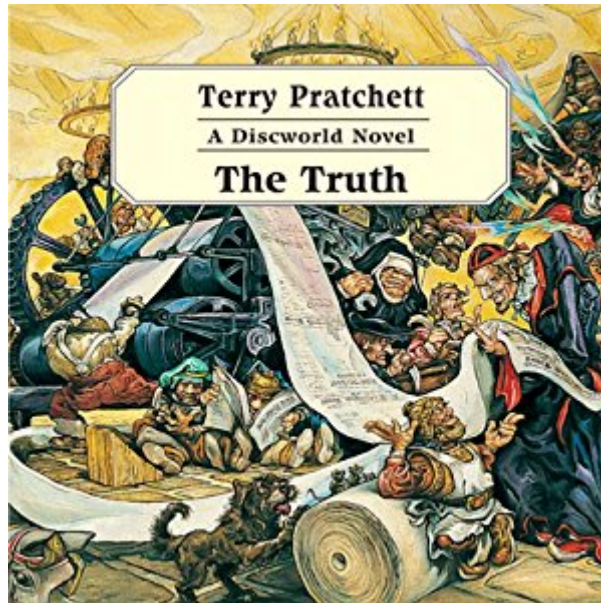


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The Truth: Discworld #25



Synopsis

Terry Pratchett's acclaimed Discworld novels have been number one bestsellers in England for more than a decade. In fact, this prolific author sold more hardcover books in the United Kingdom during the 1990's than any other living novelist. Critically recognized as one of the most celebrated practitioners of satire and parody -- in the company of Kurt Vonnegut, Douglas Adams, and Carl Hiaasen -- Pratchett, with his unique brand of irreverent humor, is at last being embraced across America. In this, his twenty-fifth Discworld novel, Pratchett turns his pen on, well, the pen. Or, rather, the press, and its power to disseminate and create the truth. The lesser son of one of Ankh most privileged families, William de Worde a struggling scribe, hits on the brilliant idea of producing his upper-crust newsletter with a newfangled printing press. Truer to the family motto, *Le Mot juste*, than his disapproving father can ever realize, de Worde soon finds that his Ankh-Morpork Times is a success. So big, in fact, that certain nefarious factions would like nothing better than to put him out of business. They begin their own rival Ankh-Morpork Inquirer--full of salacious bits -- to do just that. Soon, though, de Worde has more than just the competition to fret over. Lord Vetinari, the Patrician of Ankh-Morpork, is accused of a serious crime in a seemingly airtight case. But William de Worde knows that facts aren't always the truth. Along with a much too prim and proper assistant, a roving photographer vampire with a nasty reaction to his flashgun, and a talking dog who holds the key to the mystery, William de Worde will stop at nothing to get the truth. And that's the truth. A dead-on look at the revered fifth estate, the nature of news, and bareknuckled political intrigue, *The Truth* shall make you free. From everything else you'd be doing instead of enjoying it, that is. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The title of this review notwithstanding, I'm not **quite** a blind fan of Mr. Pratchett. I have a particular fondness for his bits with Nanny Ogg in, "Pyramids" is one of my favorites, and there are some of his books I can take or leave. This one, I'm honored to inform you, is the former. I'll take it. Pratchett himself is a former newspaperman, and one gets the impression that most of his pokes at the press industry are dead-on, if couched in fiction. We're back in Ankh-Morpork, in which his knack for the surreal and head-scratchingly amusing always seems to be let loosest. Several honored characters return: Death, the Bursar (whose cameo prompted hysterical mirth on my part) the Patrician, the City Guard, Gaspode the Talking Dog, and Foul Ole Ron, among others. New folks who one really feels ought to join the regular cast are introduced: Mr. Pin and Mr. Tulip, most notably. Chances are they won't be back, but I look forward to again encountering Otto. Diversified Pratchett fans may notice a faint resemblance of these two to another pair of black-suited, unscrupulous gentlemen in "Neverwhere" by Neil Gaiman, with whom Pratchett has collaborated in the past. The resemblance is largely superficial, however, and Mr. Tulip particularly is a cleverly made and vastly amusing character, given to the peculiar mode of cursing permitted by Discworld's Universal Censors: "-ing!" Otto, the reformed vampire and Ankh-Morpork Times staff photographer, is a further joy to read. The complications with his salamander-flash camera made me laugh until I got a cramp. If there is one failing in this book, it is that the 'side' characters are so fantastically interesting compared to our protagonist, a comparatively normal human citizen.

Two random images occur frequently when reading a Terry Pratchett Discworld book. The first is of time lapse photography, the type used in nature or wildlife programs. One can see a seed planted, germinate, sprout, and then blossom into a flower in a manner of seconds even though it might take weeks to occur in 'the real world'. The second is of a frog in a pot of water. It is a time worn cliché that if you throw a frog into a pot of boiling water it will leap out immediately. However, if you drop a frog into cool water and gradually bring it to a boil it won't think about jumping out until it is too late. Terry Pratchett has a marvelous habit of taking devices or institutions that have developed over time in our world and subjecting them to the literary equivalent of time-lapse photography when he imports them into Discworld. Typically, the devices, be they guns (Men at Arms), movies (Moving Pictures), or the modern postal system (Going Postal), are introduced and evolve very quickly. In presenting us with guns, movies, or postal networks formed in such short order Pratchett highlights

the perversions these great inventions are subjected to over time that are not so readily apparent when you live through the gradual changes. The reader, like the frog, is presented with a proverbial pot of boiling water and, no doubt, on reflection must ask him or her self, how in the world did we ever let things go this far? This is exactly what Pratchett does with the newspaper business in *The Truth*. As you witness the time-lapsed development of the institution known to us as the press you cannot help but shake your head and say, how did it ever come to this? The plot has already been well summarized on the product page.

"*The Truth*," the twenty-fifth *Diskworld* novel by Terry Pratchett, is a great way to celebrate a silver anniversary! Pratchett fans already know that his different novels cover several paths: certain ones follow the witches of Lancre, others Death, the Wizards of Unseen University, or the Watch of Ankh-Morpork. This is an Ankh-Morpork novel, and much in the style of "*Moving Pictures*," "*Soul Music*," or "*Maskerade*," a familiar cultural aspect of our own world becomes public and popular in *Diskworld*--creating grief and strife for everyone and a lot of fun for the reader! The usual concoction of magical, political, and sociological troubles are afoot in Ankh-Morpork when dwarves bring movable type to the city and *Diskworld's* first newspaper, "*The Ankh-Morpork Times*," (motto: *The Truth Shall Make Ye Fret*") hits the streets. Many of Pratchett's well-loved and familiar characters are here: Sam Vimes, Carrot and Angua, talking dog Gaspode, the irrepressible C.M.O.T. Dibbler--but the spotlight's fully upon William de Worde, determined to make the written "Truth" public. There's a solid mix of old and new characters: a vampire photographer who crumbles into ash each time his flash goes off, two ruthless assassins vaguely reminiscent of a pair from a recent pop-culture movie (down to a discussion of what they call a sausage-in-a-bun in Quirm: 'le sausage-in-a-bun'). A running subplot featuring a dastardly conspiracy against Lord Vetinari moves the action along, but it's actually the story of the struggle of William's conscience and means to bring the truth to *Diskworld's* population...whether they can handle it or not.

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