

No one can look harder than a dwarf. Perhaps it's because there is only quite a small amount of face between the statutory round iron helmet and the beard. Dwarf expressions are more *concentrated*.

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And thus the University got the active ingredient which it made up into pills and fed to the Bursar, to keep him sane. At least, *apparently* sane, because nothing was that simple at good old UU. In fact he was incurably insane and hallucinated more or less continuously, but by a remarkable stroke of lateral thinking his fellow wizards had reasoned that, in that case, the whole business could be sorted out if only they could find a formula that caused him to *hallucinate that he was completely sane*.\*

\* This is a very common hallucination, shared by most people.

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There are, it has been said, two types of people in the world. There are those who, when presented with a glass that is exactly half full, say: this glass is half full. And then there are those who say: this glass is half empty.

The world *belongs*, however, to those who can look at the glass and say: 'What's up with this glass? Excuse me? Excuse *me*? *This* is my glass? I don't *think* so. *My* glass was full! *And* it was a bigger glass!

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The other lodgers were already at the breakfast table when William hurried down. He was hurrying because Mrs Arcanum had Views about people who were late for meals.

Mrs Arcanum, proprietress of Mrs Eucrasia Arcanum's Lodging House for Respectable Working Men, was what Sacharissa was unconsciously training to be. She wasn't just respectable, she was Respectable; it was a lifestyle, religion and hobby combined. She liked respectable people who were Clean and Decent; she used the phrase as if it was impossible to be one without being the other. She kept respectable beds and cooked cheap but respectable meals for her respectable lodgers, who apart from William were mostly middle-aged, unmarried and extremely sober. They were mainly craftsmen in small trades, and were almost all heavily built, well-scrubbed, owned serious boots and were clumsily polite at the dining table.

Oddly enough – or, at least, oddly enough to William's expectations of people like Mrs Arcanum – she wasn't averse to dwarfs and trolls. At least, the clean and decent ones. Mrs Arcanum rated Decency above species.

# WRITING TECHNIQUES

Watching a dog try to chew a large piece of toffee is a pastime fit for gods. Mr Fusspot's mixed ancestry had given him a dexterity of jaw that was truly awesome. He somersaulted happily around the floor making faces like a rubber gargoyle in a washing machine.

He stood up, indicating that the audience was at an end. 'The city bleeds, Mr Lipwig, and you are the clot I need. Go away and make money. Unlock the wealth of Ankh-Morpork. Mrs Lavish gave you the bank in trust. Run it well.'

The notebook was instantly flipped open, and Moist's tongue began to gallop. He couldn't stop it. It would have been nice if it had talked to him first. Taking over his brain, it said: 'Deadly serious! I am recommending to Lord Vetinari that we sell it all to the dwarfs. We do not need it. It's a commodity and nothing more.'

You do it every day. Do you think that's the action of a sane man? Okay, it's sad to see him standing for hours with his head up against a chair until someone moves it, but now *you* get up every day to move the chair for him. This is what honest work does to a person.

*Yes, but dishonest work nearly got me hanged!* he protested.

So? Hanging only lasts a couple of minutes. The Pension Fund Committee lasts a lifetime! It's all so boring! *You're trapped in chains of gold-ish!*

Desert island, desert island . . . On a desert island a bag of vegetables is worth more than gold, in the city gold is more valuable than the bag of vegetables.

This is a sort of equation, yes? Where's the value?

He stared.

It's in the city itself. The city says: in exchange for that gold, you will have all these things. The city is the magician, the alchemist in reverse. It turns worthless gold into . . . everything.

How much is Ankh-Morpork worth? Add it all up! The buildings, the streets, the people, the skills, the art in the galleries, the guilds, the laws, the libraries . . . Billions? No. No money would be enough.

The city was one big gold bar. What did you need to back the currency? You just needed the city. The city says a dollar is worth a dollar.

It was a dream, but Moist was good at selling dreams. And if you could sell the dream to enough people, no one dared wake up.

'But what's worth more than gold?'

'Practically everything. You, for example. Gold is heavy. Your weight in gold is not very much gold at all. Aren't you worth more than that?'

Vetinari shook his head in what Moist was sure was genuinely contrived annoyance and went on: 'An army that will obey anyone with a shiny jacket, a megaphone and the Umnian words for "Dig a hole and bury yourselves" would turn war into nothing but a rather entertaining farce.'

Something about the Post Office discouraged original thinking. The letters went in the slots, okay? There was no room for people who wanted to experiment with sticking them in their ear, up the chimney or down the privy. It'd do them good to—

'But I've been dropped right in it!'

'Not by me,' said Vetinari. 'I can assure you that if I had, as your ill-assumed street patois has it, "dropped you in it" you would fully understand all meanings of "drop" and have an unenviable knowledge of "it".'

It was a hard bargain, but hard on whom? That was the question. And Mr Blister the lawyer wasn't getting an answer. He would have liked an answer. When parties are interested in unprepossessing land, it might pay for smaller parties to buy up any neighbouring plots, just in case the party of the first part had heard something, possibly at a party.

There were meetings. There were always meetings. And they were dull, which is part of the reason they were meetings. Dull likes company.