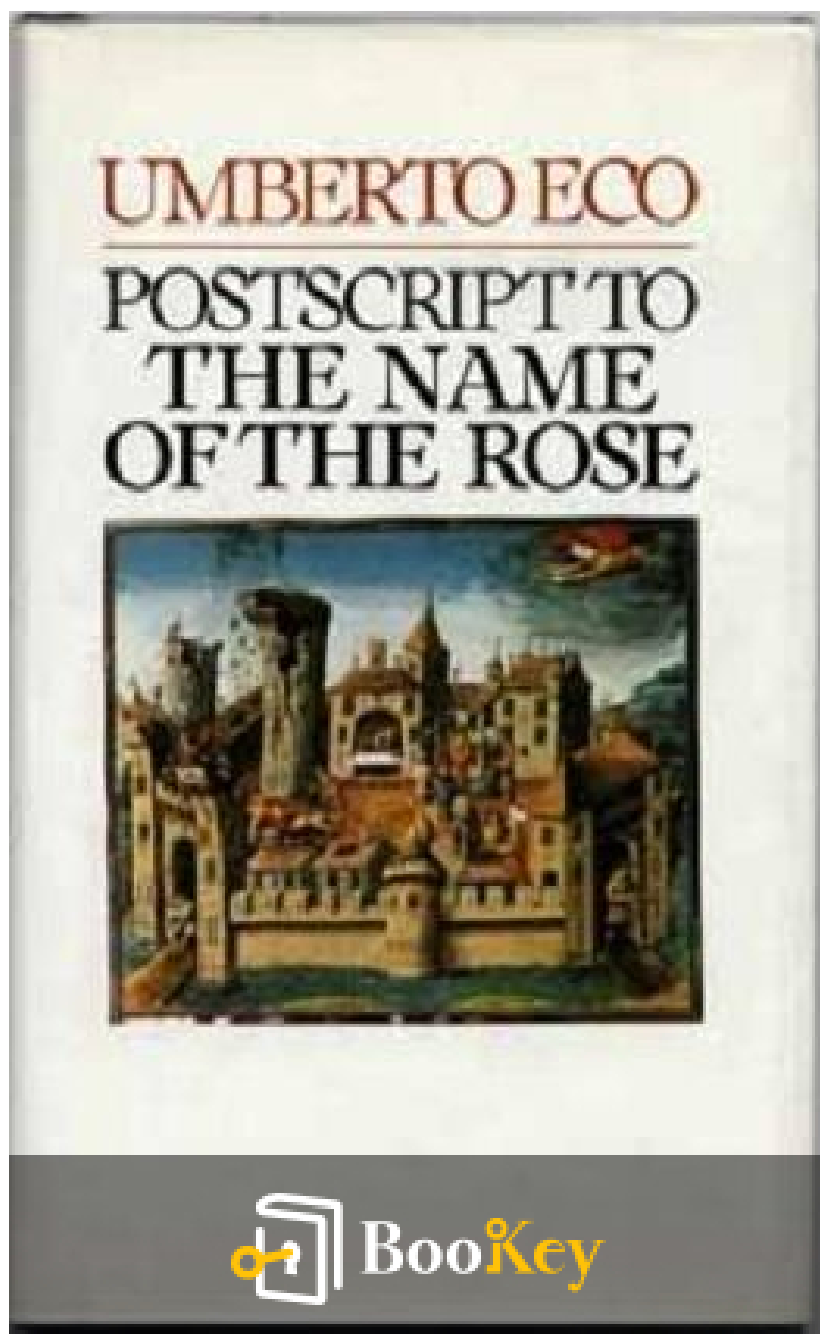


# Postscript To The Name Of The Rose PDF (Limited Copy)

Umberto Eco



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# **Postscript To The Name Of The Rose Summary**

Exploring the Craft and Philosophy Behind a Literary Masterpiece.

Written by New York Central Park Page Turners Books Club

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## About the book

In "Postscript to the Name of the Rose," Umberto Eco reflects on the genesis of his celebrated novel, \*The Name of the Rose\*, while navigating through the rich landscape of literary themes. This retrospective goes beyond mere origins; it investigates the complexities of literature by examining flawed texts and the characteristics of the ideal reader. Eco establishes a foundational notion that literature is subjective and open to interpretation, provoking readers to consider their role in storytelling.

The chapter begins with Eco's striking confession about a seemingly dark urge that sparked his creative process: "in March 1978 ... I had the urge to poison a monk." This introductory thought sets the tone for exploring the intertwining of violence and intellect in literature. As Eco progresses, he details the historical context that inspired his detective fiction—set in a medieval monastery, which serves as a microcosm for larger philosophical questions about truth, faith, and power.

Throughout the postscript, Eco artfully highlights the narrative elements of his novel, reflecting on how historical narrative shapes our understanding of both the past and the present. He introduces readers to the concept of the 'ideal reader,' emphasizing the unique interaction that occurs between the text and its audience, where personal interpretation plays a pivotal role.

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In essence, Eco's postscript invites readers to contemplate the deeper layers of narrative and the nature of storytelling itself. By threading personal anecdotes with analytical insights, he creates a tapestry that not only explains *\*The Name of the Rose\** but also enriches our appreciation for literary complexity, leaving readers with an invitation to ponder their engagement with text and the nuances of interpretation.

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## About the author

Umberto Eco, an esteemed Italian medievalist, philosopher, and semiotician, is celebrated for his profound contributions to literature and cultural criticism. Best known for his historical mystery novel, *\*The Name of the Rose\** (1980), Eco masterfully intertwines themes of semiotics, biblical interpretation, medieval culture, and literary theory to create a rich tapestry that examines the complexities of knowledge and faith in the Middle Ages. Following this success, his 1988 novel, *\*Foucault's Pendulum\**, delves deeper into similar philosophical concerns, providing a labyrinthine narrative that critiques the manipulation of historical narratives and the search for meaning.

In addition to his novels, Eco's prolific career includes children's literature, vital translations of classical works, and a popular bi-weekly column, "La Bustina di Minerva," published in *\*L'Espresso\** from 1985 until shortly before his passing in 2016. As an Emeritus professor at the University of Bologna, he significantly influenced contemporary academia and the literary world. His incisive 1995 essay, "Ur-Fascism," articulates the core characteristics of fascist ideologies, reflecting his deep engagement with political and cultural discourse.

Through his works, Eco invites readers to explore the intersections of language, history, and culture, encouraging a critical examination of how

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narratives shape our understanding of the world. His unique voice continues to resonate, making him a pivotal figure in both literature and scholarship.

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# Chapter 1 Summary: FIRST DAY

## Summary of Chapter 1 of "Postscript to the Name of the Rose"

### First Day

#### Prime: Arrival at the Abbey

On a tranquil November morning, the inquisitive William of Baskerville and his novice Adso arrive at the magnificent Aedificium, an abbey characterized by its artistry and grand architecture. Demonstrating his sharp deduction skills, William assesses the whereabouts of the abbot's horse, Brunellus, merely by observing the snow-dusted path. Upon their arrival, they are warmly greeted by Remigio, the cellarer, and later honored by the abbot, who welcomes them into the abbey with ceremony.

#### Terce: Dialogue with the Abbot

During a hearty meal with the abbot, William learns about the recent suspicious death of a young monk named Adelmo of Otranto. The abbot expresses concern about the balance between good and evil residing within the abbey's walls and suggests that a thorough investigation may be needed.

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William expresses doubt regarding the influence of diabolical forces, steering the conversation toward more profound philosophical questions about guilt and innocence in matters of justice.

### **Sext: Admiration and Conversation on the Abbey's Design**

As the day unfolds, Adso becomes enamored with the abbey's serene beauty, prompting discussion of its architectural design. The atmosphere grows darker, and while the monks attend to their evening duties, William continues to scrutinize the nuances surrounding Adelmo's untimely demise, piecing together the elements of a potential mystery.

### **Toward Nones: Exploring Knowledge and Intelligence**

In their exploration, William and Adso engage with Severinus, the abbey herbalist, who shares valuable insights into the medicinal herbs cultivated within the abbey. In turn, William introduces Severinus to the fascinating concept of lenses, hinting at the potential for broader scientific inquiry. Their discussion turns to the abbey's secretive library, rumored to harbor forbidden knowledge and dark happenings, igniting intrigue around the circle of intellectual creation and danger among the texts.

### **After Nones: The Decision to Investigate**

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Entering the scriptorium, the two marvel at the beauty of the illuminated manuscripts while meeting various monks devoted to scholarly endeavors. However, an air of tension permeates the atmosphere as the monks appear torn between their scholarly pursuits and underlying fears stemming from Adelmo's death. Whispers circulate about a blind monk named Jorge, known for his ominous declarations regarding the Antichrist and the perils posed by monstrous imagery.

### **Vespers: Reflections and Revelations**

As the chapter culminates, the monks gather for vespers, and William and Adso are invited to join the abbot for a well-prepared evening meal. This post-dinner dialogue reveals rifts among the monks regarding their interpretations of emotional imagery and the role of knowledge—conflicts that underscore the intellectual and spiritual struggles present within the community. William, reflective and contemplative, begins to grasp the deeper mysteries surrounding Adelmo's death, as well as his own position within the intricate tapestry of the abbey's esoteric knowledge and secrecy.

### **Final Thoughts on the Chapter**

This chapter artfully interweaves themes of knowledge, observation, faith, and skepticism within the setting of a medieval abbey, a place of worship that also serves as a keeper of secrets. William's keen intellect and

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observational prowess shine as he begins to navigate the complex dynamics among the monks, all while laying the foundations to untangle the enigma of Adelmo's death.

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# Chapter 2 Summary: SECOND DAY

## Chapter 2 Summary

In Chapter 2 of "Postscript to the Name of the Rose," titled "Second Day," the narrative explores the juxtaposition of monastic solemnity and the escalating tensions ignited by violence and suspicion within the abbey.

The chapter opens with the monks participating in Matins, a time of solemn prayer conducted in darkness. Also, the narrator, reflects on the atmosphere of faith surrounding the rituals. However, unease descends as a reading from the Psalms alludes to wickedness. This tension erupts when the disquieting discovery of Venantius, a monk, is made—his body grotesquely positioned in a jar of pig's blood, provoking panic and distrust among the brotherhood.

Recognizing the severity of the situation, William, a knowledgeable and astute monk, begins his investigation by interviewing key figures within the abbey, including the abbot and other monks. He uncovers significant insights into the behaviors and absences of various monks, particularly Berengar, whose secretive actions arouse suspicion.

As the investigation progresses, the narrative probes deeper into the conflicts brewing among the monks, revealing a complexity of relationships and the

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dangerous ideas of heresy that circulate within their ranks. Adso and William piece together subtle clues, heightening the tension surrounding Venantius's death.

William's inquiries lead him toward the abbey's enigmatic library, a place steeped in mystery and trepidation. He theorizes that this dark, labyrinthine space might hold crucial answers amidst the abbey's turmoil. As they venture into the library, laden with shadows of the past, the narrative intertwines themes of knowledge and folly, suggesting that the truths they seek may be perilous.

Within the library's confines, the duo faces illusions and distractions that challenge their resolve. Adso experiences terrifying visions that amplify the conflict between the pursuit of knowledge and the descent into madness. The chapter intricately weaves mysticism with the harsh realities of ambition and crime, highlighting the complex quest for truth amidst chaos.

As the chapter draws to a close, William and Adso confront the abbot regarding Berengar's alarming absence from morning prayers. This confrontation underscores the undercurrents of secrecy and sin that threaten to surface, hinting at future calamities that may emerge as William and Adso navigate the dark labyrinth of the abbey's mysteries. The narrative ends on a note of suspense, emphasizing the intertwined fates of knowledge and hidden transgressions.



## Chapter 3 Summary: **THIRD DAY**

### Chapter 3 Summary: **Postscript to the Name of the Rose**

#### **From Lauds to Prime**

As morning prayers conclude, a chilling development emerges at the abbey: Berengar, a monk, is missing, and a bloodstained cloth found in his cell heightens suspicions. Despite a thorough search by the monks, there are no leads. William of Baskerville, a sharp and inquisitive Franciscan friar, suggests a patient approach, advising them to await further evidence. Meanwhile, Adso, William's novice and narrator of the events, reflects on the calm demeanor of the monks amidst the turmoil, pondering the profound sanctity and enigma of their extensive library, a treasure trove of knowledge and sacred texts.

#### **Terce**

In the scriptorium, where monks diligently copy texts, Adso observes their unwavering commitment to their scholarly duties. This prompts him to contemplate the intrinsic link between knowledge, temptation, and the relentless quest for truth. He realizes that while the library symbolizes enlightenment, it equally embodies the dangers of curiosity, hinting at the



moral complexities the monks must navigate.

## **Sext**

Adso encounters Salvatore, a vagrant who shares a vivid and painful account of his childhood, marked by famine and despair. His story sheds light on the profound suffering experienced by society's most vulnerable. Salvatore's narrative connects to broader themes of societal decline and moral ambiguity, challenging Adso's simplistic views of good and evil.

## **Nones**

Later, William engages Adso in a deeper discourse about heresy, explaining the dynamics of various heretical movements and their followers. He reveals that the 'simple' people often gravitate towards heretical leaders due to desperation and lack of guidance. William articulates a philosophical framework regarding knowledge and truth, emphasizing the risks of oversimplifying complex heretical narratives, which can obscure the true fabric of belief and error.

## **After Compline**

Adso, seeking clarity, turns to Ubertino for insights into Fra Dolcino, a heretical figure known for his radical ideals and tragic destiny. Ubertino

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emphasizes how heresy often springs from pride and the seductive nature of temptation, illustrating how noble aspirations can lead to ethical disarray, further complicating Adso's understanding of morality.

## **Night**

In an intimate encounter, Adso grapples with desire when he comes across a beautiful girl in the kitchen. Despite his initial efforts to resist temptation, he succumbs, experiencing a moment of fleeting joy that quickly turns into guilt and conflict. Later, he stumbles upon a heart among the debris, a gruesome discovery that amplifies his sense of horror, ultimately driving him to seek forgiveness from William, highlighting the tension between earthly desires and spiritual aspirations.

## **Conclusion**

As the chapter unfolds, William uncovers Berengar's lifeless body in the bath, deepening the enigma surrounding the abbey and its inhabitants. The intertwining themes of knowledge, temptation, heresy, and moral complexity reflect the frailty of faith and the darker facets of human nature, creating a pervasive atmosphere of dread as the investigation continues.

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## Chapter 4: FOURTH DAY

### Summary of Chapter 4: "Postscript to the Name of the Rose"

#### Fourth Day

##### Lauds

As dawn breaks over the abbey, William of Baskerville and his companion Severinus investigate the mysterious death of Berengar. Their examination reveals inconsistencies with the theory of drowning, prompting intrigue over potential foul play. The discovery of blackened fingers on both Berengar and Venantius raises suspicions of poison. Severinus, well-versed in herbal lore, discusses various toxic substances, while William applies his logical reasoning to unravel the circumstances surrounding the deaths, emphasizing the challenge of discerning truth from insufficient evidence.

##### Prime

In their pursuit of answers, William and Adso interview a cast of characters. Among them is Salvatore, a dubious figure who admits to procuring women for the cellarer, hinting at the murky underbelly of the abbey's hierarchy.



The cellarer himself brings forth his questionable past tied to heretical movements, adding to the tension within the abbey. Remigio mentions an ancient poison he once owned, which has suspiciously gone missing, further intertwining the fates of those involved in the investigation and implying deeper conspiracies at play.

### **Terce**

Amidst the investigation, Adso grapples with his burgeoning feelings for a local girl, torn between desire and the weight of his spiritual vows. His inner turmoil represents the broader conflict between worldly affection and ascetic dedication common among the abbey's monks. At the same time, William interacts with a significant manuscript that ties back to the unfolding mysteries, highlighting the importance of knowledge and interpretation within the narrative.

### **Sext**

Tensions escalate with the arrival of a papal legation, including the formidable inquisitor Bernard Gui. This gives rise to discussions among William, Ubertino, and others about the precarious balance of power. The presence of Gui signals potential danger, marking a shift in the atmosphere as fear and suspicion loom larger within the abbey, complicating their ongoing investigation.



## **Nones**

Following a sumptuous banquet, Bernard Gui scrutinizes the local villagers, singling out Salvatore and a young woman, which leads to alarming accusations of witchcraft. The subsequent apprehension of Salvatore and the girl ignites a wave of panic among the abbey's inhabitants. This situation precipitates dire interrogations by Bernard, whose zeal for uncovering heresy exacerbates the already charged atmosphere, intensifying fear and suspicion throughout the community.

## **Vespers**

In a reflective moment, William discusses insights from Alinardo regarding the interpretation of signs and symbols in texts. Their discourse on truth and knowledge evokes deeper philosophical questions about human understanding, exploring the nuances of perception and the often intricate nature of human existence.

## **Compline**

The chapter reaches a dramatic climax as Salvatore is discovered with a black cat and a dead rooster, leading to overwhelming accusations of witchcraft against him and the girl Adso harbors feelings for. The

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community's fearful reactions underscore their beliefs about the supernatural, leaving Adso in despair and helplessness over the fate of the girl he loves, trapped within a web of suspicion and superstition.

Overall, Chapter 4 deftly intertwines themes of love, philosophy, suspicion, and the intricate relationships among characters. It paints a vivid picture of a religious setting grappling with knowledge, power, and the shadowy specters of ignorance and fear.

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## Chapter 5 Summary: FIFTH DAY

### Summary of Chapter 5: Postscript to the Name of the Rose

#### \*Fifth Day: Prime\*

As dawn breaks on the fifth day, William of Baskerville and his novice, Adso of Melk, awaken to a heavy fog, symbolizing the looming uncertainties surrounding the ongoing theological debates at the abbey. The atmosphere is thick with tension, heightened by hushed meetings among the monastic community as they deal with the significant debate regarding Christ's poverty, a central tenet of Franciscan belief that contrasts sharply with the views of the Dominican order.

#### \*The Debate\*

Inside the chapter house, representatives of the Franciscans and Dominicans gather to present their arguments regarding the implications of Christ's poverty. Abo serves as a mediator, referencing historical decrees and previous controversies, which leads to a heated exchange between the two factions. As theological interpretations clash, the debate escalates into a chaotic confrontation, reflecting ideological divides that echo the broader conflicts within the Church itself.

#### \*Severinus's Discovery\*

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Amidst the cacophony, William receives urgent news from Severinus, the abbey's librarian, who claims to have found a crucial book that could reveal hidden truths. His discovery adds a layer of intrigue to the already charged atmosphere, prompting William to investigate its significance as tensions rise and the threat of violence looms.

### \*Murder in the Abbey\*

Just as the debate is suspended, tragedy strikes when news of Severinus's murder permeates the abbey. Accusations quickly fly towards the cellarer, intensifying mistrust among the monks. The chaotic environment sets the stage for an inquisition led by Bernard Gui, a figure known for his relentless pursuit of truth and justice, even as his methods invoke fear.

### \*Inquisition and Peril\*

The inquisition unfolds, revealing a web of entangled relationships and past sins within the abbey's corridors. As Bernard interrogates the cellarer, layers of guilt, heresy, and betrayal emerge, ultimately leading to a confession under duress. Other prominent figures, such as Malachi and Michael, find themselves caught in the turmoil, exposing the moral failings lurking beneath the surface of monastic life.

### \*The Antichrist's Prophecy\*

Amidst the growing chaos, Jorge, a pivotal and foreboding character, delivers a fervent sermon on the Antichrist, invoking dread among the

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monks. His haunting message speaks to the moral decay proliferating within the community, foreshadowing impending turmoil and unraveling the fragile peace of the abbey. This invocation reacts with the earlier debates, further entrenching the characters in their respective ideological stances.

### \*Climactic Resolutions\*

As night envelops the abbey, the once-stable environment spirals into potential upheaval. Characters find themselves contemplating escape or confrontation, burdened by grief and moral dilemmas in the face of injustice. William and Adso reflect on their roles within this chaos, alluding to broader implications for not only the Church but for society at large and humanity's eternal struggle between ambition and divine intention.

### \*Final Reflections\*

In a moment of heartfelt despair, Adso ponders the fate of a girl caught in the crossfire of these ideological conflicts, symbolizing innocence shattered by the relentless power struggles over faith and knowledge. This poignant conclusion underscores the heavy toll of ambition, betrayal, and the complex interplay of power dynamics woven throughout the narrative, leaving readers with a profound sense of loss and the troubling cost of enlightenment in a fractured world.

This chapter intricately weaves themes of faith and knowledge within the church's power struggles and the dire consequences of fervent beliefs, setting

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the stage for future confrontations and resolutions.

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# Chapter 6 Summary: SIXTH DAY

### Summary of Chapter 6: Postscript to the Name of the Rose

## Sixth Day

### Matins: A Disturbing Absence

The chapter begins on a cold, foggy morning in the cloister as the narrator and William attend Matins, a religious service marked by deep tension among the monks due to the absence of Malachi, the librarian. His empty seat raises concerns, especially from the abbot and the blind monk, Jorge, as foreboding fills the air. The chanting of psalms begins with a focus on "Sederunt," a piece that echoes themes of persecution and calls for divine aid—foreshadowing the struggles that lie ahead for the abbey.

### Malachi's Collapse

Mid-service, Malachi reappears but abruptly collapses, prompting frantic efforts to save him. Despite their haste, he dies, cryptically uttering the phrase about "a thousand scorpions." His unexpected death heightens suspicion and fear among the monks, leading to urgent discussions about

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replacing both the cellarer and Malachi as librarian, as both roles have recently become vacant.

### **Lauds: Musical Tensions and Succession**

Following Malachi's death, the monks elect a new cellarer. However, debates linger about who will succeed Malachi as librarian. This segment hints at deep-seated rivalries and dissatisfaction among the members of the abbey, exacerbated by the ongoing mystery surrounding Malachi's final words. William takes it upon himself to delve deeper into the implications of these words.

### **Prime: A Visit to the Crypt**

Nicholas, the new cellarer, takes William and Adso to the abbey's crypt, a place filled with treasures and relics. During this visit, they discuss Malachi's standing among the monks and the precarious balance of power within the abbey, particularly the tension between him and Jorge. The conversation reveals persistent rivalries and the notion that hidden knowledge exists within the library's depths.

### **Terce: A Vision in the Church**

During morning prayers, Adso experiences a dream depicted as a comedic

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allegory of the abbey's unrest. His dream features surreal imagery of indulgence and chaos that critiques the pervasive corruption and moral decay among the monks, reflecting the turmoil brewing in their community.

## **Conversations and Revelations**

After sharing his dream, Adso and William connect its themes to their ongoing investigation into the abbey's recent tragedies. They discover clues pointing toward deeper secrets linked to the library, particularly a forbidden book known as "finis Africae," which heightens their resolve to reveal the truth.

## **Nones: Confrontation with the Abbot**

As tensions escalate, William confronts the abbot regarding the mysterious deaths and the secrets festering within the abbey. The abbot's evasive responses indicate a protective instinct over the monastery's reputation and a desire to keep scandalous inquiries under wraps, reflecting the underlying divisions, particularly between foreign monks and their Italian counterparts.

## **A Growing Mystery and Secrecy**

With increasing unease among the monks and additional disappearances, William becomes determined to uncover the truth behind the murders and

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the library's clandestine knowledge. He investigates the abbey's architecture, discovering hidden access points that hint at even darker secrets lurking within its walls.

### **After Compline: Entering the Finis Africae**

The chapter culminates as William and Adso successfully uncover a hidden entrance to the "finis Africae." Together, they prepare to venture through a secret door in the mirror room, signaling their readiness to confront the mysteries entangled in the abbey's dark legacy and the secrets of the library, paving the way for profound revelations in their quest for truth.

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## Chapter 7 Summary: SEVENTH DAY

### SEVENTH DAY: Night

In this gripping chapter, William and Adso find themselves in a dimly lit chamber, surrounded by the musty scent of ancient books and papers. Here, they encounter Jorge, a frail and menacing figure whose sinister actions have led to the demise of several members of the abbey. Jorge reveals his dark deeds, confessing that he has actively manipulated events to safeguard the secrets of the library, particularly a dangerous manuscript attributed to Aristotle, which he views as a potential catalyst for societal upheaval.

The narrative dives into a philosophical discourse between William and Jorge, centering on knowledge, truth, and the nature of laughter as a form of wisdom. Jorge perceives the manuscript as a threat that could destabilize established hierarchies and doctrines, which he believes are upheld by fear and ignorance. His fervent desire to obliterate the manuscript rather than allow its contents to surface reveals his obsessive control over knowledge and belief.

The tension escalates when Jorge, in an act of desperation to protect his warped vision of truth, begins to consume the pages of the precious manuscript. This frantic act propels William and Adso into a confrontation

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with him, leading to an unforeseen catastrophe: an accidental fire erupts, rapidly engulfing the library and sending the abbey into chaos. The fire symbolizes the destructive power of suppressed knowledge and the lengths to which individuals will go to maintain control over it.

In the aftermath, William and Adso reflect on their harrowing experience, realizing that the true adversary extends beyond Jorge. It lies within the intricate web of fear, the nature of knowledge itself, and the potential for chaos that accompanies freedom and truth. This chapter underscores profound themes concerning the implications of absolute truths held by zealots and the paradoxical nature of wisdom, inviting readers to ponder the consequences of human action in the relentless pursuit of knowledge.

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