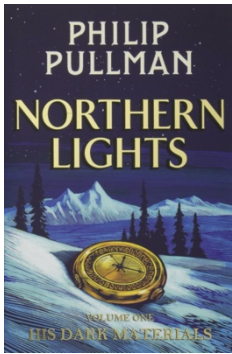


# Northern Lights

By Philip Pullman



The book is set in a familiar/strange parallel universe and centres around the journey of a young girl named Lyra Belacqua to rescue her kidnapped friend Roger and her uncle Lord Asriel who has been conducting experiments with a mysterious substance known as 'Dust'. On the way she enlists the help of a terrifying armoured bear, a witch and a Texan aeronaut. The novel was followed by two more, *The Subtle Knife* and *The Amber Spyglass*. Together the trilogy is known as *His Dark Materials* which is also the title of the BBC 1 television series broadcast in 2019.

## Some discussion points

Here are some questions to prompt feedback that others can share. There is space to below to comment on those that interest you or feel free to make other points.

- For many readers, the daemons are the best thing in the book. Why are they so fascinating? What do they represent? Why are daemons the opposite gender from their humans and why can the daemons of children (but not adults) change shape?

- Match the humans and their daemons:

Mrs Coulter,  
Serafina Pekkala  
Farder Coram  
Lord Asriel  
Lee Scorsby  
Ma Costa

a shabby hare  
a golden monkey  
a green-eyed snow leopard  
a yellow-eyed hawk  
a grey goose  
an autumn-coloured cat

- What would be the right daemons for the following:

The Queen, Stormzy, Boris Johnson, Serena Williams, Donald Trump, Nelson Mandela, Marcus Rashford, Beyonce

- What would your daemon be and why?

- Is Lord Asriel a hero or a villain? Why?
- What makes Lyra such an appealing character?
- What do you make of Dust? Is it a force for good or evil?
- At the beginning of the books there is a quotation from John Milton's epic poem *Paradise Lost*, first published in 1667. The poem is about Satan's rebellion against God, his expulsion from Heaven and his decision to seek revenge by destroying Adam and Eve, the human beings God creates to replace the fallen angels. The quotation ends '*Into this wild abyss the wary fiend / Stood on the brink of hell and looked awhile, / Pondering his voyage*' Can you see any connections between the quotation and the story told in the book?
- Is the end hopeful or terrible and why?
- *Northern Lights* is often described as a 'crossover book' and it seems to appeal to both teenage and adult readers. Why do you think it does?

**You can make any other notes about the book on the back of this page.**