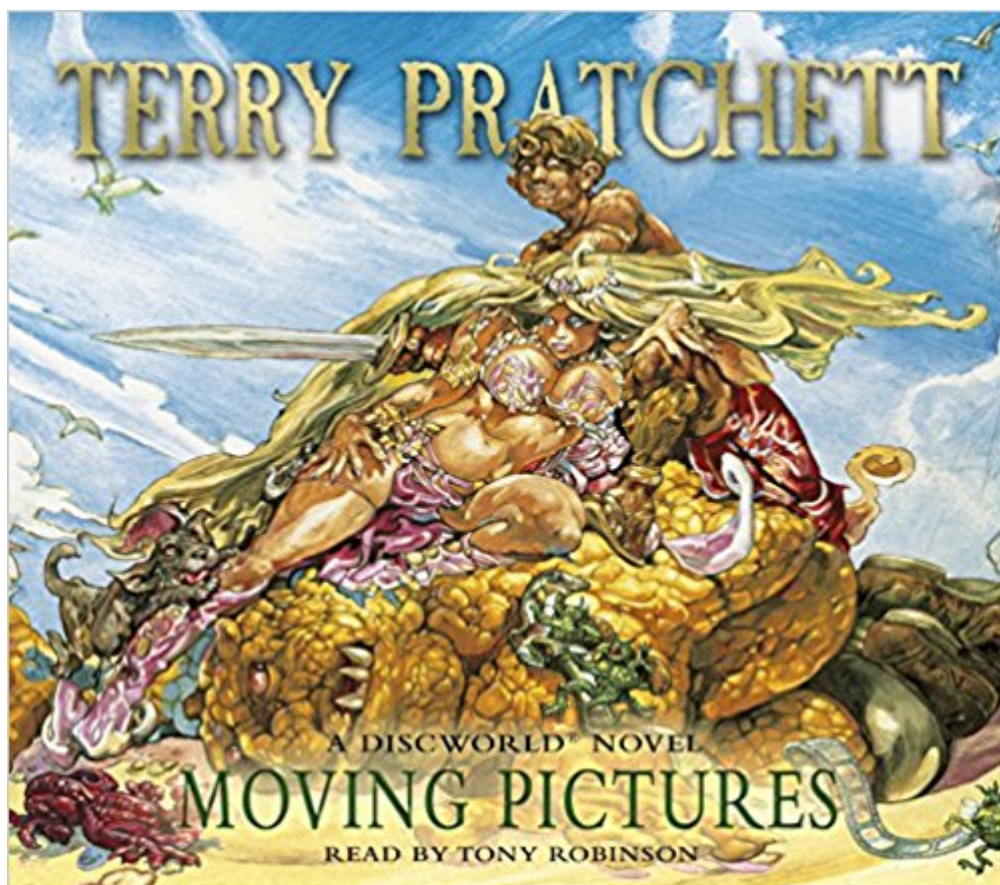


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# Moving Pictures



## Synopsis

A gloriously funny saga set against the background of a world gone mad. The alchemists of the Discworld have discovered the magic of the silver screen. But what is the dark secret of Holy Wood Hill? It's up to Victor Tugelbend (Can't sing. Can't dance. Can handle a sword a little •) and Theda Withel (I come from a little town you've probably never heard of •) to find out.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

... and our little life is rounded with a sleep." This snippet of Prospero's from Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, was beautifully ad libbed by Humphrey Bogart during the filming of *The Maltese Falcon*. It pretty much sums up the experience I took out of reading Terry Pratchett's *Moving Pictures*. Life in Holy Wood, like life on Prospero's island is one where magical events occur encouraged by a host of spirits. Since these magical events unfold in that piece of the universe known as Discworld, they unfold with wit, humor, and more than a bit of thought. As the title suggests, *Moving Pictures* is Pratchett's take on Hollywood. In a manner similar to his approach to *Men at Arms*, *The Truth*, and *Going Postal*, Pratchett takes the development of the motion picture industry and through the literary equivalent of time-lapse photography compresses it so that the reader experiences in a brief time span that which occurred over decades on our slower-moving planet. The result is hilariously funny and made me shake my head and murmur, how did we let this nonsense happen. CAST OF CHARACTERS: As a click trailer might say: Introducing Victor and Ginger (think Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers) as the leading man and lady of this epic. Also new to Discworld is Thomas Silverfish

(think Samuel Goldwyn of MGM fame), the first big producer on Discworld. As in *Casablanca*, Pratchett has also rounded up the usual suspects. Cut Me Own Throat Dibbler (can't think of a character on earth that remotely resembles Dibbler!) and Gaspode (think Oscar Levant as played by a stray dog) are featured prominently and hilariously. This is a big step up for these two contract players in the Discworld series!

*Moving Pictures*, the 10th Discworld novel written by Terry Pratchett, has the distinction of being the first one with which I've been a bit disappointed. All of the typical elements of a Discworld book are still there: witty satire on an aspect of society, humour, and weird situations. They just don't come together as a whole. It was a bit difficult to get through as a result, because I did become bored at certain points. Pratchett includes a few characters that don't have much to do with the plot, but instead are there for a one-off joke. This seemed to pad the book far more than the joke, while amusing, was worth. One character in particular falls into this category: he's there to make a joke about Victor's exit examination; then later on in the book, he keeps trying to go out for a night on the town, but keeps getting stymied. Again, the joke is amusing, but the pages devoted to it seem to be a waste. Another example is the antics of some of the wizards. The situations that they get themselves into are hilarious, I must admit. But as part of the narrative, they don't merge well. The rest of the book contains some wonderful skewering of Hollywood and the movie business. I loved how Dibbler wanted to add elephants to everything, with mass battle scenes (with different people galloping by in take after take because they only have a couple of horses) and romance where there wasn't any before. Theda (who calls herself Ginger) and Victor heat up the screen with kiss after kiss, and everybody assumes that they're lovers (hey, it happened on screen, right?). Who cares if something didn't really happen, it will look exciting! The main characters were less memorable than Pratchett's characters usually are. I found both Victor and Ginger to be kind of bland.

Somewhere in Discworld the last priest of Holy Wood shakes hands with Death and one of realities weak points (it has many) suddenly is unguarded. Not long after, an alchemist in Ankh-Morpork suddenly figures out how to make a form of octo-cellulose that only explodes occasionally. In no time, rolls of this miracle compound are being fed into picture boxes where tiny demons frantically paint pictures on the film. You guessed it, the Discworld entertainment industry is about to take a great lurch forward (or maybe backward). Suddenly, ancient Holy Wood was on the map, drawing people to it from all over the world. And from outside the world as well. In the spaces between the universes, unmentionable creatures are drawn like magnets to the thin reality of feature filmmaking.

Nor are the locals much more respectable. Cut Me Own Throat Dibbler sells the world's most horrible sausage business and heads for tinsel town to become a mogul, trolls enroll as bit part players, and people who should never be allowed to cook, are. The good guys are just as various. Victor Tugelbend deserts wizardry, and Ginger Withel leaves the farm in order to make it big in show business. These two reluctantly become involved in what is really going on, which is, as usual, 'the end of everything as we know it.' But the very best character of all is poor Gaspode, the talking dog, a disgraceful looking canine who spends his time (when he isn't out drinking with his friend Laddie the Wonder Dog) keeping Victor and Ginger alive and relatively down to earth. Gaspode is as corrupt and sneaky as they come, but he knows that it is no fun being rotten when there isn't a world to do it in. 'Moving Pictures' is parody and punning, as Pratchett makes fun of everything from 'Gone with the Wind' (Blown Away) to H.P.

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