father is behind the Committee to remove the Patrician. He confronts his father. William agrees not to name him publicly if he leaves town, in order to spare the family dishonor. No longer an absolute idealist, William accepts that journalists must tell whatever portion of the truth is available and not worry about eternal truths. He has the tools to survive in this tough profession.



# The Truth, pgs. 1-32

## The Truth, pgs. 1-32 Summary

Rumors fill Ankh-Morpork about the dwarfs mastering turning lead into gold. The dwarfs in question are amazed to hear it! On guard duty, Sgt. Colon and Cpl. Nobbs admit seeing a rowboat in which Pin and Tulip bicker before setting ashore a figure who disappears. William de Worde writes down the rumor for his newsletter. Having transferred his story to a woodblock, he goes to his engraver just as dwarfs lose control of a large cart and run him over. He comes to in a noisy and dwarf-filled workshop, where Gunilla Goodmountain swiftly sets the ruined block in type and prints enough copies for William to solicit eighteen new patrons. Meanwhile, in a large house, the exact double of the Patrician Vetinari, the leader of Ankh-Morpork, is delivered to a group plotting his overthrow. At Unseen University, the Archchancellor wants Gunilla checked out as a means of reducing printing costs.

When William again drops into the print room, recalling his last argument with his father, William finds the UU Bursar arguing the various meanings that letters and words hold with Gunilla. He prepares a story for another edition, but still needs more news. Meanwhile, Vetinari meets with Hughnon Ridcully, the unofficial spokesman for the religious establishment, and urges him to accept that times are changing, as weapons give way to words, and words must not be expensive. The semaphore is revolutionizing diplomatic communications and commerce will make use of it soon. As Vetinari prepares to visit the dwarf printers, a stinking and aged dog called Wuffles emerges from beneath his desk

## The Truth, pgs. 1-32 Analysis

The first section of this novel contains no chapter or explicit section breaks, introduces some of the major characters, and establishes some basic themes. It also accustoms the reader to follow quick asides and sharply humorous observations. It opens with rumors filling the city of Ankh-Morpork that the dwarfs have mastered turning lead into gold, something that has eluded both alchemists and wizards, who are among the city's major powers. Word flits from ear to ear until finally protagonist William de Worde writes it down. William has a vocation to write things down. Two shifty characters, Mr. Pin and Mr. Tulip, row into the city, easily slipping by lazy Sgt. Colon and Cpl. Nobbs. They deposit a mysterious figure that disappears into the city. Colon, Nobbs, and the City Watch (police force) play a less conspicuous than usual role in this novel.

William writes his story about the rumor, transfers the ink to a woodblock, and leaves to visit his engraver. At his engraver's workshop, he will have the story painstakingly carved out to print out five copies for distribution to his patrons. However, he is run over by an out-of-control cart and enters a noisy workshop filled with dwarfs. Their leader, Gunilla Goodmountain, quickly convinces him of the benefits of movable type and sets



him on his way to becoming a professional journalist. William's rebellion against his father is quickly shown in the context of his education, which tends towards the literary. This is a rare commodity in Discworld society. Most of the dwarfs working in the print shop bear the names of famous typefaces. Pratchett begins describing the art of printing as William comes to appreciate the rapid dipping into letter boxes and developing lines of type. He learns to read these movements on the fly.

At the same time, a mysterious group is planning the overthrow of Ankh-Morpork's ruler, the Patrician Vetinari. One of Vetinari's faults is his toleration of massive dwarf immigration, which threatens the majority's well-being. An exact physical double but extremely stupid version of Vetinari is found and hidden away in a great house, pending further developments. Meanwhile, at Unseen University, the prospect of reducing printing costs causes the administration to consider switching to Gunilla's services. This means dropping a long-held and vehement philosophical objection to movable type.

In separate scenes and together, the Archchancellor and the Bursar spell out the opposition. Individual slugs of lead when being reused in new compositions, can carry with them some of the aura of the previous use. There is the danger of mundane contexts corrupting sacred and magical works and vice-versa. Hand-carved woodblocks do not share this danger, but are labor-intensive and thus expensive. While the philosophy will continue to be debated, it is notable that the money angle wins out without trouble. Vetinari argues in favor of understanding and flexibility, which are not keystones to his administration, with the unofficial spokesman for the city's religious establishment. He claims that Ankh-Morpork must adapt to the changing times. He alludes to the evolving understanding of Discworld's shape as an example. Most Disc novels go into far more detail about this mythology. The section ends with the introduction of Vetinari's stinking and aged pet, Wuffles, who becomes the key to unraveling the mysteries that are about to be revealed.



# The Truth, pgs. 32-64

## The Truth, pgs. 32-64 Summary

Vetinari's coach passes near where his naïve look-alike Charlie sits chained, facing Pin and Tulip, who offer him \$10,000 for a few days' work. The dwarfs' shed has recently been converted into a rocking horse factory. The constantly-changing press enters the center of the floor. Watching Gunilla set type, William understands why people fear the ability to recombine letters endlessly, but movable type is not illegal. Just then, Vetinari arrives and assumes that William is in charge. His fears are allayed that the shed is not built on a crack in space-time like much of the city. Vetinari thus allows it to operate with William in charge. Pin and Tulip observe from a rooftop as Vetinari leaves and Tulip must be restrained from killing him outright. They too are being watched by a small dog attached by string to a figure wearing a strange and grubby coat and a brimmed hat. The dog speaks while the man mutters. They share a sausage together.

William writes up the Patrician's visit and is amazed that he has a dozen items for his newsletter, because people will talk if asked questions. William has always been troubled by the nature of truth. He is terrible at lying, but as a journalist, finds that telling the whole truth about a brawl at the Mended Drum Tavern also gets him in trouble. The dwarfs break up the text with headlines, give the paper a name, Ankh-Morpork Times. They print 100 copies and price each at 50¢. When Foul Ole Ron and the talking dog Gaspode visit, Gunilla gets the idea of having him and his friends who live under Misbegot Bridge to sell papers in mass quantities less expensively. Pin and Tulip, who consider themselves facilitators rather than thugs, are received by Mr. Slant who serves as attorney, intermediary, and zombie. The group delivers \$30,000 in gems for special expenses and ushers them in to see the bosses. While they wait, Tulip surveys the artwork knowingly.

When William is accosted as an ingrate by Sacharissa Crisplock, the granddaughter of his ex-engraver, he mollifies her by the offer of a reporter's job. Pin and Tulip are ushered into a dark ballroom. In the center of the room, there is a candlelit circle of a dozen chairs. Those sitting in the chairs are hidden in shadows from the New Firm as it stands in the center for questioning. The group decrees that Vetinari is to be harmed as little as possible and definitely not killed as this would make him more dangerous. They are also warned to avoid trouble with Commander Vines' efficient Watch, which employs a werewolf. When Pim and Tulip have left, the Committee to Unelect the Patrician considers hiring the Guild of Assassins to eliminate evidence including Charlie.

## The Truth, pgs. 32-64 Analysis

A plot to unseat Vetinari is introduced, along with the following crucial new characters: Vetinari's naïve look-alike called Charlie who is a chump to be used and discarded; a zombie lawyer, Mr. Slant, who serves as intermediary among the principals; a



mysterious "Committee to Unelect the Patrician" (pg. 64) that wants to remove Vetinari but not to harm him because of the danger martyrs always pose; and a pair of thugs, Mr. Pin and Mr. Tulip, constituting the New Firm, whose arrival in Ankh-Morpork by water has been seen.

They are a mismatched but complementary pair, reminiscent of Laurel and Hardy or Abbot and Costello, but with a well-developed streak of cruelty. A variety of details suggests that they are intended as a parody of the wacky crime movie *Pulp Fiction*. Pin is intellectual but chronically angry and Tulip is "a would-be wrestler who had failed the intelligent test" (pg. 62) that is also a sensitive art expert. He snorts any powder he can find inside homes where these powders will be considered drugs. He succeeds only in ruining his health. Tulip's odd habits are developed in great detail throughout the rest of the novel. Commander Vines' efficient Watch, which will investigate the crime, is first mentioned. It is particularly noted that the Watch employs a werewolf, which excels at tracking criminals. The hint is appreciated and soon badly needed. The clients fail to reveal other crucial details of the mission, however.

William runs into the Patrician in the dwarfs' print shop and is assumed and assigned to be head of the printing enterprise. William understands why people fear the ability to recombine letters endlessly, but all are coming to see that it is the wave of the future. This expands on the earlier philosophical arguments. William finds himself expanding his journalistic enterprise, printing more copies more often and selling them at a lower price per copy to the masses, who have different interests and tastes from his aristocratic patrons. He hires as salesmen the mysterious figures first seen tailing Pin and Tulip as they in turn tail Vetinari. Foul Ole Ron and the talking dog Gaspode become keys to the story's happy ending. They live with a number of oddly intriguing friends beneath Misbegot Bridge, who become the sales force.

William also hires a full-time writer who turns into his co-editor and love interest. Sacharissa Crisplock invades his office accusing him of defrauding her granddaughter. She is an ex-engraver and slaps him for good measure. Tying in with Tulip's interest in art, William sees Sacharissa as having features that artists in various era would have considered beautiful, but the composite is neither pretty nor ugly. She is self-conscious of her voluptuous figure, which plays a part going forward.



# The Truth, pgs. 64-98

## The Truth, pgs. 64-98 Summary

The Patrician's clerk, Drumknott, buys a paper from Ron and observes that many people are buying copies. Vetinari orders brief appointments with the affected guilds and with William to discuss the paper. He has reversed his position on printing and is looking forward to an exciting future full of possibilities. He is shocked to read the Times' report of fifty-six people being hurt in a brawl. He is certain that if something is printed, it must be true. William hears the same from fellow boarders at Mrs. Arcanum's residence, who reject his contention that it is simply a misprint. At the shed, William is amazed at the overnight profits from sales. Gunilla proposes halving the price to sell three times as many.

Prim and naïve Sacharissa waits in the back room. She hands William a story about the Dolly Sisters Baking and Flower Circle Annual Competition and asks for a critique. He finds it dull but gives her several leads to track down. They are interrupted by a short and red-faced man who presents a phallus-shaped carrot as a possible story idea. Unfortunately, the Times cannot print pictures. Gunilla advises William to include as many names in stories as possible to maximize circulation. They go down into the cellar to look for a well and find a replica of Ankh-Morpork. Most of the current buildings are second and third floors of older buildings that fill with mud whenever the river floods. One can cross the city underground with a pickax.

A troll summons William to a meeting with the Patrician. Vetinari wonders why normal people need a newspaper. People, he says, are uncomfortable with new things that represent the unexpected. They crave "olds" instead of actual news. William should tread carefully but go forward. Thinking about this, William passes Pin and Tulip purchasing Dibbler's delights before coming on a crowd that urges a man to jump from the fourth floor of a building. William runs up the stairs to get Arthur Crank's story but learns that it is a regular event and a kind of street theater. When William faints, Crank carries him down and disappears. William hurries to write up the story.

To gain insurance against all that Slant knows about them, Pin and Tulip visit Thaumaturgical Park next to the UU to buy a Dis-organizer Mk II, whose tiny green imp can repeat everything that it hears. William and Sacharissa discuss finding an iconographer to incorporate pictures in the Times. William adds a lost-and-found feature and hires a zombie, Mr. Bendy, to write obituaries and a huge troll, Rocky, as his bodyguard when Brezock the Barbarian comes to behead him over the story about the Mended Drum fight. William agrees to print a correction. Sacharissa has been gathering stories from men who want to flirt with her and has designed a graphic masthead for the paper incorporating the motto, "The Truth Shall Make Ye Free" (pgs. 86-87.)

Pin and Tulip instruct Charlie, whom they will not allow to back out, how to behave haughtily like the Patrician, who sends out for a morning paper and smiles at its motto





and articles. He answers the door when someone knocks but does not enter as bidden. Meanwhile at breakfast, Arcanum's tenants discuss the articles with a kind of veneration that embarrasses William. In the office, Gunilla reports record sales and suggests printing more and selling at a lower per-paper price. The wealthy Guild of Engravers is setting up a press to compete, so the Times must go daily. William is wary of making too much money and doubts that enough truthful material can be found. Foreign bureaus are considered, including getting news by costly semaphore.

The discussion is interrupted by a flash of light, introducing the black-clad vampire iconographer Otto Chriek who comes to answer a help wanted ad. Otto has taken the pledge never to drink human blood again. When Mr. Wintler brings another vegetable to be written up, Otto takes its picture. An imp sits inside the iconograph, brush poised as Otto startles a salamander, which fills the room with searing flash that staggers Otto to the ground. This is Otto's normal reaction to light and sometimes it makes him crumble to dust.

## The Truth, pgs. 64-98 Analysis

The issue of how anything recorded in print creates in people's minds an aura of truthfulness is repeatedly raised. William finds the uncritical veneration for the press uncomfortable. The Patrician is of this mind as he calls in those most affected by his change in policy regarding printing. He later asks William why ordinary citizens want or need to read a newspaper, and cautions him to be prudent in what he prints. Proof is mounting that the Patrician is a despot yet enlightened somewhat. In addition, it is dramatically hinted but not fully depicted that the plot against him is staged. His clerk, Drumknott, who is eventually wounded in the attack is introduced to readers.

The Times continues to grow, much to William's consternation. He fears the effects of high profits and looks for ways to siphon off money, by buying the distribution force breakfast, for instance, and investing in the latest technology. He starts to learn some of the practical basics of journalism such as to cite as many names as possible in articles to assure extra sales from those mentioned. He is also keenly aware how people may dislike how they are depicted, including ways that might seem irrational. William develops an amusing obsession to citing subjects' ages in parentheses, which is later carried to extremes. He also risks his life covering an unfolding suicide that turns out to be a regularly-staged street drama. Onlookers taunt the man to jump from higher buildings. William's preparation to be a street reporter is woefully and almost suicidally weak. He faints on the ledge, but the subject catches him and carries him to the ground.

The editors begin grappling with their one technical shortcoming, which is an inability to include pictures with stories. They take out an ad and receive a response from a stereotypical vampire, Otto Chriek. Otto has taken a pledge similar to that initiated by the Alcoholics Anonymous to never drink human blood again and is shown struggling with temptation through the rest of the book. Taking pictures by iconograph has a dramatic effect on Otto. At the very least, the light involved in the process throws him to the floor and can cause him to crumble to dust. This becomes a regular motif later in the



novel. The process of iconography is magical. An imp sits inside the apparatus, brush poised to record the black-and-white scene. That imps are the mainstay of advanced technology on Discworld. This role is previously established when Pin and Tulip buy a Dis-organizer Mk II as protection against the lawyer Slant, who knows about their past activities too well.

William's hiring of Otto causes him to contemplate the status of non-human minorities in Ankh-Morpork. Except for a few witty phrases, it is largely serious. Dwarfs, trolls, zombies, werewolves, and gnomes have all more or less assimilated, but vampires lack the social skills even to get along with one another. The Committee to Unelect the Patrician has made clear that Vetinari's tolerance is a major reason for wanting to unseat him, and it has been mentioned in passing that representatives of these species serve in the police force. The nature of discrimination will continue to be drawn out.



# The Truth, pgs. 98-126

## The Truth, pgs. 98-126 Summary

William agrees with his father that "lies could run around the world before the truth could get its boots on" (pg. 98.) Letters prove that people want to believe lies. William orders them published, including the controversial ones along with rebuttals. It looks as though the Guild will block the engraving of iconographs but Otto believes that he can teach the imps to etch plates. He is also working on an "obsкуроgraph" for taking pictures with light from the other side of darkness that only imps can see. A demonstration makes William feel like pins have been hammered through every cell in his body, while Otto sees in the resulting picture inexplicable presences. Hearing that someone has been killed at the Palace, William heads there.

William talks their way past dim Sgt. Detritus to Commander Vimes, whom he bullies into giving him the facts, threatening to tell the story, with or without cooperation. He refuses to show him an advanced copy. Vimes tells him about three maids finding Vetinari holding a knife and claiming to be sorry for killing Drumknott. While they go for help, Vetinari runs to the stables and is found unconscious with \$70,000. Taking an iconograph, Otto turns to dust, leaving behind a card that states that he can be swept up and reconstituted by a drop of blood. Vimes orders the dust taken to the kitchen, which William interprets liberally as permission to wander around the palace.

At the Oblong Office, Nobbs is on guard. They flatter their way around him into the crime scene, where a uniformed female dwarf is examining the floor. She cannot be conned, recognizes dark light, and throws them out. Otto refuses to say what harmful effects the dark light might have but it makes William's head buzz as badly as the nonsense about the Patrician killing someone who is not dead and the crime scene reeking of peppermint.

William cannot figure out how to form a coherent story out of what he has learned. He has no patience for the trivial matters that have accumulated at the office and are organized on an engraver's spike. Most of these matters constitute a new category, which is paid advertising. William begins dictating a special edition to Gunilla, specifying type sizes for headlines, sub-headlines, and text, with Sacharissa questioning specific words and making suggestions. They are interrupted by four trolls attending two humans that include the zombie lawyer Slant and Ronald Carney of the newly combined Guild of Engravers and Printers. They demand \$200 for membership and a one-time shakedown fee of \$2,000. As the dwarfs take up battle axes, William and Sacharissa demand to see their charter and William begins dictating large-type headlines and instructs Gunilla to take down Slant's increasingly desperate and self-incriminating comments word-for-word. The party leaves silently as William worries about what he has gotten them into. The press is like a beast that must be fed a constant stream of words. William hopes to find the truth once this edition hits the street.



The building shakes as papers are printed and the sellers come back repeatedly. Foul Ole Ron's dog watches William in an offensive and knowing way, but William refuses to believe urban myths about a talking dog and a werewolf working on the Watch. William offers Sacharissa one of his sister's ball gowns so that she can cover a social affair.

## The Truth, pgs. 98-126 Analysis

William agrees with his despised father when he says that "lies could run around the world before the truth could get its boots on" (pg. 98.) This sentence is echoed as the investigation of the Patrician's alleged crime and eventually helps Williams understand who stands behind it. In the meantime, the Times operation continues growing as classes of materials suggest special kinds of columns such as letters to the editor and classified ads. It appears that the Guild will do all it can to impede progress, beginning with blocking the engraving of iconographs for inclusion. "Obscurographs" or pictures made with light from the other side of darkness grow prominent and have even more of a dramatic effect on Otto. Inside the Palace, these images create useful diversions. Its operation also affects William but Otto is unwilling to say what might be going on. It comes out later in the novel.

William learns that officials are unwilling to talk the outlines of the case against Vetinari. It makes no sense, but he takes this knowledge at face value. Commander Vimes is introduced as an official careful about preserving his own position who opposes freedom of the press but finds no way around it. An initially unnamed female officer working the crime scene is tougher than her colleagues. She becomes important in the course of the investigation. The Oblong Office is played for comedy, with the chalk outline of the body is drawn in colored chalk with flowers and clouds added. The victim however is still alive. The key evidence consists of a projectile stuck in the floor and a reek of peppermint.

William learns how to extract information from people by threatening to quote them directly. It works equally well on police and lawyers. Slant returns with a new client, Ronald Carney, chairman of the Guild of Engravers and Printers. The two bodies seem to have joined together to meet the Times' threat, but the paper holds out against the blatant shake-down. A show-down seems inevitable. Sacharissa computes that when they publish their latest materials, the Times' trouble will rise on a scale of one to ten from eight to 2,317. This hyperbole catches rather well the flavor of the narrative, although William is sincerely worried about what he has gotten everyone into. He introduces a simile that he frequently repeats: "The press is like an insatiable beast that must be fed a constant stream of words but always demands more."

Finally, in this section, William is faced with two urban myths, both of which will prove true. He plans to borrow one of his ball gowns for Sacharissa at the family townhouse. This sets up the story's dramatic climax. Notice also the engraver's spike that Sacharissa has brought in for organizing messages. William nearly impales himself on it. It will eventually find its way into his hand and then accidentally save his life. William notices that he is being spied upon possibly by mobile gargoyles.



# The Truth, pgs. 126-162

## The Truth, pgs. 126-162 Summary

William arrives at Watch headquarters just after Vimes summons him to complain about the Times calling him baffled. Vimes forbids William taking notes, lest he be humiliated as Slant has. He wonders what more trouble William will cause. William lets slip that he has not published the rumor about a werewolf on staff just as he notices Sgt. Angua in the shadows. He shocks her by guessing that Nobbs is a werewolf and reveals that he has noticed the gargoyles spying on him. Vimes counters that they are protecting him from people that he is upsetting. He is short-handed having to deal with the Vetinari case. Vimes lets slip that Vetinari and Drumknott are both in the cells, being cared for by a staff doctor with special skills. He draws a blank when William asks about Vetinari's dog and suggests that the crossbow bolt in the floor may have been fired at Wuffles and the peppermint introduced to thwart a werewolf.

Vimes realizes that he does not trust William because William is not answerable to any person like others. Williams is answerable to the Truth but Vimes finds this too abstract. Vimes offers a picture of Wuffles to publish in the Times to find him and allow his interrogation by Nobbs in dog language. Trying to get rid of William, Vimes refuses to let him see Vetinari but cannot keep him from Drumknott. The well-guarded cells are illuminated brightly by flickering blue light. Igor, head of the forensic unit, has a horrible face. He lets slip that the jailed Patrician has suffered a blow to the head, contradicting the official story that he falls from a horse. The Patrician has yet to awaken, but Drumknott is up, his head bandaged. He claims not to remember the assault but is sure that Vetinari is not guilty, before refusing to say more. After William leaves, Angua warns Vimes not to underestimate William's powers of observation. Two officers are protecting William.

Pin and Tulip are upset over losing the Patrician's dog, which bites both of them in the ankle. They are angry that Slant had not warned them about the dog or that Vetinari moves as fast as a snake. Stabbing Drumknott and having Charlie babble at the servants had been improvised. A member of the Thieves' Guild attempting an official robbery finds that he has approached the wrong people. Tulip claims a complementary barbecue set, putting on a "Kill the Cook!!!" (pg. 140) apron. Pin is anxious to get out of town.

The Ankh-Morpork Inquirer's first issue headlines a woman giving birth to a cobra. Its headquarters are also on Gleam St. The Engravers' Guild aims at putting the Times out of business, with three presses. It has tried to buy the dwarfs' press, hire Otto, and buy up all paper supplies. William must go negotiate with Mr. King. The Times gears up to do an even better job, hiring writers and offering color pictures. Meanwhile, Slant meets with Pin and Tulip, who complain about not being told about the dog. Slant explains that the Watch werewolf can take testimony from animals. Vimes, who cannot be bribed, already suspects that things are not right. Slant forbids killing Charlie, who is unstable.



He does not want the Watch to find any clues. Slant offers another \$5,000 to find the dog, but will not reveal who has hired them. As he leaves, he drops a subtle hint that they could become victims.

"The King of the Golden River" runs a lucrative junk yard and recycling plant founded on providing and processing buckets for collecting human waste. He has fanned out into collecting 27 varieties of rubbish, including recycled paper. He has sold his entire stock to the Guild. In return for covering his daughter's wedding with a color picture, Harry lets William steal a cart's worth. William must however pay him \$80 by month's end.

At the print shop, Otto clumsily lets an eel escape and reacts too slowly to prevent Sacharissa from grabbing it and being shocked unconscious. As Otto is nearly tempted back to his old ways, the dwarfs sing temperance songs. He reluctantly explains the magic of dark light and how it captures past, present, and future, causing odd side effects. The picture that Otto has taken in the Patrician's office shows two Lords Vetinari staring at one another. Another picture of William shows his father standing behind him. Sacharissa has seen flames and silver rain underground. They decide to keep this secret.

## The Truth, pgs. 126-162 Analysis

William investigates the rumor about the Patrician murdering his secretary. This turns out to be an exaggeration. The man is alive. For some reason, the Watch keeps this knowledge private. Commander Vimes' character is developed and several new police characters are introduced. William guesses that Nobbs is a werewolf, which helps cement his reputation for sharp observations. William also seizes upon two key items, which include a crossbow bolt embedded in the floor, suggesting that someone might have fired it at Wuffles, and a strong peppermint odor, which might have been intended to thwart tracking by a werewolf. Vimes does not trust William because he is not answerable to anyone, but has to cooperate in the search for Wuffles who can offer eye-witness testimony through Nobbs.

Below ground, William meets Igor, head of the forensic unit, who lets slip details that contradict the official story of how Vetinari is caught. The scene is played for full comic effect in Mel Brooks's Young Frankenstein style. As William leaves, it is suggested that his life is in danger. Pin and Tulip also need to find Wuffles to prevent his testifying. Much is made of the admissibility of animals' testimony in Ankh-Morpork. A long passage describes the city's tradition of allowing professional thieves to rob people legally in exchange for a certificate that exempts them from further harassment for a period of time. The unfortunate thief who confronts Pin and Tulip loses not only his life but also the barbecue equipment that he offers as a bonus. The apron and implements are referred to several times going forward. There is a humorous play on the booklets of useless promotional goods that are regularly sold to a wary public.

Tensions rise as the Engravers' Guild sets up a gossip rag, the Ankh-Morpork Inquirer across the street from the Times and buy up all paper supplies to force the Times swiftly



out of business. William is determined that truth must prevail and takes steps to get out an extended issue containing all that he has learned. This takes him to meet Mr. King to obtain paper. The meeting is the only time in this novel that Pratchett permits himself to revel in scatology. From childhood King has reason to hate the Guild, so he is amenable to letting William steal a load of paper. He also wants color pictures printed of his daughter's upcoming wedding.

This segues into Otto telling Sacharissa about the magic of dark light, having seen her shocked by an eel. Test photos and Sacarissa's memory of visions point to the climax. Sacarrisa is knocked unconscious and watching her come to, with heaving bosom, nearly drives Otto back to his old ways. The scene is played for laughs, with the dwarfs singing temperance songs and finding him rat meat to suck dry. He finds it a humiliating fall after so many months of sobriety, wavers a bit, and then declares that he is fine. Throughout this section, prejudices against various groups including dwarfs, trolls, and vampires are brought out.





# The Truth, pgs. 163-197

## The Truth, pgs. 163-197 Summary

In Biers Bar, which caters to the undead, Pin and a poorly coordinated Tulip retreat from a deadly standoff with a half-werewolf. Outside on the street, Foul Ole Ron, speaking with an odd clarity, sells them a Times. Noticing that Ron's dog looks like the sketch in the paper, Pin formulates a new plan. Gaspode declares that the confrontation was too close for comfort as Ron divides a sausage into three parts. William offers a \$25 reward for the Patrician's dog, figuring that he might need to be on the Watch's good side. He includes in his story what little he knows to be true. Blissful that another edition is finished and being distributed, William feels like Sisyphus, pushing a rock uphill. The press will soon demand to be fed again. Sacharissa is hard at work on two stories. Constable Fiddymont feeds her stories, being sweet on her. Sacharissa forbids William to walk her home, lest Grandfather see him. When he confesses that she is attractive but not his type, she is relieved. William races home, arriving just in time to eat at the table, where all agree that the Inquirer is more interesting, that changes are needed in the city and Vetinari is guilty. William goes to bed to think.

Standing in the circle of chairs, Slant reports the missing dog but discounts its importance to the Watch. The Guilds will meet to consider whether a new Patrician should be elected and Vimes will play by the rules. Mr. Scrope, a useful idiot, is favored to succeed Vetinari but everyone will feel bad about deposing Vetinari. Vimes and the Watch will have to be brought to heel. There is no need to do anything about the Times, which people find amusing. The inquirer outsells it after one day and it has money and supply problems. It will collapse. Still, Slant keeps an eye on everything.

Pin and Tulip break into the Temple of Om in the Street of Small Gods to steal clerical dress. They wander incognito, searching the streets for the dog. An old priest interrupts them and gets into a discussion with Tulip about a silver candlestick before being knocked out for not displaying it properly. Meanwhile, William borrows Mrs. Arcanum's scales and races out to save the city. He wakes Gunilla to start another edition. Weighing ten assorted dollar coins, William calculates that \$70,000 in coins would weigh a third of a ton. This proves that Vetinari could not have carried it off with a bad leg and that Vimes knows it is a frame. The news story includes this as it speculates that Vetinari comes in on a crime in progress. Exhausted, William finishes off a story disproving women in Lancre bearing snakes.

Gunilla asks why William is taking all of this risk and reveals that the dwarfs are ready to sell out and return to the lead mines. William believes it is because he has never had a proper job or been good at anything. Now he cannot imagine doing anything else. William talks about his father's prejudice against "lesser races" (pg. 182.) Gunilla explains why dwarfs need gold. Dwarf brides and grooms use the gold to buy each other from their parents, paying off the cost of raising them. Gunilla and Boddony want to mine for a year or two and then marry. William is surprised, having taken them both





for males. At breakfast, William debunks an Inquirer story from personal knowledge, but the lodgers will not believe in Vetinari's innocence. William buys a copy of the Inquirer and wonders who writes their stuff, better than he could.

Taking a shortcut down gloomy Creek Alley, William is approached by what he takes to be professional thieves and cites the time remaining on his receipt. The mystery voice, however, belongs to someone who smells like Foul Ole Ron but sounds somehow different. Calling himself Deep Bone, he suggests he might help William rather than the uncaring Watch to find a certain lost dog with a story to tell. He demands a reward of \$100 rather than the \$25 misprint and throws in an interpreter for \$150 total. Deep Bone offers a free tip that someone other than Vetinari stabs Drumknott and is bit on the ankle. Deep Bone can identify him by smell and not a visual description once he has the money. When Deep Bone mentions the Committee to Unelect the Patrician, William remains skeptical. Finally, he suggests asking Vimes what Vetinari does just before the attack. Left alone, William realizes that Deep Bone like Otto is a foreigner from a misused colloquialism used by the man.

William falls in behind the golem fire fighters rushing to a blaze on Treacle Mine Rd. The two papers provide different coverage of the aftermath of Mr. Hardy, forgetting that he is bathing his feet in turpentine when he lights a cigar. Otto races up, snaps a picture, and is reduced to dust. However, he is reconstituted by the emergency blood that he wears in a bottle around his neck. A perfect etching has been produced of a perfectly routine event. Otto talks wistfully about giving up women before reiterating his love of cocoa and singsongs.

## The Truth, pgs. 163-197 Analysis

Tulip's search for drugs has a terrible effect on him. Together with Pin, he searches for a werewolf to interpret Wuffles' speech. They get into a classic stand-off in the tough Biers Bar from which they have to withdraw. Meeting Foul Ole Ron selling the Times, they do not realize that Wuffles is with Ron and Gaspode. This fact is subtly indicated by the traditional breaking of the sausage into three shares instead of two, and Gaspode's declaration that it was too close for comfort.

Pin gets an idea, which turns out to be disguising themselves as clergy to watch the crowd of folks trying to collect a \$25 reward for Wuffles. The scene is largely played to showcase Tulip's art expertise when he tells the priest the provenance and monetary value of a candlestick that Pin has looked upon only as a blunt object for assaulting the cleric. Tulip clubs him as effectively by hand and declines to steal the candlestick as their fences would surely just melt it down.

Slant watches Pin and Tulip on behalf of the Committee, which is shown discussing the upcoming election of the nondescript Mr. Scrope as Vetinari's successor. The Committee dismisses the Times' importance, overruling a member's call to vandalize it. It will collapse in competition with the Inquirer. The incredible popularity of the Inquirer



after only one issue is brought out several times, in discussions around Mrs. Arcanum's breakfast table and while William is covering a fire.

William's compulsive truthfulness is examined. He includes in stories only what he knows to be true. He has tried to write in the Inquirer style but finds it too difficult, given his personality. He admires those who can artfully invent. He is also stressed out by the need constantly to be preparing and publishing new editions. Without being able to recall the name of the ancient Greek, he feels like Sisyphus. It would not be good to cross over explicitly into Earthly history and culture. William's relations with his father are, of course, brought up again in this context, with him several times apologizing for the old man's rabid hostility to non-human species. Details about two species, dwarfs and golem, are brought out in passing. William's feelings for Sacharissa are revealed to be torn where he does not find her his type, but is jealous of how she attracts the attention of other men.

William gets a sudden insight into proof that Vetinari has been set up. He ransacks humorless Mrs. Arcanum's kitchen for scales to weigh out ten assorted dollar coins, and then calculates the weight of \$70,000. At a third of a ton, it is impossible for crippled Vetinari to manage. William gets another break, but works heartily to reject it unless he can be assured that it is valid. He is approached by someone calling himself "Deep Bone," an obvious take-off on the "Deep Throat" of Watergate history. Deep Bone wants more money than is being offered in reward and refuses to give more than hints until he is paid. He gives away gratis that Wuffles has bitten the true perpetrator for the crime, but William notes that he can hardly go around lifting people's cuffs to check for marks. Dogs see humans as cliffs with nostrils, so William cannot expect a visual description. He can get a scent identification. Note that Deep Bone smells like Foul Ole Ron but does not sound like him. Recall the earlier close encounter with Pin and Tulip and the saturating of the crime scene with peppermint. Scent will resolve the case.



# The Truth, pgs. 197-229

## The Truth, pgs. 197-229 Summary

At Gleam Street, a crowd hopes to collect the \$25 reward, bringing in all breeds and species. A priest from the Om temple and an enormous nun offer assistance. After Sister Jennifer (Tulip) administers tough love on fakers, the crowd thins. While she gathers terriers into sacks, Brother Pin shows William a frock full of weapons. William secretly signals Gunilla that the clergy are fakes and the dwarfs attack just as Otto startles a bunch of eels and the universe folds away in chilling darkness and ice needles. Sacharissa lands embarrassingly in William's arms and Otto, whom Pin has beheaded during his escape, also embarrassingly needs to be restored. The dwarfs talk about the bad luck of using black light, but Otto justifies it in terms of Temporal Relevance Theory.

Vimes appears, smiling in a predatory fashion, commenting on the tidal wave of terrorized animals underfoot before telling William about the next day's election. As William pulls out his notebook to record the confrontation, Vimes pulls out a truncheon, but they agree to a truce. They discuss Vetinari's atypical behavior and Scrope's sex toy shop and plans to pardon Vetinari. Vimes warns William to think more.

His iconograph smashed, Otto complains about how hard it is to stay on the wagon in the big city, with its women dressed in fancy clothing. Blood on his shirt sets him off however and he has to be restrained, sung to, and fed blutwurst. In the picture, Pit's face is a white blob surrounded by live shadows. Meanwhile, out in the sleet, Pin and Tulip reach a bridge, throw the sacks full of dogs into the river, and run away. Pin feels like more than human watchmen are after him.

Sacharissa declares that people find true only that which promotes survival and what is important to one is dull to others. She cites Twurp's Peerage to show that the de Wordes run things and never worry about little things. The Times is William's hobby. Like all aristocrats, he has a choice about what to do. William admits this but clarifies that someone has to worry about the big truth. Vetinari might not be a nice man, but setting him aside is wrong, and his successors could cut off all hard news. Sacharissa announces that William should leave politics to the Watch but privately admits that he is having an effect on those who actually run things.

William goes home to fetch the key for Sacharissa. He imagines that the shed is now well-guarded, as Vimes watches to see who attacks them next. Pin and Tulip reach the empty mansion ahead of William and remove the clerical clothes. Sure that they have drowned Wuffles, Tulip wants to kill Charlie and run away, but Pin will not violate the contract. They have a reputation to maintain. He wants to talk again with Slant and visit the newspaper again, ostensibly to grab their photograph, but actually because he is haunted by dead enemies who are watching him and reaching out to touch him. It is



time to retire and perhaps practice a little religion. Immediately however, they must either follow Slant's instructions to the letter or kill him dramatically.

Having heard something plop into the river, the Misbegot Bridge crew rescues one sackful of terriers, while William purchases a scent bomb far more potent than peppermint and collects his keys and checkbook at Mrs. Arcanum's. He alludes a gargoyle that is following him and a compost heap-resembling gnom that he knows works for Harry King. After dodging about town a while, William stops to see who will use him next. When a werewolf arrives, sniffing the ground, William hurls the scent bomb and flees to the livery stables, where Deep Bone assures him that Nobbs is not a werewolf. He agrees to send a messenger to Misbegot Bridge that night. When Deep Bone and William both leave, a groom loading sacks is ordered by a terrier to put him down and then denies that dogs can talk.

## The Truth, pgs. 197-229 Analysis

The response to the Times' \$25 reward for a dog that resembles the Watch's drawing of Wuffles dominates this section. Sacharissa cannot believe that anyone would be idiotic enough to offer a reward in Ankh-Morpork. People have showed up with a variety of dog breeds and many other animal species, including a cow labeled "Dog" in paint. Pim and Tulip show up in clerical outfits to sort through the chaos, removing several sacks full of terriers, which they throw into the river, assuming that this will solve their problem. One sack, however, is recovered by the crew that lives under the bridge and a talking terrier in a sack identifies himself as Deep Bone to William, agreeing to provide information that night.

Pin's pseudonym is a spin off from his surname and an interest of medieval Christian scholars Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus, resulting in "Brother Upon-Which-the-Angels-Dance Pin." Tulip becomes Sister Jennifer of the "Little Flowers of Perpetual Annoyance," which is a less than successful take-off on St. Therese of Lisieux. Jennifer is played for slapstick, given Tulip's size. She has conveniently taken an absolute vow of silence but is a partisan of tough love. When Jennifer is discussed later, Sacharissa observes that she has tougher nuns for teachers, including one who can bite doors in half. Otto takes an iconograph whose powerful black light seriously disorders Pin's mind, causing him to see the souls of his many victims and feel them reaching out for him. Pin is no theologian but believes it might be time to practice a bit of religion to relieve the pressure in his head.

The dwarfs somehow know that black light is dangerous and even unholy. They cannot believe that Otto is using it for iconography. Otto resents William asking him for some "children of the night business" (pg. 197) when the crowd blocks them from the print shack, and quietens the pack. Otto is beheaded by Pin as Pin and Tulip flee but is restored later. The blood on his shirt, however, excites Otto to blood-lust and he has to be restrained until it passes. The dwarfs must sing temperance songs from a book that Sacharissa has conveniently borrowed at a meeting. Otto had believed that life in the city would be easier, not harder for staying straight.



Vimes and William tangle, each posturing behind the symbol of his position. William's symbol is a notebook (which has proved formidable in several earlier encounters with officialdom) and Vimes' symbol is a truncheon, which he assures William is mightier than the pen. This saying by the 19th-century English writer Edward Bulwer-Lytton is frequently used in the context of conflicts between press and state, usually with the free press being assumed to come out on top. They bring out some facts about the assumed next Patrician, Scrope, which are unflattering. Most importantly, in terms of the Watergate imagery, he is expected immediately to pardon Vetinari.

William and Sacharissa debate the nature of truth, she charging that aristocrats like the de Wordes, who run things in society, never worry about little things. While admitting that William is sincere about the Times, she claims that it is William's hobby and not a necessity for staying alive, as it is for the rest of the staff. Resentful of his family position as it is constantly brought up by everyone he meets, William admits this. He however maintains that he is worrying about the big truth beyond Vetinari's character. A true dictator could bring real danger to a free press. Their argument turns into an ad hominum debate, which points up the embarrassment they both feel when thrown into each other's arms during the explosive iconograph.

William's sensory attack on a werewolf that he assumes is Cpl. Nobbs brings him back to the stables and another meeting with Deep Bone, whose identity is clouded by the presence of a talking terrier in a sack. Deep Bone assures William that Nobbs is not a werewolf and that his scent bomb will greatly anger Vimes. The exchange of Deep Bone's mysterious information is set up for that night.



# The Truth, pgs. 229-260

## The Truth, pgs. 229-260 Summary

Adding color to the Times greatly slows printing, requiring four imps to work together. They will speed up eventually, but the Inquirer will figure out the process and use it. Several dwarfs favor tunneling under the Inquirer through the cellar to see what they are doing. Sacharissa joins them. Breaking through the Inquirer's cellar, they meet Dibbler, who is glad to see them. Meanwhile at the bridge, Gaspode gallops up, sees the other dogs, and dives under Ron's horrible coat. The crew finally figures out that terriers are being hunted because of the newspaper article. Needing to be out and about town, Gaspode needs a disguise. Lady Hermione has an idea. Back beneath Gleam Street, William finds Sacharissa haranguing Dibbler about writing believable untruths for the Inquirer. Dibbler knows that William is too unimaginative for him to have approached for a job in hard times. Mr. Carney requires only that something might have happened. People are allowed to make up their own minds. Repenting of his fall into employment, Dibbler accepts a commission job selling advertising space in the Times. As Sacharissa, accompanied by Rocky, goes to pick out a dress, William "goes to see a dog about a man" (pg. 238.)

Sgt. Angua steams her sinuses, lamenting that they cannot arrest William without revealing that she is a werewolf. Vimes resents being unable to forbid William to reveal that. Since William does not want to be followed, they remove his protection. No one has found Wuffles, the Guilds are battering down, the High Priest is talking about flying lobsters, and Scrope is predicting a return to responsible citizenship.

William follows a pink, talking poodle, Trixiebell, from the bridge to the stinking hideaway beneath. Once William hands over his check, Ron opens his coat, revealing Wuffles. No one would ever search Ron, nor could even a werewolf sniff the dog out. William conducts a formal interview, translated by Deep Bone. After talking about one of two Vetinaris in the Palace smelling wrong and the presence of two others, Wuffles bites William on the ankle. Meanwhile, at Slant's office, Pin and Tulip force themselves in to an appointment. Pin's Dis-organizer imp plays back incriminating materials, for which he demands what is owed plus \$50,000 in jewels so that they can leave town. When Slant tries to sneak in a few fake diamonds, Pin pulls an illegal spring-gonne (miniature crossbow) on him. When four bodyguards crash through the door, Tulip dispatches them without thinking, while Pin lights a bolt capable of consuming a dry zombie. Wanting not to kill today, he accepts good rubies and leaves. Slant writes a message for delivery to Lord de Worde.

As William continues taking notes, he is offered tea that he cannot politely decline but puts off drinking as too hot and finally kicks over. Deep Bone confirms that Wuffles bites everyone in the room and describes their various tastes and smells. William wants an iconograph to prove that he has talked with Wuffles, to be taken back at the Times, for another \$50. Meanwhile, Tulip worries about Pin's new amateurish behavior. When Pin





mentions religion, Tulip reveals that he wears a potato on a string around his neck, which assures him of returning to life after he dies, no matter what he has done. All other religious practices are secondary. They head back to the house to collect their diamonds, kill Charlie, and buy Pin a potato. First however, Pin needs revenge on Otto for whatever he has done to his head.

Sacharissa and Rocky let themselves into the sealed de Worde town house and find the musty wardrobe, which is strewn with powdered mothballs. Selecting a blue dress, Sacharissa is anxious to leave, but drunken Charlie calls to them. When Rocky prepares to defend Sacharissa, Tulip knocks him out. She recognizes the fake nun and monk, who threaten her into revealing that William has provided her key. They proceed to the shack.

## The Truth, pgs. 229-260 Analysis

Feeling pressure from the Inquirer, the dwarfs and Sacharissa go underground, intent on breaking through into the rival's cellar and look around. They discover Dibbler writing and hire him away to self-advertising space. This is less morally offensive to Dibbler. Telling William about Dibbler, Sacharissa uses an extended allusion to writing as a form of sausage. William's insistence on truth is again critiqued.

The victim of William's scent bomb is revealed to be Sgt. Angua rather than Nobbs. Vimes resents not being able to use his position to silence William, who is led beneath the bridge to meet and interview Wuffles. It is revealed that the eyewitness or actually a "nosewitness" has been hiding under Ron's impenetrable coat since escaping the Palace. He testifies to two Vetinaris and two other people, all of whom he bites. The persons involved are not yet known, but the Patrician now seems an unlikely suspect.

Pin, whose mental and physical states are slipping swiftly enough to worry even Tulip, threatens to blackmail and/or kill Slant, but leaves him alive once his demands are met, which is entirely out of character. He speaks in religious terms. Tulip talks about his village's belief that wearing a potato guarantees reincarnation. Pin's interests in the spiritual are growing, but first he must settle up with Otto for whatever he has done to his head. This brings the criminal pair to the de Worde town house as Sacharissa and her bodyguard, Rocky, are ready to leave with a dress. Clearly the wardrobe has been one of Tulip's favorite spots for doing pseudo-drugs. Coming downstairs they discover Charlie's place of drunken imprisonment. He calls to them. Pin warns her to be quiet as they proceed back to the shack, setting up a deadly confrontation.



# The Truth, pgs. 260-290

## The Truth, pgs. 260-290 Summary

Trixiebell and not Deep Bone accompanies the crew through the streets, where William is sure that no one will make an attempt on Wuffles. In the print shed, Pin and Tulip are waiting, holding Sacharissa prisoner and demanding to see Otto. As Wuffles attacks Pin, a crossbow misfire hits a lamp, which showers the room with burning oil. William warns that the old paint tins will explode, just as they do. As the building begins to collapse, Pin and Tulip hide in the stone cellar. Pin is convinced that he is not destined to fry, but the lead slugs melt and begin flowing downstairs. When Tulip examines Otto's salamanders and then his "Handle viz Car!" eels, a flash of black light goes through his already ragged brain, sending him back to childhood and to victims whom they have murdered. Seeing that they are trapped and the pooling molten metal will soon engulf them, Pin requests Tulip's potato for the good of the Firm, kills him, and stands on his body.

Tulip's shade opens its eyes in refreshing darkness and is greeted by Death, who has come to claim him. Death regrets that Tulip believes in no god and has lost his potato and helps him to be sorry for everything. He shows him an arc of hourglasses representing the lives that he and Pin have shortened. Death shows him his whole life as others have seen it. By the time the golems arrive, the fierce fire has burned itself out. The press is not repairable but the office is intact. Even a used press is too expensive to consider and William is in debt to Harry King. Still, he and Sacharissa are optimistic about expanding to specialty magazines. Gunilla is amazed at their inability to see reality.

Figuring that twenty tons of lead cannot disappear, they are heading for the cellar when Pin emerges like a demon, screaming incoherently and grabbing William by the throat. The paper spike, which has miraculously survived, goes through William's arm, but he concentrates on suffocating until Sacharissa kicks Pin in the groin. As William struggles to pull the spike from his arm, Pin clutches Tulip's potato triumphantly. Pin pulls a dagger and lunges forward, only to impale himself on the spike. When Otto arrives, the sight of blood nearly requires another intervention. William wishes that he could have interviewed Pin.

Checking Pin's pockets, he finds the incriminating Dis-organizer, bags of jewels, and a card with the de Worde town house's address. Dwarfs find Tulip cooked into the floor downstairs. Both corpses have dog bites on the leg. They briefly debate what to do with the jewels before deciding to restore the press. Hearing Lord de Worde's favorite phrase about lies running around the world settles it. William wants a new press in operation in half an hour, photographs taken, and quotes from everyone involved. The dwarfs cross the street to borrow an Inquirer press.





William and Sacharissa visit Carney at the Inquirer, where she pulls a pistol bow on Carney and, using foul language, demands the loan of a press to put out a special edition. Downstairs, Gunilla convinces the staff to take the night off for \$100. When Otto adds a threat, he is rewarded by the melodramatic thunder and lightning that he has missed since moving to Ankh-Morpork. William gives Carney \$2,000 in jewels for a Guild membership. William dictates Inquirer-sized headlines about conspiracy and Vetinari's innocence. He credits uncovering the plot to the Watch, hoping this will help appease Vimes' anger. Gunilla does not argue, for William is transformed into someone touch and less patient. He describes the dastardly plan involving a look-alike, a dog Wuffles, public-spirited citizens (Ron), and criminals from outside the city who are now deceased.

A hailstorm rages as William paces, referring to his notebook. Otto hands in iconograph plates. William is satisfied that everything is journalism, e.g., "true enough for now" (pg. 287.) He adds a paragraph about evidence pointing to a group of prominent citizens being involved and the Times is helping the Watch make inquiries. When in private, Sacharissa asks William about the conspirators, he replies that the Dis-organizer proves that his father is involved and, knowing him, is probably the ringleader. Privilege means "private law" (pg. 288) and de Wordes believe themselves to be above everything. His friends are all thugs who accept that whatever side they are on is right by definition, and eliminate opponents. Because he cares about his family, William is willing to publish a half-truth. He storms off to confront his father. When Trixiebell and Gaspode emerge to tell Sacharissa and Otto that William is headed into danger, Otto rushes off to warn him.

## The Truth, pgs. 260-290 Analysis

The story comes to a dramatic climax as the Times print shed accidentally burns down but the means of rebuilding are found and the documented truth is prepared for publication. Pin and Tulip receive their just desserts after receiving several more jolts of black light, which serves to activate their guilty consciences. Pin's new mystical streak fixates on Tulip's childhood potato fetish and brings him, guiltily, to murder his partner in a survival of the fittest motif. Tulip, after all, is too big to benefit from standing on Pin's corpse to rise above the molten lead, whereas Pin can benefit from Tulip's considerable girth. Early, semi-theological debates about the pros and cons of the use and reuse of movable type culminate in words melting down into letters and then a general flood of metal. Death, a frequent character in Discworld novels, comes for Tulip's shade. Note that he always speaks in all-capital letters. An agent of whichever deity the deceased identified with, Death dislikes having to make decisions for non-believers. He brings Tulip to a state of remorse by showing him his life from the viewpoint of those whose lives he has shortened, rather than the stereotype flashing of his own life before his eyes.

Pin has survived but his mind is gone. He attacks William and dies when William pulls loose the paper spike on which he had earlier nearly impaled himself and now has. He is clutching the stolen potato, confident that it will provide a fruitful next life. Pin's pockets provide all that they need to prove the conspiracy and fund the rebuilding of the



Times. They just have to convince themselves that this is not theft. They invade the Inquirer armed, tie up the owner, and bribe the staff to take the night off, but then pay for use of the press and a Guild membership with the gems found on Pin. Hearing Lord de Worde's favorite phrase about lies running around the world convinces William that his father is involved in the plot which, given his father's character, means that he is at the head of it. William, whom the crisis has changed, tells as much of the truth as he can, admits that in journalism one does not always possess the full truth all the time, and cannot bring himself to publish the full truth about his father. This is a marked compromise from his earlier idealism. He heads to confront his father in the final section of the novel.



# The Truth, pgs. 290-324

## The Truth, pgs. 290-324 Summary

Death asks if Tulip is ready to go and tells him that reincarnation can take place at any time, perhaps not even requiring that lives follow one another. Pin runs up, waving his potato, declaring calmly that he is sorry and wants what is coming to him. The Death of Rats steals Pin's potato as Death justly makes Pin disappear in a flash of blue light.

William is angry over how his father never admits doing wrong but this time has stupidly put the family's honor at risk. William finds his father, expecting him, and is not satisfied by Father's "end justifies the means" (pg. 295) explanation, that Vetinari is ruining Ankh-Morpork. William has enough to open an inquiry. When Father demands that William cease, William reminds him that he has always been ordered to tell the truth.

Emboldened, William quotes Pin quoting Father about truth putting on its boots while lies are running around the world, and demands that Father leave town immediately, lest William publish everything that he has just recorded on the Dis-organizer. In keeping with dwarf custom, William throws Father \$20,000 in gems to repay for being raised and educated.

Father signals four thugs from the shadows, ordering them to put William on a long voyage to comfortable exile far away. Otto drops from the chandelier and with blinding speed knocks out all four before Lord de Worde runs him through with his sword. Otto lifts him and prepares to bite, but for William's sake and his own self-esteem, merely kisses his forehead and lets him go. William declares that for family's sake he will not publish proof that Father is a traitor, but others will discover the full truth soon enough. Rejecting the gems, Father leaves, declaring that William is a true de Worde. Sickened, William pulls out the sword out of Otto and knows that his troubles with the Watch are just starting.

Vimes demands information that the Times has not published such as names. William insists that there is enough to release Vetinari and offers to debate publicly his right to defend himself against a werewolf. He congratulates himself on getting good at lying. William returns from comfortable protective custody to find that Slant has beaten Vimes, arguing that everyone in the city is guilty of withholding information from the Watch. Slant fears that William will reveal everything, including accomplices, if forced to testify. Slant confirms that Scrope has been elected Patrician, but with a number of guilds voting to adjourn. William questions whether Vetinari's innocence might cast a question mark over the election.

After a short night, William exults in having made "DOG BITES MAN!" into news (pg. 306). Macleduff leads the discussion of how Vetinari cleverly gets away with it but then skips over the far-fetched political stuff to talk about vegetables. William refocuses the group. When Windling speaks up, William grabs him across the table and demands to know what everyone knows, whence, and how, since he has written the Times article on



the basis of careful fact checking rather than relying on stupid, trouble-making rumors. He is in hot water for helping people know things that are important. All are amazed at the revelation that special people are not in charge of news.

William and Otto arrive early at the Palace, where Scrope's mother has sent a note claiming that he is sick and Vetinari is feeling well enough to resume duties next day. Vimes defends to Mr. Downey, head of the Assassins' Guild, William's legal right to write whatever he wants and insists that Downey answer reasonable questions. Downey declares that Vetinari will not face trial because he is guiltless; that Vimes, his officers, and the Times are responsible for determining this; and that Vimes will be commended. Vimes looks both angry and amused. Slant informs Downey about Ankh-Morpork's fine old tradition of free speech. He is sure that William will do nothing to upset the city's smooth running. Out of sight, William laughs.

An uneventful week passes. The Times relocates temporarily as its shed is rebuilt. A new, redesigned press is put to work. Money makes everything effortless. Sacharissa finds three eccentric new writers. Vetinari visits unexpectedly, to see the free press about which Vimes speaks so much. William explains in what sense the press is free and how the public interest and the topics of interest to the public are not the same. The Times has begun including some stories that appeal to the public's natural interests, but William hopes that the public will be capable of thinking "big, sensible measured thoughts" (pg. 314.) Vetinari predicts an eventful future for the Times and agrees to an interview. William warns that he will not be bribed or patronized. When Vetinari invites the Times to a party, Sacharissa accepts. William convinces Vetinari to attend and promote Harry King's daughter's marriage and agrees not to upset Vimes more than necessary. In the interests of controlling tyranny and despotism, Vetinari hopes that there will not be too much pulling together, for progress lies in diversity. The staff goes back to work, finding usual and unusual—but always true—stories. They know news when they see it.

Reviewing all that they have been through, William and Sacharissa agree to take the afternoon off, after finishing mountains of paperwork. Hours pass before they walk to a noodle place on Elm St. En route, a brewer's dray runs out of control, dumping 100 gallons of beer. They scramble to cover the story. William is shocked to realize that he has observed and written rather than helping rescue and clean up. Sacharissa remarks that sometimes heroes jot notes. The press must again be fed. Deep in ancient timbers, a reincarnated woodworm thinks how good it tastes. Nothing has to be true forever, just long enough to tell the truth.

## **The Truth, pgs. 290-324 Analysis**

Pin runs up as Death is leaving Tulip, and is disintegrated, which is his fair reward for a life of evil. In the novel's final scene it is shown that Tulip is reincarnated as a woodworm enjoying the taste of the Times' new press. The moral is that one ought not to put too much trust in root vegetables on anything else, for things may not be as they seem.



William confronts his father but cannot publicly brand him a traitor. William has too much family pride for that. William rejects the famous aphorism that the "end justifies the means" (pg. 295.) William amazes himself by growing fearless in reminding his father that he had always been ordered to tell the truth. With a flourish of how truth can be compromised, William reveals how he knows that Father is behind the plot to unseat the Patrician and demands that Father leave town immediately or be unmasked. As Father fingers his sword, William tells him to use it or desist. It is, thus, no surprise, when the sword is used—but where it strikes is a surprise. William acknowledges that Father will not be acquainted with dwarf wedding customs, since he despises their race, as he throws at him the gems he has taken from the body of the man who had tried to kill him. He considers himself even with Father.

Father still has a bit of treachery, sending thugs after William, but finding himself suddenly at Otto's mercy. Father's sword plunges into Otto without, of course, killing him. It tempts Otto to the limits, however, to bite Father and turn him into something he despises. Instead Otto and William both let Father leave in defeat. Father, however, declares that William is a true *de Worde*. Initially sickened by the thought, William spends the final pages of the novel realizing how true and ultimately useful this is. He begins applying his natural talents of arrogance and falsehood.

Vimes and William tangle a last time over the release of names and William's assault on Sgt. Angua. They debate the nature of the public good. William hires Slant as his lawyer, knowing how hard he will work in order not to have his role in the plot revealed. William's goal is to get Vetinari vindicated, simply because that is just. By the time William returns for a hearing before the Patrician, Scropes is out of the picture and Vetinari back in. Slant has convinced Vimes to support the rights of a free press, which galls the head of the Assassin's Guild. This victory is further emphasized by Vetinari's visit to the new print shed. Vetinari proves far more observant and cagey than has appeared thus far. He understands that press and state must necessarily be adversaries for the relationship to be healthy.

A final breakfast at Mrs. Arcanum's shows how William has changed. He can no longer endure hearing the Times torn down and rumors exalted. He takes pride in having finally proved that "DOG BITES MAN!" can actually be news (pg. 306.) Throughout the novel he has held that true news would create the reverse of what people expect such as a man biting a dog. William is proud that he endangers himself to help people know important things. Getting off far easier than he expects, William continues contemplating in what sense the press is free and how the public interest and the interest to the public are not identical. How dedicated William and Sacharissa are to journalism is shown in a final farcical afternoon, as they prepare a story on the overturning of a huge cask of beer on the street rather than becoming part of the diverse scene. William realizes that nothing has to be true forever, just long enough to tell the truth.

# Characters

## William de Worde

The novel's protagonist, William is the estranged younger son of a prejudiced and bullying aristocrat, Lord de Worde. William is educated not at the prestigious Assassins' School like his brother Rupert, but at the bleak, spartan Hugglestones boarding school, which is little known for academics. Wide reading renders William unsuitable for the church position that befalls most second sons, and he sees no value in land management or the military. He likes words, however, and against his father's wishes sets off on a writing career in Ankh-Morpork.

William is a modest young man who offers a unique service, "Things Written Down" (pg. 3.) Once a month he puts out a one-page newsletter, which he distributes to five rich patrons at a net profit of \$30 a month. He writes in his tiny office above the Guild of Conjurors, traces his writing backwards onto boxwood, and takes this to Mr. Cripslock, who laboriously cuts away the background wood and prints five copies. When a runaway cart knocks William flat and destroys his woodblock, he meets the cart's owner, Gunilla Goodmountain, who swiftly sets the ruined page in type and prints many copies. Sending them to 18 new prospective subscribers marks the first expansion of William's business.

In reaction to his father's looseness with the truth, William has difficulty becoming a professional journalist. He perseveres, however, assisted by the ex-engraver's daughter, Sacharissa Cripslock, who becomes a skilled full-time writer, editor, and William's growing love/hate interest. He claims no attraction, which pleases her, but others think otherwise. The enterprise rather steadily grows into a full-blown newspaper, The Ankh-Morpork Times, complete with color graphics and foreign bureaus.

William's investigation of the alleged stabbing of Rufus Drumknott by his boss, the Patrician Lord Havelock Vetinari, establishes his credentials and reputation for strictly adhering to the truth. Members of the City Watch (police force) run book against his survival, but Commander Vimes, with whom there is not love lost, orders him protected, admiring his attention to detail. William discovers discrepancies in the evidence and keeps digging until he obtains an interview with an eyewitness, Vetinari's terrier, Wuffles. Sacharissa cannot believe how naïve William is to offer a reward in Ankh-Morpork, as mobs of people bring dogs of all sorts and assorted other species to the office. William's success in gathering information inspires Mr. Pin and Mr. Tulip to kill him, but he is saved. The press shack, however, burns down. William and Sacharissa are determined to rebuild and expand.

Finding on the body of his would be assassin a store of gems and proof of his father's involvement in the plot against the Patrician, William confronts him and demands that he leave Ankh-Morpork as a condition of keeping his treason secret. William cannot betray the family's honor. Leaving, the old man declares William a true de Worde. While





initially shocked by this, William sees how he has mastered lying. He sees that truth must not last forever, just long enough to get through the day.

## Sacharissa Cripslock

The granddaughter of an engraver whose services protagonist William de Worde uses while publishing a monthly one-page newsletter, Sacharissa confronts William when he begins using dwarf printers for his expanding work. It is taking \$20 out of their mouths. William, therefore hires Sacharissa as a reporter for the Ankh-Morpork Times at \$5 per day. Convinced that writing is a proper, cultural undertaking for a young lady, she accepts.

Sacharissa's individual features would have driven various artists from various times in history crazy, but the composite is neither attractive nor bad-looking. She seems to be a background character. She mistakes etiquette for good breeding. Sacharissa is self-conscious about her ample bosom but unable to conceal it completely. She comes to appreciate how it motivates a lot of men to tell her things that she uses in newspaper stories. She is relieved when William declares that she is not his type. Others, however, are able to see an attraction, which she resents hearing about. Sacharissa is depicted as respectable for so long a time that "there's a lot of dammed-up disrespectability just waiting to burst out" (pg. 233.) Most surprising is her drawing a crossbow on a rival newspaper and couching her demands in terms she has picked up from the late thug Mr. Tulip. After Ronnie Carnie is safely tied up, she reveals that the bow had not been loaded. She saves William's life by kicking his assailant in the groin, an action that William finds surprising.

Sacharissa is able to think in headlines, which William finds impressive and baffling, and regularly shortens articles by striking out all adjectives. She designs the Ankh-Morpork Times' graphic nameplate, complete with "fruit salads and leaves and things" (pg. 87). She finds an odd assortment of writers for various special columns, pushing for a human-interest column that will provide something of what makes the rival Inquirer popular. When arguing about the truth, Sacharissa charges that William as a rich man's son is in journalism as a hobby rather than out of necessity like the rest of them.

## Mr. Pin and Mr. Tulip

Forming a criminal group known as "The New Firm" (pg. 50), Pin and Tulip are hired by a group of concerned citizens to frame the Patrician of Ankh-Morpork, Lord Vetinari, and put a new man in his place. Vetinari is not to be harmed. Pin and Tulip do not see themselves as thugs, thieves, or assassins, but rather as facilitators. They have no rules, which sets them apart from the inefficient guilds.

Pin is small, slim, large-headed, and dapper. He is the brains of the operation, while heavyset and blotchy-faced Tulip provides the brawn. Four-legged Pin speaks coherently, while Tulip mumbles at random and modifies every noun and verb by the word "—ing," which is not a printer's euphemism but an actual pause followed by "ing."



Tulip imbibes any powdery substance he can find, hoping that it may prove to be an intoxicant. His eye is said to revolve slowly from all of his experiments. In addition, Tulip drinks aftershave because he has to drink something. Pin sees smoking cigars as his only vice. All other vices are job skills.

Tulip kills for pleasure and has constantly to be restrained by Pin, who insists on maintaining a professional demeanor. Tulip makes up for Pin's inability to sustain violence. Pin cultivates "pure, platonic anger" and holds a "never-ending red-hot grudge" (pg. 51.) He sometimes wonders what the root cause is. Surprisingly, Tulip has an instinct for and a vast knowledge of and appreciation for art, which frequently diverts his attention. Long passages are devoted to this enigma.

Pin and Tulip are normally found by clients through word of mouth and multiple intermediaries, but this time are approached directly by the attorney, Mr. Slant, about substituting a look-alike shopkeeper and make it appear that Vetinari is fleeing the city with a large amount of gold. Slant is a zombie and Tulip hates zombies. It is good that contact is minimal. Pin and Tulip stab Vetinari's clerk, Drumknott, and push their look-alike into the hallway to confess to murder. Unfortunately, Vetinari's aged terrier, Wuffles, bites each on the ankle before disappearing. If Wuffles can be found and interrogated through werewolves, Pin and Tulip will be found out, so they join in a lively competition to find the dog along with the Ankh-Morpork Times.

Pin and Tulip are upset about losing the Patrician's dog and also Slant for failing to warn them about Wuffles or Vetinari's snake-like reflexes. They are forced to improvise, which they do not enjoy. They demand more money as they grow anxious to get out of town. Needing to screen the dogs that are brought to the Times for a reward, Pin and Tulip disguise themselves as Omnian clergy, known as the "Brother Upon-Which-the-Angels-Dance Pin" and Sister Jennifer of the "Little Flowers of Perpetual Annoyance." Picking out all terriers and ostensibly drowning them, they feel safe.

They plan next to murder William de Worde, editor of the Times, but are thwarted when the Times iconographer takes a picture using "Dark Light." This reveals to Pin the myriads of ghosts for whom he is responsible, all of whom are waiting for him to die. When the Times office catches fire, sending Pin and Tulip to the basement, Pin kills Tulip and stands on his body, because he "wasn't born to fry" (pg. 264.) This proves ironic when Pin fails to strangle William, is accidentally run through with a paper spike, and is consigned by Death to be reincarnated as a potato, which is deep fried for chips. Tulip is rather more pleased to come back as a woodworm chewing its way through "—ing good wood" (pg. 324.)

## Lord Havelock Vetinari

The Patrician of Ankh-Morpork, Vetinari is trained as a youth by the Assassins' Guild and has for some time ruled the city. He believes that what the people most want is for things to stay the same. Working from the Oblong Office, where he is too cheap to build an adequate fire, to the point that his ink freezes, Vetinari is more benevolent a dictator





than earlier Patricians, but no better liked. He is said rarely, if ever, to have dragged innocent people to dungeons without a trial, but he does not bother to request or demand their presence before sending goons to inform them of an appointment and escort them directly there. Vetinari has the advantage of knowing why they are there while they are ignorant. For this he can thank a team of clerks that keeps him abreast of everything happening in the city. They are headed by his personal secretary, Rufus Drumknott.

Vetinari is a pragmatist. He remains alive by playing off all would-be sources of power against one another, making him appear to be the least offensive of options. Many aristocrats are upset that he tolerates and even encourages immigration of non-humans such as trolls, zombies, gargoyles, vampires, and some 50,000 dwarfs. Vetinari shows the height of toleration by permitting the creation of a free press. Several attempts have been made on Vetinari's life prior to this novel, indicated by the ebony cane with which he walks.

Vetinari is framed for attempted murder and the theft of city funds, arrested by Samuel Vimes, his own Commander of the Watch, and confined to the dungeon alongside the supposed victim, Drumknott. Protagonist William de Worde finds inconsistencies in the evidence against him, which lead to Vetinari's restoration to office. Central to Vetinari's vindication is the testimony of his sixteen-year-old wire-haired terrier Wuffles. Wuffles is the only living creature whom Vetinari cares about. Visiting the Times press shack to learn what this new phenomenon is all about, Vetinari plays stupid but reveals sparks of understanding and useful abilities, like being able to read upside down and backwards. He predicts success for the free press but does not want it and the government to get too cozy. This is unhealthy.

## **Sgt. Angua**

A fair-haired and uniformed member of the City Watch or police force, Angua is first seen in Commander Vimes' office, lurking in the shadows. He witnesses the protagonist William de Worde being dressed down about causing trouble by what he publishes in the Ankh-Morpork Times. William has seen Angua on the streets and finds that she stares at people too intently. Her face goes blank when William guesses that Cpl. Nobbs is a werewolf. She is herself quite important in the werewolf community and able to keep strangers from finding the Patrician's lost dog, Wuffles. She is put on William's track along with Watch gargoyles, but William buys a particularly stinky concoction of oils of aniseed, rampion, and scallatine and hurls the scent bomb beneath her nose, incapacitating her sense of smell. She likens it to running unprepared into Foul Ole Ron. It shuts her nose down for hours. The Watch cannot arrest William for assaulting an officer because Angua is in werewolf form at the time and they do not want her true nature to become public knowledge.



## Mrs. Eucrasia Arcanum and her Boarders

The proprietress of a "Lodging House for Respectable Working Men," Arcanum has strict rules for her boarders. In particular, she banishes to the kitchen table anyone who arrives late for meals in the dining room. Protagonist William de Worde often has difficulty making it on time to the table. Mrs. Arcanum is progressive in also accepting clean and decent dwarfs and trolls as boarders. She serves more leftovers than original meals. As she dislikes foreign things, it is odd that she serves curries. The quality is low but the portions are large, which is what the tenants want.

Boarders who speak up at meals include Mr. Cartwright, Mr. Longshaft, who is a dwarf, Mr. Mackleduff, Mr. Prone, and Mr. Windling. Mr. Mackleduff, is a bakery night-foreman. As the "longest-surviving lodger," he presides at meals with his copy of the Times and is instantly an expert on anything he reads. He is unaware that William is the editor/publisher. Windling lengthens any debate by prefixing his contrary views by "in my humble opinion."

Everyone agrees that if something is printed in black and white, it must be true. When the Inquirer begins publication, the tenants agree that it is more interesting than the Times, but includes stories not fit to discuss at the table. William finally cannot stand the ignorance any longer and seizes Windling to demand how and whence everybody knows certain things. The Boarders are amazed that William, an ordinary person, edits the Times.

## Boddony

Second in command of the dwarf print room, Boddony seems surely named after the famous typeface, Bodoni. He and Gunilla Goodmountain want to return to lead mining for a year or two and then marry.

## Ronnie Carney

The President of the Guild of Engravers, Carney sets up the Ankh-Morpork Inquirer across the street from the Ankh-Morpork Times with the express purpose of putting the latter out of business. He goes to school with the Times' associate editor, Sacharissa Cripslock, but she denies that they had played together. He has chased her and she has hit him over the head with a wooden cow. After the Times shed burns down, Sacharissa pulls a pistol bow on Carney and using foul language, demands the loan of a press for an hour to get a special edition out.

## Charlie

A clothes-seller in Pseudopolis, Charlie is a look-alike for the Patrician of Ankh-Morpork, Lord Havelock Vetinari. Charlie is kidnapped by Mr. Pin and Mr. Tulip. They offer him



\$10,000 to impersonate Vetinari for a few days. Charlie foolishly wants to be convinced of the legality of his actions, which Pin takes as a "highly developed death wish" (pg. 33.)

Believing that he will live to enjoy the money, Charlie tries to be cunning and outsmart Pin and beguile the menacing Tulip. He is too much a clown to be used in a permanent role. Charlie panics when he faces Vetinari during the switch. He is kept by Pin and Tulip drunk and chained in the dungeon. The lawyer Slant, who works as intermediary on the venture, forbids killing Charlie. Once the case is broken, Vetinari frees Charlie, who enrolls in the Acting Guild.

## Otto Chriek

Iconographer (photographer) for protagonist William de Worde's Ankh-Morpork Times, Otto uses regular and dark light to capture images. Otto answers a help-wanted ad in the Times and is hired after making clear that he has taken the Uberwald Temperance Movement pledge never again to drink human blood or the "b-vord" as he refers to it. Otto is thin and pale-faced, dresses in black, wears dark oval glasses. He clutches a twist of black cloth as a talisman. He speaks in an Uberwaldian accent, a generic and inconsistent Balkan patois. Several times shocks to his system nearly make Otto revert. His Times colleagues, however, restrain him and sing temperance songs while bloody non-human meat is found to satiate him.

While he embodies all stereotypes of vampires, Otto resents discrimination. Through most of the novel Otto is depressed that the psychotropic events that he is used to in the old country such as thunder and lightning accompanying his grand pronouncements, do not occur in Ankh-Morpork. When they come back at a crucial point, he dances with joy.

Otto is thrilled to set up shop in the cellar of the print shop. His iconograph consists of an imp with a paintbrush, who rapidly captures the patterns of light and dark produced when he irritates a salamander, causing it to emit a strong light. This causes him, as a vampire, to be at the least knocked to the ground and often to crumble into dust, requiring that he be revived by a single drop of blood from any species. To get around Guild bans on members engraving iconographs, Otto teaches the imps to etch onto plates. He is also working on an "obsкуроgraph" for taking pictures with true, living darkness—light from the other side of darkness, which only imps can see. A demonstration in the picture inexplicable presences. Otto takes William's suggestion and hangs a bottle of b-word around his neck, so that when he snaps an iconograph and is reduced to dust, the contents reconstitute him. He also abandons the "traditional black evening dress preferred by his species" (pg. 195), replacing it by a black, armless, and pocketed vest with tails.

Late in the novel, an obsкуроgraph drives the killer, Mr. Pin, to see ghosts of past victims. Resenting having been photographed, Pim and colleague Mr. Tulip return for the plate but end up trapped in an accidental fire. When William goes to confront his



father over his role in deposing the Patrician, Otto sneaks into the house and attacks the thugs whom Lord de Worde orders to seize his son. He knocks them out with lightning speed, but is run through by de Word's sword. Strongly tempted to suck de Worde's blood to turn him into a vampire, Otto only kisses him on the forehead and lets him go.

## **Sgt. Fred Colon and Cpl. Nobby Nobbs**

Colon are friends of long standing on the Ankh-Morpork City Watch (police force.) Colon is overweight and whenever possible avoids exertion. Nobbs, who is about 34 years old, is skinny, smelly, and usually taken for a dwarf. He is in fact, a human. He chain smokes without exhaling. They are first seen in this novel standing guard at the Water Gate, allowing Mr. Pin and Mr. Tulip, the story's villains, free access to the city because it is too much trouble to climb the icy steps. The friends often engage in philosophical conversations, in which Nobby picks flaws in Colon's comments, forcing him to come up with quick answers. Colon gives protagonist William de Worde items for his newspaper for drinks but insists on ample praise for the Watch's vigilance in apprehending wrongdoers.

Nobbs is on duty in the Oblong Office when William comes investigating the Patrician's alleged attempted murder of his secretary. William gets Nobbs to talk first about himself. When iconographer Otto Chriek falls flailing after taking Nobbs' picture, William slips into the crime scene, where Nobbs has drawn a chalk outline in colored chalk and added flowers and clouds. William guesses that Nobbs is the werewolf on the force, which is the subject of urban legend and played down by the commander.

## **Arthur Crank**

Arthur Clark is a character intent on suicide whom protagonist William de Worde interviews on a fourth-floor parapet, fighting off dizziness, Crank is a regular attention-seeker who is a cry-for-help type rather than an actual jumper. He enjoys "impromptu street theater." Mrs. Crank is summoned to badger him down. They have been happily married three out of thirty-five years, even though she cannot cook cabbage. When William faints on the ledge, Crank catches him, carries him down to safety, and disappears.

## **Sgt. Detritus**

An unimaginative member of the Ankh-Morpork City Watch (police force), Detritus is born above the snow line on a distant mountain and never sees a human until he is five. He rises from the status of stupid troll to fairly intelligent troll, thanks to a clockwork cooling helmet that reduces the effect heat on his silicon brain. He is on duty at the Palace gate when protagonist William de Worde arrives to investigate the rumored murder. Otto Chriek gets them past Detritus by taking a picture of him refusing them



entrance and William takes down quotes. Detritus orders Fiddymment to take them to Commander Vimes.

## **Cut Me Own Throat (C.M.O.T.) Dibbler**

Ankh-Morpork's most "enterprisingly unsuccessful entrepreneur" (pg. 7), Dibbler falls back whenever he fails at some other venture to selling meat by-products to the gullible public, particularly hot sausages-inna-bun. He looks rather like a rodent in his long "poacher's" coat covered in pockets and carries his cooking tray. Dibbler laments not having gotten an education like protagonist William de Worde, that he might enjoy a warm indoor job, and that he has had no luck seizing opportunities as they arise. William had been Dibbler's first "Fung Shooley" customer, but had been hit by bad karma—but not as badly as the second customer (pg. 8). Dibbler is generally a good judge of people and manages to slip around corners before being stopped by the wrong types. He tries to sell his high-class merchandise to Mr. Pin and Mr. Tulip, but the latter insists on sausage containing fingernails. Dibbler first wonders why Tulip leaves spaces in his sentences followed by "ing."

The first question that the Patrician, Lord Havelock Vetinari, asks about William's Ankh-Morpork Times is whether shiftily Dibbler has any "significant managerial capacity" (pg. 36) in the operation. Dibbler has, in fact, hired out to Mr. Carney at the rival Ankh-Morpork Inquirer, knowing that William is too unimaginative for him to approach about a job in hard times. Mr. Carney requires only that something might have happened, that no evidence proves it has not. People are allowed to make up their own minds about the Truth. Repenting of his fall into employment, Dibbler accepts a commission job selling advertising space in the Times.

## **Dr. A. A. Dinwiddie**

The Bursar of Unseen University, Dinwiddie (credentials: D.M. (7th), D.Thau., B.Occ., M.Coll., B.F.), is quite insane, but is kept hallucinating about being completely sane by taking medications derived from the nasty toxins of bright, happy tree frogs from the jungles of Klatch. A side effect is that they make him believe that he can fly. Archchancellor Mustrum Ridcully sends Dinwiddie to talk to Gunilla Goodmountain & Co. about reducing UU's printing costs. This requires reversing a long-standing policy of opposing movable type for magic purposes. Dinwiddie grants journalist William de Worde an interview after agreeing to prices, proclaiming that it is time for UU to be "dragged kicking and screaming" into or out of the Century of the Fruitbat and to embrace new technology (pg. 27.)

## **Rufus Drumknott**

Personal secretary to Lord Havelock Vetinari, the Patrician of Ankh-Morpork, Drumknott keeps his boss informed of activities in the city and in Discworld as a whole. He is apparently stabbed by Vetinari and sent to the dungeon to recover. Thanks to William



de Worde and the Ankh-Morpork Times, it is revealed later that Mr. Pin and Mr. Tulip on contract from the Committee to Unelect the Patrician have brought in a look-alike in order to get Vetinari deposed. In the course of discovering the truth, William decides that Drumknott lacks a personality.

## Gunilla Goodmountain

The chief of the print-setting dwarfs, Gunilla demonstrates to the protagonist, William de Worde, the benefits of set type over engraving and easily wins him over. He faces a more difficult task winning over representatives of the priesthood and Unseen University, but the price that he can offer for their printing needs proves to be the deciding factor. Gunilla is riled by the Patrician Lord Havelock Vetinari's questions about whether his hut is built on a fault in space-time or permeated by ancient rites, or redolent with the souls of the innocent slain, and has to be taken aside by William, lest he say anything that might get him executed. Gunilla insists that he always speaks his honest mind. He then proceeds to state that while William might consider Vetinari a despot, Gunilla believes that he will not stand in his way earning an honest living.

Claiming that he and Boddony want to return to lead mining for a year or two so they can marry, Gunilla explains dwarf wedding traditions, which make a rather profound effect on William. Gunilla helps him understand many things which a prejudiced society and in particular, Lord de Worde hold against dwarfs. When the print hut burns down, Gunilla is amazed that William and Sacharissa Cripslock, whom he sees are enamored of each other despite denials, cannot accept reality that the Times is finished and instead look forward to launching additional specialized publications.

## Igor

The head of the Ankh-Morpork City Watch's forensic unit, Igor has a horrible face marked by eyes on different levels, ears of different sizes, a patchwork of scars, and a greasy rock star hairdo. He has two thumbs on his right hand. A native of Uberwald, he is like all Igors a fine surgeon and into self-improvement. Trying to be modern, he lisps only occasionally. His work table in the basement of the Palace sizzles with blue light. He is breeding swimming potatoes to provide instant fish and chips. Meeting protagonist William de Worde for the first time, Igor lets drop that the jailed Patrician has suffered a blow to the head, contradicting the official story that he falls from a horse. Victim Rufus Drumknott credits Igor with saving his arm. Igor is played for slapstick humor akin to the movie titled Young Frankenstein.

## Harry King

Nicknamed "The King of the Golden River," which is an improvement over the original "Piss Harry," Harry is an enormous, pink, and thin-haired man who dresses in shirtsleeves and constantly smokes a huge cigar to protect him from the odors of his profession. He shifts it from side to side for emphasis as he talks. Harry runs a junk





yard/recycling plant. The foundation of his fortune is his providing and processing at a modest fee buckets for collecting human waste products. He finds that there is a market somewhere for anything. Soon he fans out into collecting 27 varieties of rubbish that looks lucrative, including recycled paper. Harry's wife, Effie, cleans up his signage to "H. King—Recycling Nature's Bounty" (pg. 150.)

As the two Ankh-Morpork newspapers battle for circulation, the Inquirer seals a deal for all available paper, but protagonist William de Worde convinces Harry to let him have enough for a crucial edition. The price is getting notables to attend Harry's daughter Hermione's upcoming wedding by covering the event with color iconography. Effie has liked how elder daughter Daphne's nuptials are written up in the Times. After talking with William and his dwarf printer about being a muckraker since age three and all along resenting having been bullied out of the first tosheroon (coin) by a Guild member, Harry looks the other way while William steals a cartload of paper, for which he must pay \$80 by month's end. Harry has undercover people keeping an eye on William thereafter.

## Misbegot Bridge Crew

A group of beggars and thieves live under Misbegot Bridge, avoiding work and people until they are induced by protagonist William de Worde to sell copies of the Ankh-Morpork Times. The crew includes: Coffin Henry, who is generally acknowledged to be their leader; he is also a champion expectorator. Arnold Sideways uses the loss of both legs to full advantage in bar fights, biting people in the genitals. Duck Man, is well-spoken, educated, and sane, but consistently (and wrongly) insists that he has no duck on his head. When they witness Mr. Pin and Mr. Tulip throwing two sacks full of terriers into the river, Arnold and Duck Man manage to rescue one sack. Henry wants to give them artificial respiration, but is told it is unhygienic.

Altogether Andrews is a psychotic taken over by eight personalities, who switch dominance at five-minute intervals. These include: Jossi, Lady Hermione, Little Sidney, Mr. Viddle, Curly, the Judge, and Tinker. Burke has only shown up once and is suppressed by the rest. At least five personalities are capable of holding coherent conversations. Apparently the group colonize. Protagonist William de Worde assigns Altogether Andrews to see copies of the Ankh-Morpork Times near Pseudopolis.

Finally and most prominently throughout the novel, there are Foul Ole Ron (Deep Bone) and Gaspode. Ron is a man so foul-smelling that his Odor requires a capital letter and has acquired a life of its own. Banned from the Beggars' Guild, he wanders about Ankh-Morpork entirely covered in a strange, grubby coat and brimmed hat. From one pocket emerges a series of strings knotted together, ending in a small, gray, limping terrier named Gaspode. The dog speaks; Ron generally mutters. His favorite word is "bugrit." When occasionally he says something coherent, it seems likely that Gaspode is practicing ventriloquism.

Ron and Gaspode are first seen spying on Mr. Pin and Mr. Tulip, who in turn are spying on the Patrician, Lord Havelock Vetinari. They next appear at the print shop after he



departs. Gunilla Goodmountain suggests hiring Ron and his friends to sell copies of the Times on the street. Gaspode sells the opportunity to the beggars, downplaying the work aspect, which they reject. A mystery voice belonging to someone who smells like Foul Ole Ron but sounds somehow different uses the code name Deep Bone to demand \$150 for Wuffles and a non-Watch interpreter of dog-talk. William deduces from an odd phrase that Deep Bone is a foreigner. Eventually, a pink poodle, Trixiebelle (who is hinted to be Gaspode but not said explicitly), leads William to an interview with Wuffles and learns enough to prove Vetinari innocent.

## The Ridcully Brothers

Two powerful figures in the life of Ankh-Morpork, Hughnon Ridcully is High Priest of Blind Io and unofficial spokesman for Ankh-Morpork's religious establishment, while Mustrum Ridcully is Archchancellor of Unseen University (UU).

Hughnon visits Lord Vetinari, the Patrician of Ankh-Morpork, to lay out the traditional case against movable type: "words are too important to be left to machinery" and subject to being taken apart and used for other words afterwards (pg. 27). His minor witticisms go over Vetinari's head. Vetinari believes that it is too late to put brakes on this particular volcano. After Vetinari's arrest, Hughnon declares him insane because he has talked about flying lobsters.

Mustrum Ridcully reads an advertisement for low-cost printing by Gunilla Goodmountain & Co., Mustrum and sends his Bursar to investigate the possibility of ending opposition to movable type and lowering costs. Finances determine that UU must move forward.

## Tuttle Scrope

One of the leading figures in Ankh-Morpork, the son of Tuskin Scrope, Scrope is for seven years the President of the Guild of Shoemakers and Leathermakers and favored to succeed the dishonored Patrician, Lord Havelock Vetinari, although a lot more powerful men owe positions—and loyalty—to Vetinari. He is a fine family man, open to advice from informed groups. No one says outright that he is a useful idiot. Protagonist William de Worde points out that there is no leatherwork shop on Wixson's Alley, where Scrope is said to be headquartered. The only establishment there makes "little jiggly things" (pg. 210), which Watch Commander Vimes assures him are legal and family-oriented. William also hears that Scrope plans immediately to pardon Vetinari. When the truth about the conspiracy comes out, Scrope's mother writes a note claiming that he is sick and Vetinari resumes his office.

## Mr. Slant

A member of the Lawyers Guild, Slant considers himself a facilitator between Mr. Pin and Mr. Tulip, who form "The New Firm," a criminal endeavor, and their anonymous employer, who turns out to be Lord de Worde. Slant has a voice that could oil watches.





He wants to know no details of the plan they have created to fulfill their sealed, written contract, and keeps contact minimal. This is fine with the New Firm, because Slant is a zombie, centuries dead. When he coughs, Slant emits disconcerting clouds of dust. Tulip hates zombies and Slant assures him that the feeling is mutual.

Slant assures Pin and Tulip that he has deposited in several hidden locations details that include burial places as insurance against any attempts on their part of foul play against him. He assumes that as new arrivals in Ankh-Morpork they have no local criminal record and hopes that none is established. Pin and Tulip record conversations with Slant to even the score. After the conspiracy falls apart, protagonist William de Worde, publisher of the Ankh-Morpork Times, hires Slant to defend him against assault on a police officer and withholding of evidence. Slant makes the charges go away.

## **Sgt. Angua von Überwald**

The first woman to join the Ankh-Morpork City Watch (police force), Angua is also a werewolf. Protagonist William de Worde believes that Cpl Nobby Nobbs rather than Angua is the werewolf on the Watch when he knocks out the nasal passages of the figure that is tailing him. Angua understands that being out of uniform and in werewolf form she cannot swear out a criminal complaint and still keep her secret, which is actually well known throughout the city, particularly by the aristocracy and the zombie lawyer, Mr. Slant.

## **Duke Samuel Vimes**

Commander of Ankh-Morpork's City Watch, Vimes has come up through the ranks to turn the despised police force into a real investigative force—and to make many people want to get rid of him. He is considered a violent, vicious person, but knows enough to play by the rules. Protagonist William de Worde has been brought up to look down on Vimes for ordering his men to use the front door when a back-door entry might be expedient. That Lord Havelock Vetinari, has made Vimes a Duke shows that the Patrician is losing his grip. The cigar-smoking Vimes is badly-spoken, badly-educated, badly-dressed, and badly in-need-of-a-drink. When William comes to the Palace to investigate a reputed murder for the Ankh-Morpork Times, Vimes is dismissive and defensive. He demands to read anything that William writes before it is published but is turned down. He tells the story of Vetinari killing Drumknott and trying to make off with \$70,000. When William disproves the evidence, Vimes is forced to release Vetinari. He is both angry and amused when William manipulates the head of the Assassins' Guild into admitting that Vimes, the Watch, and the Times have done good work in discovering the truth and Vimes ought to be decorated.



## Mr. Wintler

A citizen of Ankh-Morpork who regularly brings to the office of the Ankh-Morpork Times oddly-shaped vegetables that he has grown, Wintler "thinks a whoopee cushion is the last word in repartee" (pg. 96.) He does not let cold receptions get in his way.

## Lord de Worde

Protagonist William de Worde's loud, stubborn, violent, and bigoted father, Lord de Worde sends his eldest son, Rupert, to the elite Assassins' School. He is distraught when Rupert dies in battle against the Klatchians. He schools William at Huggelstones and criticizes the job of scribe, which William chooses to pursue, as only one step higher than teacher. He insists that William take his place in noble military tradition to live up to the family motto, "Le Mot Juste." He believes in the proverb "as you bend the twig, so grows the tree" (pg. 42) and finds William too stiff a twig. William recalls his father as neither being given to touching nor personally violent—except through the words he wields like fists and the men that he employs to make people disappear. Believing that Ankh-Morpork is "polluted" by the presence of "lesser races," Lord de Word refuses to live there. His presidency of the Committee to Unelect the Patrician is proved when another favorite proverb, "lies could run around the world before the truth could get its boots on" (pg. 98) becoming popular in this subversive organization. William confronts him over having brought the family to shame by treason but refuses to name him if he leaves the city forever. Lord de Worde departs, remarking that William is a true de Worde.

## Wuffles

The beloved pet of Lord Havelock Vetinari, the Patrician of Ankh-Morpork, Wuffles first appears as a terrible smell beneath Vetinari's desk, but turns out to breathe and move. Wuffles is a terrier about sixteen years of age. Witnessing the kidnapping of Vetinari and substitution of lookalike Charlie, Wuffles smells the differences and bits the perpetrators on the Ankle. A crossbow bolt fired at him misses and lodges in the carpet, forming prime evidence. Wuffles flees the Palace in the safety of Foul Ole Ron's stinking coat and avoids being captured by criminals of the Watch. He eventually tells his story to protagonist William de Worde for publication in the Ankh-Morpork Times.



# Objects/Places

## Ankh-Morpork

The biggest city on Discworld, Ankh-Morpork is divided in two by the shallow and ominous River Ankh, around which much of the novel's action takes place. Ankh-Morpork is sometimes nicknamed "The Big Wahooonie" where "wahooonie" is a particularly "evil-smelling vegetable." Some 50,000 dwarfs have migrated to Ankh-Morpork and the city is dependent on the coal and lamp oil that are shipped downriver from dwarf mines every day. Racial tensions are fairly high. The city is ruled by the Patrician. Few of its citizens are literate, making it unlikely to support even one newspaper, yet two sprout up. Protagonist William de Worde for a fee writes down things for those who need it. Immigrant dwarfs need to write home optimistic letters. This service and his newsletter for select rich patrons grow into the Ankh-Morpork Times, which is soon followed by the Ankh-Morpork Inquirer.

Ankh-Morpork is eternally smoggy during the nasty winter. Storms have the vast Sto Plains over which to build up speed before hitting the city with malice. Most of the current buildings are second and third floors of older structures that have over centuries filled with mud whenever the river floods. Some areas have up to six levels. One can cross the city underground with a pickax. The Inquirer is invaded underground from the Times at one point in the novel.

Various parts of the city are depicted, including the squalid inner city called "The Shades." The Water Gate controls (loosely) where the River Ankh enters the city. Foul Ole Ron and eleven friends live under Misbegot Bridge. The famous Mended Drum Tavern is a place of fights. The Street of Cunning Artificers houses Mr. Crisplock has his engraving shop. Reformed vampires meet in a place on Abattoirs Lane. Pin and Tulip break into the Temple of Om in the Street of Small Gods to steal clerical dress in order incognito to search the streets for the Patrician's lost dog. The de Worde town house, in which William's father refuses to live, is located at 50 Nonesuch St. Vetinari's lookalike, Charlie, is imprisoned there, and the Committee to Unelect the Patrician holds its meetings in its library. Pin and Tulip use the cloakroom as a hide-out and capture Sacharissa there when she drops by to pick up a fancy dress.

Much of the action takes place on Gleam St., where Gunilla Goodmountain & Co. runs a reasonably-priced "word smithy" (pg. 13) business, which becomes the offices of the Times. Across the street, the Inquirer sets up shop. Gleam is off Creek Alley, another place merely to pass through; among whose warehouses and sheds is Hobson's Livery Stable, where many people keep their horses and William meets an informer. There is concern that this area might stand on a time-space crack like many other parts of the city. Fire is always a danger in parts of the city made mostly of wood and thatch, and is fought by golem volunteers. The Times falls victim accidentally but has found the funds to rebuild.



## Ankh-Morpork Inquirer

Ankh-Morpork's second newspaper, the Inquirer is a gossip rag modeled after the National Enquirer, with sensational headlines and made-up stories. It is backed financially by the Guild of Engravers and aims at nothing more than to put the slightly-older Ankh-Morpork Times out of business. Appealing to the popular taste, it outsells the Times from the first day. Needing a job, Dibbler hires out to Mr. Ron Carney at the Inquirer, knowing that protagonist William de Worde is too unimaginative for him to approach about a job in hard times. Carney requires only that something might have happened. People are allowed to make up their own minds. He appreciates how convincing Dibbler's tales are.

## Ankh-Morpork Times

Ankh-Morpork's first newspaper, the Times swiftly evolves from a single sheet distributed monthly at a high price to select patrons into a mass-media outlet that strives to tell real news. Protagonist William de Worde is the founding editor. He is soon assisted by Sacharissa Cripslock, who shows a talent for thinking in headlines, and Otto Chriek, the Iconographer. Sacharissa designs the paper's graphic nameplate, complete with "fruit salads and leaves and things" (pg. 87.) The motto, "The Truth Shall Make Ye Free," is regularly misspelled to comic effect. Insisting on true stories based on interviews and fact-checking, the Times swiftly falls behind its rumor-filled challenger, the Inquirer. Gradually, William hires people to cover all of the traditional kinds of news stories, including light human interest pieces, sports, classified ads, and lost and found.

## Assassins' School

The premier school on Discworld for the "full-glass class" (aristocracy; pg. 21), the Assassins' School numbers among its alumni Rupert de Worde, protagonist William's elder brother, and Lord Havelock Vetinari, the Patrician of Ankh-Morpork. William has to settle for Hugglestones.

## The Bucket

An ill-named tavern on little-traveled Gleam Street off Treacle Mine Road. in Ankh-Morpork, the Bucket is owned by Mr. Cheese and caters to the City Watch. Not even licensed thieves disturb this clientèle, but the police pass bogus money worse than anyone else. They tell good murder stories however. Cheese rents the "rat's nest of old sheds and cellars" (pg. 15) behind the pub, including one to Gunilla Goodmountain & Company. The dwarfs' shed, most recently a rocking horse factory, is still stacked with unsold wares and a variety of corroded paint tins. The press occupies the center of the floor. It is in a constant state of reinvention. An accidental fire destroys the shed, but the Ankh-Morpork Times rises from the ashes, relocating nearby until rebuilding is complete.



## City Watch

The Ankh-Morpork police force, the Watch never enjoys high public opinion. Its low point comes under the Patrician Lord Vetinari when theft is legalized and unionized. The Watch is currently housed at Pseudopolis Yard and has been actively recruiting such minorities as dwarfs, trolls, zombies, gargoyles, and one vampire. The City Watch's unofficial tavern is the Bucket on Gleam Street.

## Committee to Unelect the Patrician

A group of Ankh-Morpork notables devoted to saving the city from oblivion, the Committee substitutes a perfect double of Lord Havelock Vetinari for the real Patrician and makes it look as though he is absconding with city funds. This will allow them to replace him by a more-easily manipulated person. When protagonist William de Worde and the Ankh-Morpork Times prove that the charges against Vetinari are false, the Committee drops the indictment and returns him to office. The name is a play on the Committee to Re-Elect the President that used dirty tricks to achieve its end, including the breaking at Watergate.

## Discworld

A flat world that rides on the back of four giant elephants who in turn stand on the shell of an enormous star turtle, Discworld is a medieval place where little kingdoms war, intermarry, and ally. By this twenty-fifth novel in the series, author Terry Pratchett downplays physical descriptions of his imaginary world, referring to the cosmology only once and obliquely, but he regularly refers to locations as lying centerward of others. Klatch is a region of jungle, which has recently been at war with Ankh-Morpork, the principal city and locale for this novel. Other cities mentioned in passing include Genua, Pseudopolis, and Quirm. These are all smaller but increasingly like Ankh-Morpork. Breccia had been the abode of trolls but it has gone soft. Uberwald is a dwarf stronghold, supplying coal products to Ankh-Morpork. Typesetting in Omnia and the Agatean Empire have inspired the younger members of Ankh-Morpork's Guild of Engravers to begin using movable type, which leads to a threat to protagonist William de Worde's Ankh-Morpork Times.

## Dwarfs

Considered non-humans by racist humans, dwarfs are small and heavily-bearded people who always dress in chain mail and iron helmets and carry battle axes. Their expressions are concentrated because their faces are so small. Some 50,000 dwarfs have migrated to Ankh-Morpork and the city is dependent on the coal and lamp oil that are shipped downriver from dwarf mines every day. Patrician Havelock Vetinari is careful to stay in their good graces, but others see them as threatening to turn humans into a minority. Dwarfs appear and are addressed as males, even when deep beneath



the chain male they are female. Brides and grooms must purchase each other from their parents before marrying, to repay the cost of raising them. Thus they start their new life "g'daraka" or unencumbered. Sex is not discussed among dwarfs either out of modesty or because what couples do together is entirely their own business.

Many dwarfs come to the city to earn this amount of money. When they reach Ankh-Morpork, they feel obliged to write relatives back home about their success, even if imaginary. Protagonist William de Worde sells them a variety of form letters for this purpose. William is also a journalist of sorts and follows up on the rumor that dwarfs have found the secret to turning lead into gold, an achievement that has long eluded alchemists and magicians. He finds himself in a dwarf print shop after being run down by a heavy dwarf cart. He discovers that movable is their metaphorical gold and soon becomes the head of their operation. The dwarfs constantly redesign the press, needing only their axes and a means of making fire. They are good at using things that other people throw away. They suffer no love of gold as do humans, who wrongly impute the vice to dwarfs as a matter of nature. Although dwarfs are not religious, they know the unholy when they see it—and it is obvious in Otto Chriek's black-light iconographs.

## **Golem Volunteer Fire Brigade**

The patient, hardworking, logical, and indestructible people who protect Ankh-Morpork from the ever-present threat of fire, the Golem cannot allow people or property to be destroyed. They probably organize on analogy with the Watch, when citizens refuse to form a professional brigade lest fire fighters manufacture fires to fight. The golem converge on fires without communication, do whatever is needed, and return to their abandoned tasks.

## **Guild of Engravers**

The professionals who traditionally control all printing in Ankh-Morpork, the Engravers raise their rates three times in a year. This inspires large users of print material such as Unseen University (UU) and the religious establishment to consider dropping their dogmatic opposition to movable type. The younger members prevail and set up a press to compete with protagonist William de Worde's fledgling Ankh-Morpork Times. With their resources, they are a serious threat, and the publication they launch called the Ankh-Morpork Inquirer, is a gossip rag aimed at appeasing the masses' tastes. After the Times office accidentally burns down, William buys a membership in the Guild and a replacement press to get out the story of the fire.

## **Hugglestones**

A bleak and spartan boarding school in Ankh-Morpork, Hugglestones is the protagonist William de Worde's alma mater. Its purpose is to make men from boys through simple and violent games. Natural selection plays its role. Few graduates expect to do more with a pen than sign their names without crushing the pen, but William proves himself a





keen student. He is also the school's fencing champion only because the other students are so clumsy at it.

## Imps

Imps are miniature, magical, and long-eared creatures that in Discworld enable and operate various appliances such as Mr. Pin's Dis-organizer Mk II and Otto Chriek's iconograph. Imps are formed of "biothaummic particles" (pg. 81.) Having no imagination, imps cannot make things up, but are capable of repeating visually or orally everything that they see or hear.

## Trolls

Enormous creatures, considered non-human by racist humans, trolls have come to migrate to Ankh-Morpork in large numbers. Trolls wear no more than humans consider decent. One serves on the Patrician's staff, summoning citizens to appointments about which they are unaware. Another, Rocky, a former boxer who is tired of being knocked down, becomes protagonist William de Worde's bodyguard. His first assignment is Brezock the Barbarian, who wants to behead William for slander in a story about a fight in the Mended Drum Tavern. Lacking a sense of smell, Trolls are particularly fitted for working for "H. King—Recycling Nature's Bounty" (pg. 150.)

## Unseen University

Discworld's premier school of wizardry, Unseen University (UU) is located in the city of Ankh-Morpork. Its current Arch-chancellor is Mustrum Ridcully and its Bursar, Dr. A. A. Dinwiddie, D.M. (7th), D.Thau., B.Occ., M.Coll., B.F., is insane but is kept drugged to believe that he is sane. Ridcully sees an advertisement about low-cost printing by Gunilla Goodmountain & Co., which could greatly reduce costs over continuing to use the services of the Guild of Engravers. However, it would require reversing a long-standing policy of opposing movable type for magic purposes. Dinwiddie grants William de Worde an interview after agreeing to prices with Gunilla, proclaiming that it is time for UU to be "dragged kicking and screaming" into (or out of) the Century of the Fruitbat and to embrace new technology (pg. 27.) Next to UU stands the Thaumaturgical Park, built on centuries of UU's dumping. It is highly polluted "unreal estate" (pg. 80), a place where grass is multicolored and trees walk away. Mr. Pin and Mr. Tulip go there to buy a cutting-edge Mk II Dis-organizer.



# Themes

## Words

Terry Pratchett's *The Truth* examines the nature of written communications. Literacy in the medieval society of Ankh-Morpork is largely limited to the upper class and is not highly regarded by its members. Even those completing an education look forward to doing little more with the written medium than signing their names. By virtue of their strenuous physical training they must concentrate not to shatter the pens that they grip. Protagonist William de Worde is an exception. He enjoys reading and writing and defies his father's prohibition against becoming a scribe. Lord de Worde consider this just one step up from teacher. William leaves home and in Ankh-Morpork produces a monthly one-page news sheet for five rich patrons at an exorbitant rate and form letters for recent immigrants to boast of their successful new lives. This suffices to keep him alive.

William's life changes when a cart runs him over in the street and he is rescued by dwarfs who run a print shop. The novel opens with rumors running wild that the dwarfs have discovered how to turn lead into gold. This is a process that has eluded alchemists and magicians. William realizes that it is a metaphor for typesetting where the lead slugs that are aligned into rows and pages sell newspapers to a society hungry for news or "olds," since people want to learn about things in which they already believe. The process is versatile, quick, and cost-effective. It is also condemned by the Guild of Engravers, who have a vested interest in maintaining the old, inefficient ways, and the establishment at Unseen University. The priesthood is the third major opponent.

Watching the process, William has to agree that it appears threatening to those who believe that words are important: letters combined in various ways can say anything that one wants. The letters that record holy wisdom or mysterious spells can be reused for such mundane subjects as cookery and navigation. What is to guarantee that a previous use will not rub off on the new composition? Neither writing with quill pens nor engraving whole pages carry this physical risk. In the end, however, economics wins out over philosophy.

When an accidental fire burns down the Times print shed, innocent words briefly float on melting metal before being lost, merging, flowing, and spreading. William and Sacharissa consider rebuilding and expanding into magazines for specialty markets. He sees it as a waste of words, but she assures him that there are always more words and reminds him that newspaper words last but a day or a week before they are thrown away. Books by contrast, are long-lasting.

## Truth

Not surprisingly Truth is woven through Terry Pratchett's novel, *The Truth*. Protagonist William de Worde shares with his estranged father a favorite saying: "lies could run



around the world before the truth could get its boots on" (pg. 98.) William learns growing up that he is bad at lying and gets in trouble when caught "telling stories" by his father. He therefore tells the truth "out of cosmic self-defense," finding "hard truth less hard than an easy lie" (pg. 42.) As he is gradually drawn into investigative reporting and editing the Ankh-Morpork Times, William finds that the truth does not necessarily set him free, as the paper's slogan proclaims. This is, of course, a quotation from John 8.32, a passage in the Christian New Testament showing Jesus in contention with Jewish officials who take offense at his suggestion that they have not always known the truth. William finds himself repeatedly in such a situation vis-a-vis the establishment. His biggest problem is getting people not to take everything that appears in print at face value, if for no more profound a reason than that misprints occur. One ought to be able to guess that a report of 56 casualties in a bar fight probably means 5-6.

The matter of truth comes to a head when the wealthy Engravers' Guild establishes a rival paper, the Ankh-Morpork Inquirer, whose slogan is "the news you only hear about" (pg. 140.) With a bold masthead imitating the National Enquirer, the Inquirer, is filled with sensational stories about a woman giving birth to a cobra, a rain of soup in Genua, and a hen laying an egg three times in a hurricane. Initial sales are brisk. The Times editors have to admit that it looks more interesting. The Committee to Un-elect the Patrician observes that William is an idealist who has yet to realize that "what's in the public interest is not what the public is interested in" (pg. 175.) Mr. Carney at the Inquirer requires only that something might have happened and that no evidence proves that it has not occurred. People are allowed to make up their own minds about Truth. William has tried writing in the Inquirer style but finds that "common sense and intelligence get the better of him" (pg. 188) and lying is wrong.

Reflecting on mysterious events and phenomena, including black-light iconographs that produces terrifying images, William recalls Epehebian philosophers' tales and wizards' theories of numbers that claim to deal with the nature of reality, but he cannot say for sure that they are Truth. Co-editor Sacharissa reminds him that people find true only that which provides for their survival. What is important to one person is dull to others. William insists that there must be a "big truth" (pg. 217) beyond this. Vetinari might not be a nice man, but setting him aside is objectively wrong, and the new rulers could cut off all hard news, leaving only harmless trivia.

William is becomes comfortable with the basic approach of journalism, that one can present what is "true enough for now" (pg. 287.) He refers to evidence pointing to a group of prominent citizens being involved in a crime and stating that the Times is helping the Watch make inquiries. He cannot harm his family by publishing hard evidence that his father is involved or the hunch that he is probably the ringleader. This is a major concession after having begun his career considering himself answerable only to Truth. Commander Vimes had found this too easy, since everyone else is responsible to some person or organization. When Sgt. Angua mentions that the god of Truth is female, Vimes mocks how few worship her.



## Racism

Terry Pratchett's *The Truth* examines Racism in practice rather than in theory, as one might expect in a novel about the evolution of journalism on Discworld. It is notable that witticisms are few in the three passages that deal with it. Minor mentionings are also serious.

The medieval city of Ankh-Morpork has been experiencing rapid immigration of non-human minorities. The old guard is divided between those who accept it as necessary and even desirable (at least expedient) and those who see it as a blight. The Committee to Unelect the Patrician has made clear that Lord Havelock Vetinari's tolerance is a major reason for wanting to unseat him. He allows representatives of these foreign species to serve in the City Watch (police force.) The Committee talks in terms of the city's coming oblivion unless change is made.

Dwarfs come in the largest numbers up to 50,000. There are also trolls, zombies, werewolves, and gnomes, all of whom have worked hard to more or less assimilated. Along the way they are insulted for their differences and even for their specialties such as the dwarfs' diligence. Those who are physically intimidating have the easiest time because of the cowardice of the nativists.

Vampires, meanwhile, lack the social skills even to get along with one another, but they have formed a temperance league and take a pledge never again to drink human blood. Even protagonist William de Worde, who rejects his father's extreme racism, is reluctant to hire odd-looking Otto Chriek, but forces himself to act on principle. Otto observes that William makes an effort to be friendly with other species, calls it commendable, and understands that this goes against his childhood training. Otto bears witness to how hard it is to reject one's biological and cultural legacy. He says obliquely that the legend that beautiful young women always scream when they are bitten is untrue. He claims to be satisfied with mugs of hot cocoa and singing around a harmonium, but a few times under stress the real struggle is seen.

Gunilla Goodmountain takes the time to explain to William what it is like to be a minority. He admits that there are no laws requiring humans to like what Lord de Worde terms "lesser races." De Worde will not live in the polluted city any more. Gunilla agrees with de Worde's claim that dwarfs care only about gold. However, he says this is not because they are misers as gold-loving humans are. In fact, ancient dwarf tradition requires that couples buy one another from their parents, to repay them for raising them. This allows them to start married life "g'darka" or unencumbered. It has worked for a thousand years. William finds this foreign, as Gunilla finds his description of dowries unsatisfying. On further reflection, William sees the fitness of squaring things with his own father in this way.



# Style

## Point of View

An impersonal but thoroughly bemused and opinionated narrator tells the story of *The Truth* from the third-person point of view. This perspective is omniscient with frequent and extended runs of a lively and first-person dialogue interspersed in between. The narrator seems to be aware that the twenty-first-century earthbound reader has much to learn about flat and magical Discworld. However by the twenty-fifth novel in the series, there is little attempt at filling in secondary details. Many of the minor characters in this novel are quite prominent in earlier tomes, but little or not background is provided on them.

The narrator makes rather frequent asides to the reader in order to provide useful bits of history, metaphysics, religion, magic, politics, and economy, but again fewer than in the early Discworld stories. The narrow focus on the introduction of movable type and the development of journalism creates somewhat fewer mysterious elements than some other stories contain. He depicts a thoroughly medieval culture in which magic provides services that science and technology have provided on Earth. Thus imps who are miniature and magical, long-eared creatures operate such appliances as Mr. Pin's Dis-organizer Mk II and Otto Chriek's iconograph. They are formed of "biothaummic particles" (pg. 81.) Such declarations are left to the reader to understand in context. Imps conveniently have no imagination and so cannot make things up but can be relied on to repeat visually or orally everything that they see or hear. Never do the narration and explanations get too complex or convoluted to appreciate the gist of what is going on.

Paragraphs of narration free of similes, metaphors, hyperbole, and other figures of speech are rare. Most of the characters share the narrator's wry sense of humor. Subtle misunderstandings are frequent, with characters talking past one another. The overall tone of the novel is slapstick, but there are serious passages that deal with racism. The sharpest comments consistently come out of the context in which one might expect them. Sexual innuendo in particular comes in non-sexual situations.

## Setting

*The Truth* by Terry Pratchett takes place on Discworld, a flat world that rides in space on the back of four giant elephants that stand on the shell of an enormous star turtle. By this twenty-fifth novel in the series, Pratchett downplays description of his imaginary world, referring to the basic cosmology only once and only in the context of how new discoveries are constantly being made. Conceivably it will some day be discovered that the Disc is not flat.



For the present, however, the fundamentals of life on Discworld remain constant. It is a medieval society, which prizes continuity with the past. People like to hear about what they know and believe, instead of current events. They are gullible, ready to believe the most outlandish rumors and spread them quickly. It is a prejudiced society in turmoil as non-human races migrate to the city of Ankh-Morpork. Most assimilate, but often with difficulty and some nativist opposition. Transportation is animal-powered and warfare savage, fought with crossbows, swords, and lances. The semaphore is recently discovered and put in use for distance communication. It is left a bit of a mystery how this is accomplished, but the idea of a semaphore being advanced technology points to the society's backwardness.

The innovation around which the novel revolves is movable type and the mass-produced and economically-priced newspaper. The novel opens with rumors that dwarfs have discovered how to turn lead into gold. Everyone buzzes about its possibility and how alchemists and wizards have consistently failed. Protagonist William de Worde, a "writer-downer," realizes that this is a metaphor for journalism and takes up this calling. Religion and magic have long considered movable type to be taboo, but they are enlightened when it proves more economic than engraving and calligraphy. The Ankh-Morpork Times gradually through the novel takes on all of the attributes of a serious modern newspaper and has a sensationalist rival called the Inquirer.

Most of the action takes place inside Ankh-Morpork and the majority of that on and near Gleam Street where both the Times and Inquirer are produced. Scenes are set in various places around town, particularly on the river. Scenes outside Ankh-Morpork are minimal and fleeting, relating to war and the development of the system of semaphores.

## Language and Meaning

In *The Truth*, British author Terry Pratchett lampoons the development of movable type and investigative journalism in the context of a thoroughly medieval world. The narrator is a bemused omniscient observer who comments, tongue firmly in cheek, on the foibles of individuals, groups, and society as a whole. Few narrative paragraphs are void of figurative language and more extended analogies abound. There are a number of running gags that amuse with each re-occurrence. Pratchett draws his figures of speech from twenty-first-century life and anachronistically applies them to a medieval society. The novel abounds with references to the American Watergate Affair of 1976 and to the movie *Pulp Fiction*.

There are a plethora of neologisms, which are generally understood with ease (e.g., "bioalchemic," "biothaumic"). Puns abound. Some vocabulary and slang are purely British in dialog, while the narration adheres to American spelling and grammar. Pratchett situates the reader in each new locale by describing the sights, sounds, and most particularly the smells. Ankh-Morpork is a pungent city and some of the characters are more odoriferous than others.

Pratchett enjoys some fun with sexual themes but more discretely than in some other Discworld novels. He titillates with innuendo and odd scenes about sex, centering on the prudish Sacharissa Cripslock who nevertheless know where to kick a man when it becomes crucial, and makes use of the voluptuous figure of which she is naturally ashamed when it helps her get newspaper interviews. Pratchett generally restrains his scatology but cannot resist a few choice descriptions.

Several characters speak in dialect, which is generally executed consistently and skillfully, feeding on stereotypes but also creating empathy for the characters.

## Structure

As with all of Terry Pratchett's Discworld novels, there are no chapter breaks in *The Truth*. The several story lines blend into one another, generally smoothly, with major transitions being specified by added space after the concluding paragraph and occasionally a line of dots. The story flows along with little variation in the tone or mood. It is a miserable winter in Ankh-Morpork, the Palace is full of conspiracy, the City Watch (police force) is on bumbling alert, and a new phenomenon is developing: a free press dedicated to publishing the Truth.

*The Truth* opens with all of Ankh-Morpork talking about the dwarfs discovering how to change lead into gold. Focus is on the various kinds of ears that receive the word. The dwarfs are surprised to hear of it themselves. By accident—having a runaway dwarf cart collide with him—the protagonist, William de Worde, finds himself among dwarfs who are setting movable type. The opening makes clear that Ankh-Morpork suffers from racial stereotyping and discrimination and that printing by means more advanced than engraving is taboo. William writes down words for a living and with help and encouragement from the printers his once-a-month one-page newsletter distributed to a tiny elite for a prohibitive sum grows into a full-fledged newspaper, the *Ankh-Morpork Times*.

Parallel with this, a pair of professional criminals, Mr. Pin and Mr. Tulip, enter the city at night through the Water Gate, ferrying a mysterious passenger. They are a mismatched pair, one all brains, the other all brawn but with fine taste in art. Gradually it develops that they have been hired through a legal intermediary to compromise the Patrician who rules the city and allow his replacement. A lookalike is to be introduced to the Palace and made to confess to murdering his secretary, while the real Lord Havelock Vetinari is left unconscious in the stables with a large part of the treasury on his escape horse.

The *Times* is coming up to speed when this occurs and William makes reporting on the details his highest priority. He encounters resistance from the City Watch (police force), occasioning discussions about freedom of the press and civic responsibility. William spies inconsistencies in the evidence and is tipped that the Patrician's dog had been present, bit the perpetrators, and disappeared. William offers a reward for the return of



Wuffles, resulting in a horde of animals being brought in. The Watch and Pin and Tulip are also actively searching.

William eventually gets his scoop, an interview with Wuffles, but the press burns down before he can publish it. The staff forcibly gain access to the facilities of their rivals, the Inquirer, and publish the facts, withholding only the name of the ringleader of the conspiracy—William's estranged father. Father and son confront one another over family honor with William winning out.





## Quotes

"The world is made up of four elements: Earth, Air, Fire and Water. This is a fact well known even to Corporal Nobbs. It's also wrong. There's a fifth element, and generally it's called Surprise.

"For example, the dwarfs found out how to turn lead into gold by doing it the hard way. The difference between that and the easy way is that the hard way works." The Truth, pg. 5.

"'A thousand years ago we thought the world was a bowl,' he said. 'Five hundred years ago we knew it was a globe. Today we know it is flat and round and carried through space on the back of a turtle.' He turned and gave the High Priest another smile. 'Don't you wonder what shape it will turn out to be tomorrow?'" The Truth, pgs. 30-31.

" 'I didn't have an appointment with Lord Vetinari!"

" 'Ah, well,' said the troll, 'you'd be amazed at how many people has appointments wid der Patrician an' dey don't know it. So you'd better hurry. I would hurry, if I was you.'" The Truth, pg. 72.

" 'Oh, vell ... if you vill look zis way, Mr. Vintler,' said Otto. He got behind the iconograph and uncovered the lens. William got a glimpse of the imp peering out, brush poised. In his spare hand Otto slowly held up, on a stick, a cage containing a fat and drowsing salamander, and positioned his finger on the trigger that would bring a small hammer down on its head just hard enough to annoy it.

" 'Be smiling, please!'" The Truth, pg. 97.

"His father was right about one thing, at least, when he'd said that lies could run around the world before the truth could get its boots on. And it was amazing how people wanted to believe them." The Truth, pg. 98.

" 'What actually happened when I grabbed the eel, Otto?"

"He winced.

" 'I zink zis is maybe not the time—'"

" 'Otto, I saw things. There were flames. And people. And noise. Just for a moment. It was like watching a whole day go past in a second! What happened?'" The Truth, pg. 160.

"For the vampires (those, that is, that weren't gathered around the harmonium at the Temperance Mission nervously singing songs about how much they liked cocoa) it was a place to hang up. For the werewolves, it was where you let your hair down. For the bogeymen, it was a place to come out of the closet. For the ghouls, it did a decent meat pasty and chips." The Truth, pg. 163.

" 'It certainly frightened off those people,' said William.

" 'It was the axes that did that,' said Goodmountain firmly.

" 'No, it was the feeling that the top of your head has been opened and icicles have



been pounded into your brain,' said William.

"Goodmountain blinked. 'Yeah, okay, that too,' he said, mopping his forehead. 'You've got a way with words, right enough...'" The Truth, pg. 206.

"It took some time for the whole of the crew to understand what was going on. These were, after all, people who could argue and expectorate and creatively misunderstand their way through a three-hour argument after someone says 'Good morning.'" The Truth, pg. 234.

" 'Is this the bit where my whole life passes in front of my eyes?' he said.

"NO, THAT WAS THE BIT JUST NOW.

" 'Which bit?'

"THE BIT, said Death, BETWEEN YOU BEING BORN AND YOU DYING NO, THIS ... MR. TULIP, THIS IS YOUR WHOLE LIFE AS IT PASSED BEFORE OTHER PEOPLE'S EYES..." The Truth, pg. 270.

"DO NOT PUT ALL YOUR TRUST IN ROOT VEGETABLES. WHAT THINGS SEEM MAY NOT BE WHAT THEY ARE, said Death. YET LET NO ONE SAY I DON'T HONOR THE LAW. HE SNAPPED HIS FINGERS. RETURN, THEN, TO WHERE YOU SHOULD GO...

"Blue light flicked for a moment around the astonished Pin, and then he vanished." The Truth, pgs. 292-293.

" 'I was being followed by a werewolf, Commander. I took steps to ... inconvenience it so that I could get away. Would you like to debate this in public?'

"I'm being an arrogant, lying supercilious bastard, thought William. And I'm good at it." The Truth, pg. 302.



## Topics for Discussion

Compare and contrast the discussions held under Misbegot Bridge and around Mrs. Arcanum's dining table.

How does the practice of journalism affect William de Worde's naïveté? Contrast his views at the start and end of the novel.

What is C.M.O.T. Dibbler's role in the novel? How does he serve to unify the story?

What is Foul Ole Ron's role in the novel? Describe Terry Pratchett's use of odor to set scenes and develop character.

What does Mr. Tulip's art appreciation add to his character and to the dynamic with Mr. Pin? How (if at all) is it related to his drug abuse?

How is religion dealt with in the novel?

Discuss William de Worde's decision not to name his father as ringleader of the plot against the Patrician. Does the ends justify the means? Is it similar to what William argues others employ?