

Philip Pullman

Hans Christian Andersen Awards 2012
UK Author Nomination

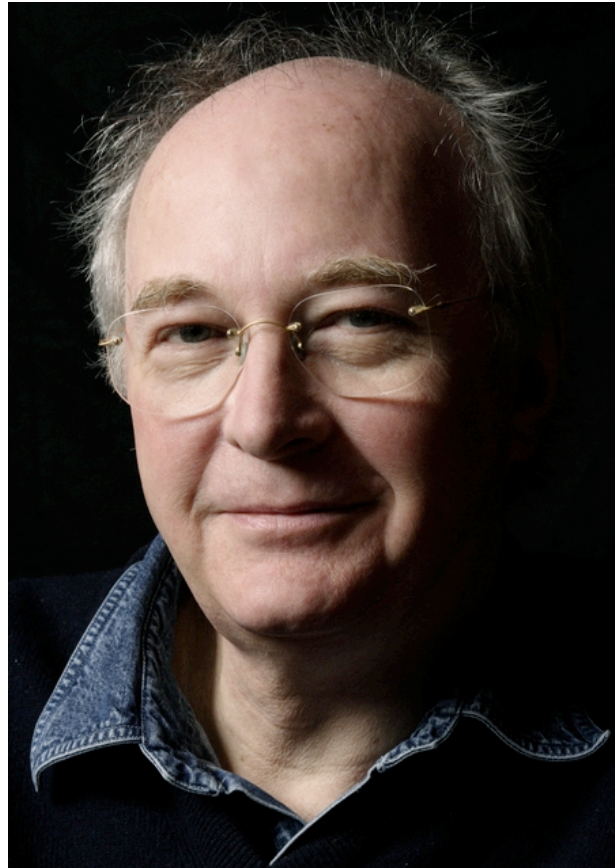


Photo: Wolf Marloh

Why do you think it's so important that young people read?

For the same reason that I think it's important that they breathe, eat, drink, sleep, run about, fool around, and have people who love and look after them. It's part of what makes us fully human. Some people manage to get through life without reading; but I know that if I'd had to do that, an enormous part of my mind, or my soul if you like, would be missing. No one should be without the chance to let their soul grow.

Guardian (UK) interview 3/3/2011

BIOGRAPHY

Philip Pullman was born in Norwich, England in 1946. His father was in the Royal Air Force, an occupation involving a good deal of travelling and separation for the family. For a period he lived at his grandparents' home, a Norfolk rectory. His grandfather was

'the most important influence in my life, I'm certain'. A country drive in his old Ford Popular was an adventure into stories: "*Now this stream - that's called Laughing Water ... This road we're on - the Romans tramped along here ... and you see that old tree over there, well that's why they call this The Trail of The Lonesome Pine.*" Bible stories mingled with tales told by murderers whose last hours before the scaffold grandfather had shared as chaplain to Norwich Jail.¹

The family settled in Harlech in North Wales when Philip was 11, where he was educated at the Ysgol Ardudwy. It was at this time that he discovered the visual arts. He says,

'I drew obsessively, the landscape, mainly: the massive rounded hills, the wide pearly estuary, the tumbled sand dunes, the dry stone walls, the ancient church half-buried in the sand. I learned that landscape by drawing it, and I came to care for it with a lover's devotion. Later in *The Broken Bridge* I wrote about a girl making the same discoveries, loving and drawing the same landscape. Many other strands went into the making of that book, but what lay at its heart was love; it's a love letter to a landscape'.²

Philip went on to read English at Exeter College, Oxford and after graduation took a variety of jobs before training as a teacher. He then worked in a number of middle schools in Oxfordshire where he enthralled pupils with his tellings of traditional stories and myths, especially the Iliad and the Odyssey, and also wrote plays for them to perform. Several of these were later to be reworked and become some of his published novels. In 1986 he moved to Westminster College, Oxford where he spent eight years involved in teaching students training to be school teachers.

Even while he was at school, Philip knew he wanted to write and has disciplined himself to write three pages a day throughout his working life. He became a fulltime writer after the publication of *Northern Lights* in 1995.

In 2004 Philip was awarded the CBE (Commander of the Order of the British Empire) in the New Year's Honours list. He has also been honoured by a number of universities, including being awarded an honorary professorship by Bangor University and the degree of D. Litt. (Doctor of Letters) by the University of Oxford. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature and is a Creative Writing Fellow at Oxford Brookes University. In October 2009 he became a patron of the Palestine Festival of Literature.

His books have been translated into more than 40 languages.

¹ Books for Keeps Authorgraph 102

² CultureWatch <http://www.damaris.org/content/content.php?type=1&id=186>

PHILIP PULLMAN – AN APPRECIATION

Philip Pullman came to international prominence in 1995 with the publication of the first part of his acclaimed and multi-award winning trilogy **His Dark Materials**. However Pullman has been writing for over 30 years, and his earlier work had already accrued considerable critical and reader recognition. These works have now been republished for the new generation of readers that has grown up with *His Dark Materials* and his subsequent books.

Pullman has written more than twenty books, in a wide variety of genres and for a wide spectrum of readers, from the earliest years in school to adults. *Count Karlstein* (1982, republished 2002), was the first, a short comic horror novel in the gothic tradition, which started life as a school play, and subsequently appeared both as a novel and a mixture of comic strip and text. *The Ruby in the Smoke* (1986) was the initial volume of the quartet about **Sally Lockhart** an engaging young heroine forced to make her own way in Victorian England, who Pullman embroils in the stock situations of melodrama to produce entertaining and amusing historical thrillers, which celebrate the enterprise of an adolescent girl in difficult circumstances. The other titles in the series are *The Shadow in the North* (1989), *The Tiger in the Well* (1990), and *The Tin Princess* (1994). **The New Cut Gang** feature in *Thunderbolt's Waxwork* (1994) and *The Gas-fitters' Ball* (1998), two stories of an occasional series about a mixed bunch of children, vagabonds and rascals in Victorian London, and their adventures among the petty crooks, showmen and market traders of the time. *Spring-heeled Jack* (1989), a self-referencing short novel adapted from an earlier play of Pullman's, and heavily influenced by comic strip conventions, also derives from his fascination with the nineteenth century underworld.

Another significant body of work lies in Pullman's series of **fairy tales**, both retellings and original illustrated texts for younger readers which, in the true fairy-tale tradition, carry equally valid messages for an older audience. These span his output to date from *Count Karlstein* to *The Scarecrow and his Servant* (2004), and include *Aladdin* (1995), *The Firework-Makers' Daughter* (1995) – originally a play, *Clockwork* (1996), *Mossycoat* (1998), *I Was a Rat* (1999) – later adapted for a new audience through television and *Puss in Boots* (2000) – adapted from a play produced at the Polka Theatre Wimbledon. All of these books have been recently re-published with illustrations by either Peter Bailey or Ian Beck. In addition to the dramatic works mentioned, Pullman has also written a **stage version** of *Frankenstein* (1998), a work sympathetic to the monster's situation, and *Sherlock Holmes and the Limehouse Horror* (1992), an affectionate parody of Conan Doyle.

Pullman has written two insightful **contemporary, realistic novels**, *The Butterfly Tattoo* (2001), a renaming of *The White Mercedes* (1992) and *The Broken Bridge* (2001), a revised version of the original 1990 novel. The former is a tragic love story, reflecting adolescent life in an unattractive suburban Oxford far removed from the dreaming spires of academic life or the fantasy city of *His Dark Materials*. *The Broken Bridge* again addresses adolescent issues, being a novel of discovery, both personal and related to

background and inheritance, with aspects which stem from Pullman's own teenage experience years in Wales.

It can be appreciated therefore that, even before the publication of **His Dark Materials**, Pullman's work was already immensely diverse and celebrated. It was, however, this trilogy, influenced by Pullman's love of Milton's epic poem about original sin and the fall of mankind, *Paradise Lost*, which made Pullman a household name worldwide³. The profound questions raised by Pullman's argument in these novels raised the possibility of a 'crossover' literature equally accessible and accessed by child and adult, and elevated the profile of children's literature to its current position, where it exists on equal terms with literature written for an adult audience alone. *Northern Lights* (1995) introduced readers to Lyra, who met Will in *The Subtle Knife* (1997), and who jointly faced the dilemmas of morality and existence in the final novel *The Amber Spyglass* (2000). *His Dark Materials* has been adapted for stage (2003), and film (2007). In 2003 Pullman added the novella *Lyra's Oxford*, which he describes as 'a sort of stepping stone between the trilogy and the book that's coming next', his long-awaited *Book of Dust*. A companion volume, *Once Upon a Time in the North* (2008), served as a prequel to *His Dark Materials*. *The Good Man Jesus and the Scoundrel Christ* (2010) continues Pullman's wider examination of religion and Christianity, which also underpinned the trilogy.

It can be seen that Philip Pullman does not compromise on the subject matter of his novels for children and young people. He is unafraid to address philosophical issues of humanity and mortality, good and evil, innocence and experience, which may be avoided by some other writers. Equally, he does not compromise on language, never "writing down" to his child audience. However, he is known above all as a master storyteller and would regard this, himself, as one of the most important qualities of his work. As he has said:

"Stories are the most important thing in the world. Without stories, we wouldn't be human beings at all...they both help enjoy life and endure it. After nourishment, shelter and companionship, stories are the thing we need most in the world".

This belief in the entitlement of young people to stories and to reading spills out into Pullman's public life. He is passionately concerned about the content and delivery of education and is a frequent, authoritative and influential contributor to the debate about the future direction of reading, literacy and literature in schools. He is also a sought after speaker on issues ranging from civil liberties to the defence of library services.

Philip Pullman's achievements are already widely recognised. IBBY UK is honoured and delighted to nominate him for the Hans Christian Andersen Award 2012.

Bridget Carrington and Sue Mansfield
IBBY UK, 2011

³ In 2008 Pullman provided an introduction to an Oxford World's Classics edition of Milton's work.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The Sally Lockhart Quartet

- The Ruby in the Smoke* Oxford University Press, 1985, Scholastic 1999
- The Shadow in the North* Oxford University Press, 1986
- The Tiger in the Well* Scholastic, 1999
- The Tin Princess* Scholastic, 2000

Contemporary Novels

- How to be Cool* Heinemann, 1987
- The Broken Bridge* Macmillan, 1990; revised edition, 2001
- The Butterfly Tattoo* Macmillan Children's Books, 1998 (first published as *The White Mercedes*)

The New Cut Gang:

- Thunderbolt's Waxwork* Viking, 1994
- The Gas-Fitter's Ball* Viking, 1995

Illustrated Books and Fairy Tales

- Count Karlstein* Chatto & Windus, 1982
- Spring-Heeled Jack* Doubleday, 1989
- The Wonderful Story of Aladdin and the Enchanted Lamp* (illustrated by David Wyatt) Scholastic, 1993
- The Firework Maker's Daughter* Doubleday, 1995
- Clockwork* (illustrated by Peter Bailey) Doubleday, 1996
- Mossycoat* (illustrated by Peter Bailey) Scholastic, 1998
- I was a Rat! ... or The Scarlet Slippers* (illustrated by Peter Bailey) Doubleday, 1999
- Puss in Boots* (illustrated by Ian Beck) Doubleday, 2000
- The Scarecrow and his Servant* Doubleday, 2004

His Dark Materials

- Northern Lights* Scholastic Children's Books, 1995
- The Subtle Knife* Scholastic, 1997
- The Amber Spyglass* Scholastic, 2000
- Lyra's Oxford* (engravings by John Lawrence) Scholastic, 2003
- Once Upon a Time in the North* David Fickling Books, 2008

Plays

- Frankenstein* Oxford University Press, 1990
- Sherlock Holmes and the Limehouse Horror* Nelson, 1992

Others:

- Galatea* Gollancz, 1978
- Ancient Civilizations* Wheaton, 1981
- Detective Stories* (editor) Kingfisher Books, 1985
- Paradise Lost* by John Milton (General introduction by Philip Pullman) Oxford University Press, 2008
- The Good Man Jesus and the Scoundrel Christ* (Canongate Myth Series) Canongate, 2010

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Butts, Dennis, *Children's literature and social change: some case studies from Barbara Hofland to Philip Pullman*. Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 2010.

Falconer, Rachel, *The crossover novel: contemporary children's fiction and its adult readership*. New York: Routledge, 2009.

Freitas, Donna, *Killing the imposter God: Philip Pullman's spiritual imagination in His dark materials*. San Francisco, Calif.: Jossey-Bass 2007.

Gray, William, *Fantasy, myth and the measure of truth: tales of Pullman, Lewis, Tolkien, MacDonald and Hoffmann*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, c2009.

Gray, William, *Death and fantasy: essays on Philip Pullman, C.S. Lewis, George MacDonald and R.L. Stevenson*. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2008.

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Tucker, Nicholas. *Darkness visible: inside the world of Philip Pullman*. London: Wizard, 2003.

TRANSLATIONS: Languages and Editions

SALLY LOCKHART SERIES (20)

Brazilian Portuguese - Objetiva
Catalan – Bromera
Chinese (complex) – Muse
Czech – Argo (Egmont rev 4)
Danish – Sesam (rev TIGER)
Dutch – Prometheus
French – Gallimard Jeunesse
German – Carlsen
Greek – Psychogios
Hebrew – Kinneret-Zmora
Hungarian – Alexandra
Italian – Salani
Japanese – Tokyo Sogensha (
Norwegian – Tun Media (rev Eides)
Romanian - RAO
Russian - Eksmo
Spanish – Urano
Swedish – Natur & Kultur (rev Sjos/En
Bok)
Turkish – Ithaki

HOW TO BE COOL (3)

Finnish – Otava Kustannusosakeyhtiö
French – Sejer
Italian – Mondadori

THE BROKEN BRIDGE (7)

Basque – Erien
Catalan – Edicions 62
Danish – Gyldendal
Italian – Adriano Salani
Polish – Wydawnictwo Albatros
Spanish – Ediciones B
Swedish – Bokforlaget Opal

THE BUTTERFLY TATTOO (11)

Basque – Erien
Catalan – Edicions 62
Danish – Lindhardt og Ringhof
Dutch – Prometheus
French – Editions Rivages
German – Carlsen
Italian – Adriano Salani
Polish – Wydawnictwo Albatros
Portuguese (B) – Editora Objetiva
Spanish – El Aleph
Swedish – Bokforlaget Opal

GAS-FITTERS' BALL & THUNDERBOLT'S WAXWORK (5)

Danish – Lindhardt og Ringhof
Finnish – Tammi
Hungarian – Alexandra
Italian – Adriano Salani
Norwegian – Aschehoug Norsk

COUNT KARLSTEIN (16)

Catalan – Edicions Bromera

Chinese (complex) – Muse
Croatian – Izvori
Danish – Gyldendal
Finnish – Tammi
French – Gallimard Jeunesse
German – Carlsen Verlag
Greek – Psychogios
Hungarian – Magyar Konyvklub
Italian – Adriano Salani
Korean – Nonjang
Norwegian – Aschehoug Norsk
Polish – Wydawnictwo
Russian – Tarna
Spanish – Ediciones Urano
Swedish – Bokforlaget Opal

ALADDIN AND THE ENCHANTED LAMP (6)

Dutch – Christoff
Faroese - Bokadeildin
French – Gallimard Jeunesse
Greek – Patakis
Korean – Gimm Young Publishers
Swedish – Sjostrand's Forlag

THE FIREWORK-MAKER'S DAUGHTER (9)

Catalan – Bromera
Danish – Gyldendal
German – Carlsen
Indonesian – Gramedia Pustaka/Maxima
Italian – Mondadori
Korean – BIR
Portuguese (B) – Bertrand Brasil
Russian – Rosman/Synopsis
Spanish – Ediciones B

CLOCKWORK (8)

Catalan – Bromera
Chinese (simplified)
Finnish – Tammi
Indonesian – Gramedia
Italian – Mondadori
Japanese – Kaisei-Sha
Russian – Synopsis
Spanish – Ediciones B

I WAS A RAT! (19)

Chinese (complex) – Muse
Danish – Gyldendal
Dutch – Van Goor
Faroese - Bokadeildin
Finnish - Tammi
French – Gallimard Jeunesse
German – Carlsen
Greek - Psychogios
Hungarian – Magyar Konyvklub
Indonesian – PT Gramedia
Italian – Salani

Japanese – Kaiseisha
Korean – Nonjang
Polish - ZNAK
Portuguese (P) – Presenca
Romanian - RAO
Spanish – SM
Swedish – Opal
Turkish – Ithaki Yayinlari

PUSS IN BOOTS (1)

Danish – Klematis

THE SCARECROW AND HIS SERVANT (22)

Brazilian Portuguese – Objetiva
Chinese (simplified) – Beijing Chil & Juv
Danish – Sesam
Dutch – Van Goor
Estonian - Tiritamm
French – Gallimard Jeunesse
German – Carlsen
Greek - Psichogios
Hebrew – Keter
Hungarian – Alexandra/Pecsi
Indonesian – PT Gramedia
Italian – Salani
Japanese – Riroronsha
Norwegian – Aschehoug/club
Portuguese (P) – Presenca
Romanian - RAO
Russian - Rosman
Serbian – Laguna
Spanish – Ediciones B
Swedish – Opal
Ukrainian – Hemiro/FLC

HIS DARK MATERIALS: - (40)

Albanian – Botimet Dudag
Brazilian Portuguese - Objetiva
Bulgarian – Bard
Catalan – Empuries/62
Chinese (complex) – Muse
Chinese (simplified) - STPH
Croatian – Sysprint
Czech – Argo
Danish – Gyldendal
Dutch – Prometheus
Faroese – Bokadelid Foeroya
Laerarafelags

Finnish – Tammi
French: Gallimard
Galician: Faktoria K/Kalandraka
Georgian – Bakur Sulakauri
German - Carlsen/Heyne/Jumbo
Greek – Psichogios
Hebrew – Opus
Hindi – Shabd
Hungarian – Alexandra/Pecsi
Icelandic: Edda
Indonesian – Gramedia
Italian – Salani
Japanese - Shinchosha
Korean - Gimm Young
Latvian – Zvaigzne
Lithuanian – Obuolys
Norwegian – Aschehoug + omn
Polish – Albatros
Portuguese (P) – Presenca
Romanian – Humanitas
Russian – AST (Tarna/Rosman)
Serbian – Laguna
Slovak – Ikar
Slovene – Mladinska Knjiga Zalozba
Spanish - Ediciones B
Swedish - Natur & Kultur
Thai – Nanmee
Turkish – Ithaki
Ukrainian – Hemiro
Vietnamese – Hanoi Book Distribution Co.,
Ltd

LYRA'S OXFORD

Brazilian Portuguese – Objetiva
Chinese (complex) – Muses
Dutch – Prometheus/Bert Bakker
Finnish – Tammi
French – Gallimard
German – Carlsen
Italian – Salani
Norwegian – Aschehoug Norsk
Portuguese - Presenca
Russian – Tarna (Rosman)
Spanish – Ediciones B

ONCE UPON A TIME IN THE NORTH (3)

Dutch – Prometheus
French – Gallimard Jeunesse
Portuguese – Presenca

PRIZES AND AWARDS

- 1988 **International Reading Association Children's Book Award**; the **Preis der Lerseratten**, German TV; **Lancashire Libraries Children's Book Award** *The Ruby in the Smoke*
- 1995 **British Fantasy Award** (shortlist) *Northern Lights*
- 1996 **British Book Awards Children's Book of the Year** *Northern Lights*
- 1996 **Carnegie Medal** *Northern Lights*
- 1996 **Guardian Children's Fiction Prize** (joint winner) *Northern Lights*
- 1996 **Nestlé Smarties Book Prize (Gold Award)** (9-11 years category) *The Firework Maker's Daughter*
- 1997 **Carnegie Medal** (shortlist) *Clockwork*
- 1997 **Whitbread Children's Book Award** (shortlist) *Clockwork*
- 1997 **Nestlé Smarties Book Prize (Silver Award)** *Clockwork*
- 2000 **British Book Awards Children's Book of the Year** *The Amber Spyglass*
- 2001 **British Book Awards: Author of the Year**
- 2001 **Whitbread Book of the Year** *The Amber Spyglass* (first children's book to win the overall award)
- 2001 **World Fantasy Award for Best Novel** (shortlist) *The Amber Spyglass*
- 2002 **Eleanor Farjeon Award**
- 2003 **British Book Awards Audiobook of the Year** (shortlist) *His Dark Materials*
- 2003 **British Book Awards Author of the Year** (shortlist)
- 2003 **British Book Awards Children's Book of the Year** (shortlist) *Lyra's Oxford*
- 2005 **Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award (Sweden)** (joint winner)
- 2005 **Carnegie Medal** (shortlist) *The Scarecrow and his Servant*
- 2005 **Nestlé Smarties Book Prize** (shortlist, 9-11 years category) *The Scarecrow and his Servant*
- 2007 **Carnegie of Carnegies** *Northern Lights*
- 2011 **Man Booker International Prize** shortlist

BOOKS FOR THE JURY TO CONSIDER

THE RUBY IN THE SMOKE

Oxford University Press, UK, 1985
(Part 1 of the *Sally Lockhart Quartet*)

THE BROKEN BRIDGE

Macmillan Children's Books, UK, 1990

NORTHERN LIGHTS

Scholastic, UK, 1995
(Part 1 of *His Dark Materials* trilogy)

CLOCKWORK, OR, ALL WOUND UP

Doubleday, UK, 1996

I WAS A RAT! or, THE SCARLET SLIPPERS

Doubleday, UK, 1999

FIVE OTHER SIGNIFICANT TITLES

THE FIREWORK-MAKER'S DAUGHTER

Doubleday, UK, 1995

THE SUBTLE KNIFE

Scholastic, UK, 1997
(Part 2 of *His Dark Materials* trilogy)

THE AMBER SPYGLASS

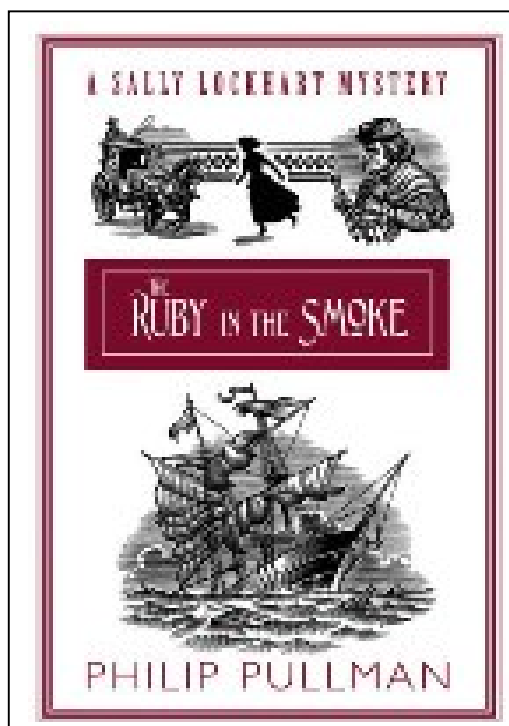
Scholastic, UK, 2000
(Part 3 of *His Dark Materials* trilogy)

THE SCARECROW AND HIS SERVANT

Doubleday, UK, 2004

PUSS IN BOOTS

Doubleday, UK, 2000



The Ruby in the Smoke

Macmillan Children's Books, 1990

International Reading Association Children's Book Award
Preis der Leseeratten
Lancashire Libraries Children's Book Award

Adapted for television by the BBC and WGBH Boston in 2006

Translated into: Brazilian Portuguese, Catalan, Chinese, Czech, Danish, Dutch, French, German, Greek, Hebrew, Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Norwegian, Romanian, Russian, Spanish, Swedish, Turkish

Reviews

A rip-roaring good adventure story filled with cutthroat villains, dastardly deeds, sleazy opium dens, filthy London slums, and a delightful 16-

year-old heroine. Sally, orphaned when her father dies at sea, becomes ensconced in mystery and treachery when she learns that a legendary ruby is rightfully hers... There are twists and turns at every moment, with new characters constantly entering and old ones exiting. Subtle innuendos enhance character development, and the understated humor keeps readers from taking the story too seriously... It's a book for sophisticated readers because of the variety of motivations and schemes as well as the shifts in setting within chapters, and one that's not for the timid.

School Library Journal, April 1987

Unpredictable, gripping, and full of surprises, this first book in the Sally Lockhart series presents a picture of Victorian England that is both disturbing and fascinating. On the one hand one has those all too famous rules of behaviour and morals for which the Victorians were famous. On the other hand there is the poverty, high levels of crime, opium dens, and moral decrepitude all of which made London, for many, a very dreadful place to live. Children were abused and exploited, and many lived under appalling conditions. Worst of all, the authorities did their best to pretend that the social problems were not there. Indeed, as Sally discovers, the government may be doing more than just turning a blind eye; they may be involved in some highly questionable business affairs.

With this book, Philip Pullman sets his readers on the road for a very exciting series of books, all of which expose elements of Victorian England which were scandalous and which Sally Lockhart and her friends do their best, in their own small way, to fight.

Through The Looking Glass Children's Book Reviews <http://lookingglassreview.com/books>

The Broken Bridge

Macmillan Children's Books, 1990;
revised edition, 2001

Translated into: Basque, Catalan, Danish, Italian,
Polish, Spanish, Swedish

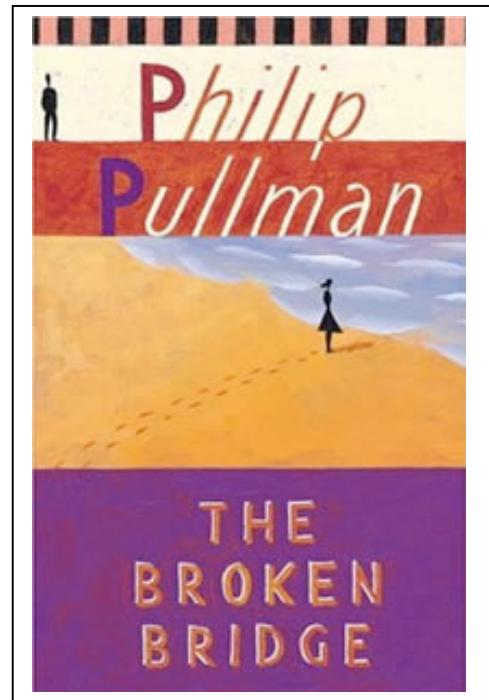
Reviews

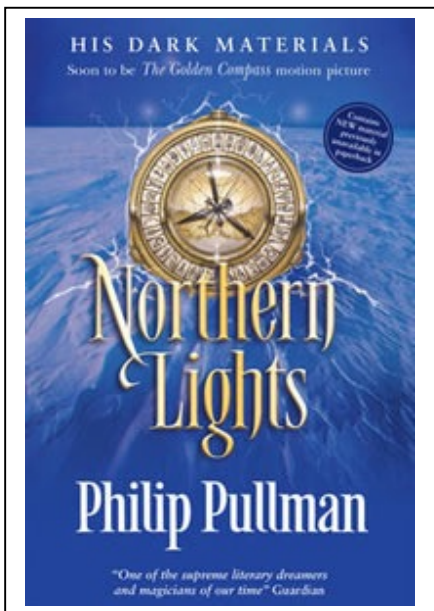
The child of a black Haitian artist and a white British father, Ginny Howard, at sixteen, is faced with a number of nagging questions about her background. She and her father have always been a close twosome; her mother, she was told, died when Ginny was an infant. Now, however, she hears rumors that her father once spent time in jail, and when she questions him about their family history, he is curiously reluctant to discuss much with her. Skilfully manipulating the conventions of the mystery and the problem novel, Pullman constructs a story of a girl who comes of age by uncovering the secrets of her past... Unsettled by these revelations, which cut to the very core of her sense of self, she begins to question her artistic bearings as well as her mixed racial identity... A series of flashbacks to Ginny's early childhood lends a level of credibility to each new disclosure, though the general effect is that of a protagonist set adrift by life's lurching vicissitudes rather than controlled by the novelist's sure hand. The contemporary Welsh setting is well realized, and the characters are flesh-and-blood people. An intriguing mystery that keeps the reader guessing and turning the pages until the very end.

Horn Book Magazine, March 1992

Master storyteller Pullman provides an engrossing plot and a richly varied cast, including Robert (who becomes an unexpected ally); some painfully believable uptight grandparents; and a thug called Joe Chicago, who plays an important role in resolving the image of the broken bridge -- a local site where a tragic misadventure is said to have taken place. Ginny is less concerned with being black than with realizing herself as an artist; as such, she is sharply realized, an intelligent and creative observer. She's also committed to finding a personal balance between qualities a friend polarizes as "sexy" (charismatic and original) and "kind" (but often boring); in the end, she survives the many dramatic revelations with the best of both. Almost impossible to put down.

Kirkus Reviews, March 15, 1992





Northern Lights

(Part One of the trilogy *His Dark Materials*)

Published in the USA as *The Golden Compass*

Scholastic Children's Books, 1995

Carnegie Medal, 1996

British Book Awards Children's Book of the Year, 1996

Guardian Children's Fiction Prize, 1996

Carnegie of Carnegies, 2007

Adapted as a film under the title *The Golden Compass*. 2007

A video game of the adaptation was released in 2007

His Dark Materials adapted as a stage play for the National Theatre, London, in 2003

Translated into 40 languages

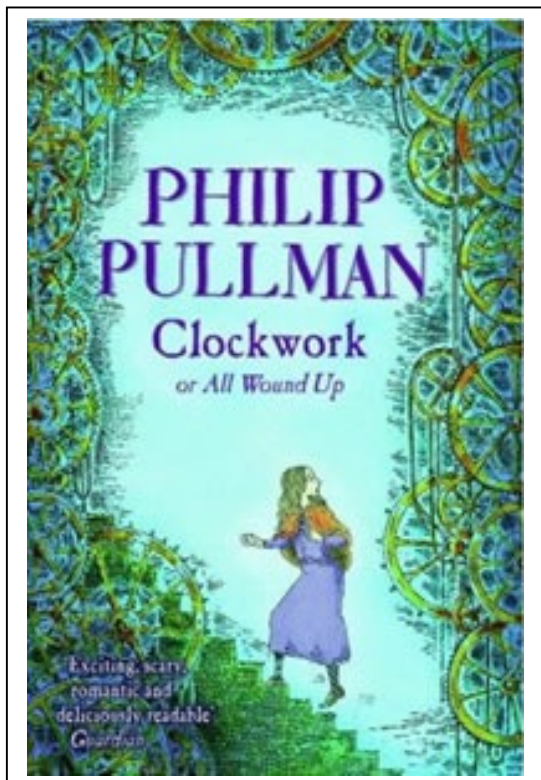
Reviews

An extraordinary, compelling fantasy, the first volume of a projected trilogy, is set in an alternate world, parallel to our own earth, but differing in many details. The most fascinating is the existence of daemons, an integral part of every human being, much like a soul, but taking the form of an animal. Human and daemon are tied by an emotional bond that cannot be broken without indescribable suffering or, more probably, death. The technology of this world is similar to that of our own of perhaps a century ago, with such things as anbaric light rather than electric, and balloons and zeppelins rather than airplanes. Our heroine is orphaned Lyra Belacqua, who lives with her daemon, Pantalaimon, at Jordan College in Oxford. She is an unusual child: rough, inquisitive, wiry, a born leader, an accomplished liar, almost fearless. Soon after children begin disappearing all over the country, she is taken from the college by the beautiful, fascinating Mrs. Coulter. The Master of Jordan College has secretly given Lyra a rare and unusual instrument, the alethiometer, which looks like a compass and can be used to answer questions of every sort, even about the future. Her old friends the gyptians, who live in canal boats, rescue her, and mount an expedition to Lapland to locate the missing children. On the way Lyra encounters and helps to free lorek Byrnison, a sentient armored bear, who becomes her most powerful defender. Lyra finds the missing children in a scientific experimental station, where they are being subjected to the hideous operation of intercision, which separates them from their daemons. The reasons for this butchery are only part of the extremely complex plot, in which the unknowing Lyra is deeply involved. The characters of Lord Asriel, Mrs. Coulter, and lorek Byrnison and the cold and beautiful Northern setting capture the reader's attention; the constantly twisting plot and escalating suspense are riveting; and Lyra and Pantalaimon are among the gutsiest and wiliest of adventurers. Touching, exciting, and mysterious by turns, this is a splendid work.

Horn Book Magazine, Jul/Aug96

The weaving together of story and morality is what makes *Northern Lights* such an exceptional book. Never for a moment does the story lose ground to the message it carries. Philip Pullman's huge cast of characters sizzle on the page. His heroine, Lyra, who, he says, 'just walked in', is cunning, deceitful, loyal and brave - a rich mixture of attributes which make her, above all, a convincing child... Above all, *Northern Lights* reflects Pullman's own love of storytelling. It's an immense tale, richly told and wholly satisfying.

Books for Keeps, issue 100



Clockwork

Doubleday, 1996

Carnegie Medal Shortlist, 1997
Whitbread Children's Book Award Shortlist, 1997
Nestlé Smarties Book Prize Silver Award, 1997

Adaptations:

2 versions of an opera for children:
Linbury Studio Theatre, Royal Opera House, 2004
Visible Fictions and Scottish Opera, 2011
Shadow-play for adults and children by The Clockwork Moth 2010.
Play by Mutabilitie Productions for the ADC Theatre, Cambridge 2010.
Stage adaptation for the Bike Shed Theatre in Exeter, 2010.

Translated into: Catalan, Chinese, Finnish, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Russian, Spanish.

Reviews

Clockwork opens on a wintry night in a small German town, back when "time ran by clockwork." The young Karl is despondent because he has been unable to construct a figure for the great clock at Glockelheim, his last task before he can become a master clockmaker. As he sits alone in a tavern, his friend Fritz starts telling a Gothicky tale about a dead prince who, to the amazement of the Royal Physician, turns out to have had a clockwork heart. The good doctor decides to consult the cleverest man in Europe for an explanation, the tall, thin and frightening Dr. Kalmenius of Schatzberg...

Just as Fritz reaches this point in his story, the door opens and "on the threshold stood a man in a long black cloak with a loose hood like a monk's." His eyes are "like burning coals in caverns of darkness." It is, of course, Dr. Kalmenius himself. Has Fritz's tale conjured this uncanny figure into existence? Before long, Kalmenius will strike a devilish bargain with the desperate Karl, for in his sledge there lies a clockwork knight, holding up a razor-sharp sword. By the time Pullman concludes this E.T.A. Hoffmann-like fable, one character will die, another be given life, and a third disappear. All in all, a perfect little chiller.

The Washington Post, December 06, 1998

... Suffice it to say without recounting a tantalizingly complicated plot, each character gets what he or she deserves. Pullman manages to weave together the threads from both the story and the story within the story in a book filled with tension, menace, and suspense. Whether or not readers understand the references to Faust, Frankenstein, The Velveteen Rabbit, and Pinocchio, they will remain riveted until the final page.

School Library Journal, Oct 1998

I Was a Rat! ... or, The Scarlet Slippers

Doubleday, 1999

Adapted for television in three parts by the BBC in 2001

Translated into: Chinese, Danish, Dutch, Faroese, Finnish French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Spanish, Swedish, Turkish

Reviews

Combining elements of fairytale, satire, slapstick humour and suspenseful melodrama, Pullman puts this story together with his customary theatrical panache...

Bob, a hardworking cobbler, and his washerwoman wife are a kindly old couple with no child of their own, and when an odd little boy knocks at their door, they gladly take him in. They name him Roger, but who is he? And why does he twitch so? Why does he eat pencils, and chew up his bedclothes?

'I was a rat,' he explains, inexplicably. His habits are undeniably ratty, but he tries to fit in. But his wild behaviour soon attracts the authorities. Demonised by hysterical reports in *The Daily Scourge*, poor little 'Rat-boy' is reviled as a monster and is locked up . . . until a certain princess - herself no stranger to the attentions of the press - hears of his plight and realises who he is . . .

It emerges that Roger has his origins in quite another story - and what a great moment it is when the princess tries on a scarlet slipper, and the clues fall into place. Exploring a host of themes, this is a glorious tale of a true 'innocent abroad'. Sound morals are seldom so entertainingly delivered, and the language, pace and drama make it perfect for reading out loud.

The Guardian (London), April 6 1999

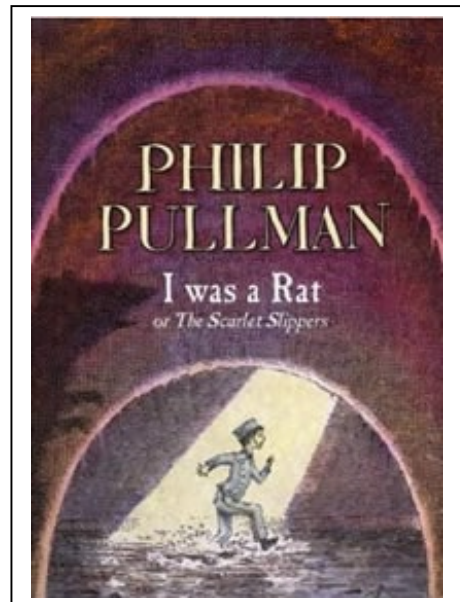
Other than a talent for scooping prizes, veteran children's novelist Joan Aitken and relative newcomer Philip Pullman share one thing: an imagination so vivid, you wonder how they sleep at night.

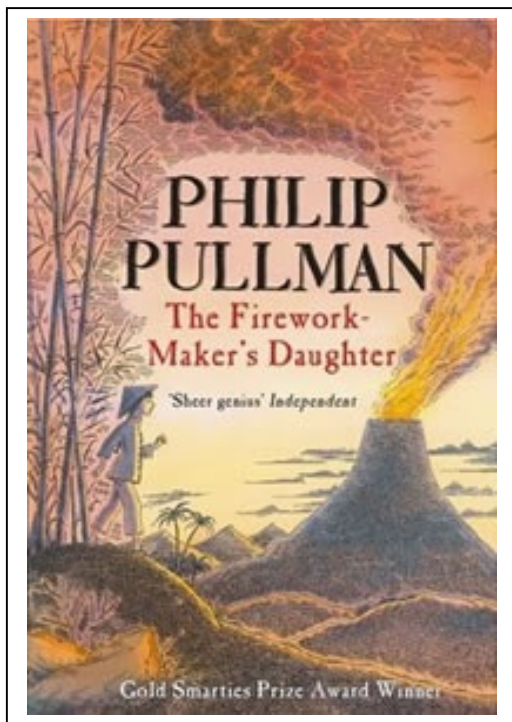
In I Was A Rat!, Pullman takes us into a half-historical world where a cobbler and his wife live together, happy with each other but a little sad that they don't have any children. Late one night there's a knock at the door, and they are faced with a pale, thin, black-eyed boy dressed in a page's uniform...

Taking the boy to the town's city hall, hospital and police station to see if he's been reported missing, the pair grow cynical at municipal hard-heartedness, and decide they'll keep the boy themselves. Running in counterpoint to this portrait of civic callousness are pages from a scurrilous tabloid, *The Daily Scourge*. Pullman's parody of the lower tabloid press is acute, full of illogicalities, misinformation, errors and bathos...

Overlaying modern-day culture on an olde-worlde environment, Pullman creates a punchy fairytale with an acid underbelly. Entertaining on several levels, *I Was A Rat!* is an engaging confection of fantasy and politics, subversive in a way children will instinctively respond to but with a warm current that heats up the chill given off by the sleazier side of life he depicts.

Scotland on Sunday, May 2 1999





The Firework-Maker's Daughter

Doubleday, 1995

Nestle Smarties Book Prize Gold Award, 1996
Adapted for the stage by the Crucible Theatre, Sheffield, 2003
Revived by the Birmingham Stage Company, 2010

Translated into: Catalan, Danish, German, Indonesian, Italian, Korean, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish

Reviews

A story set "A thousand miles ago" and very far away. Having grown up amid the clutter and creations in her firework-maker father's studio, Lila wants only to follow in his footsteps, but Lalchand thinks more of finding a husband for his daughter. Lila enlists the aid of her friend Chulak, keeper of the king's (talking) white elephant Hamlet, to help her find out what she needs to complete her apprenticeship and become a master firework-maker. Chulak learns that the final test is to obtain the royal sulfur from the Grotto of Razvani the Fire-Fiend, and Lila runs away to do this, before Chulak finds out that it takes more than determination to accomplish this quest. Now Lila's life is in danger, and it is up to Chulak and Hamlet to find her before it is too late. Stately but expressive graphite drawings open each chapter and, along with decorated title and half-title pages, add to the expanded folktale feel of this story. This title is similar in length and probable audience to Pullman's *Clockwork* (Scholastic, 1998); however, where that book used horror and suspense to rivet readers to the page, this one will be remembered for its broad humor and gentle moral featuring a determined girl who reaches her goals through hard work, courage, and perseverance. Young readers will see, hear, smell, and be dazzled by the fireworks that burst forth, as Lila earns her heart's desire.

School Library Journal, Nov99

More than anything else in the world, Lila wants to be a Firework-Maker. But every Firework-Maker must make a perilous journey to face the terrifying Fire-Fiend! Can Lila possibly survive? Especially when she doesn't know she needs special protection to survive his flames. Full of hilarious and likeable characters, this is a book that will be read over and over again. It's one of those rare books with a confident magic and quality all of its own. Children will find Lila wonderfully inspirational for her determination in what she wants to do and achieve.

<http://www.lovereadings4kids.co.uk>

The Subtle Knife

Scholastic, 1997

Translated into 40 languages

Review

In this, the eagerly-awaited second part of Pullman's allegoric trilogy, three universes overlap. Will, leaving home to find the real reason for his father's long absence, thinks he has killed a man. Just outside Oxford, he notices, and goes through, a gap in the transparent boundary into another world.

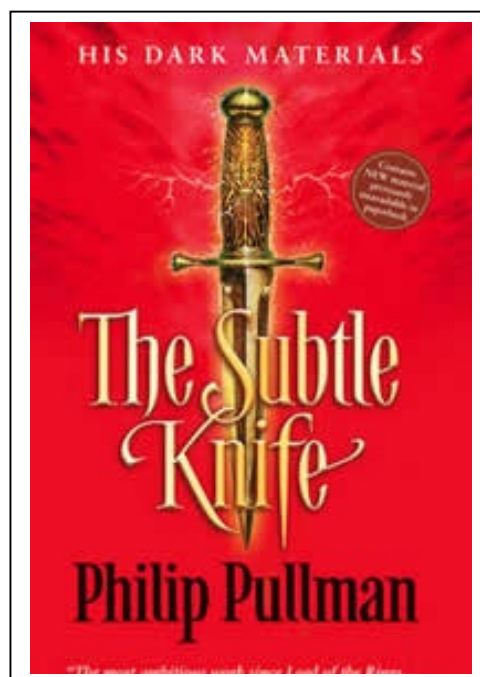
There, in a dreary town haunted by mind-numbing vampires, he meets Lyra, the forthright, deceitful heroine of *Northern Lights*, and her daemon.

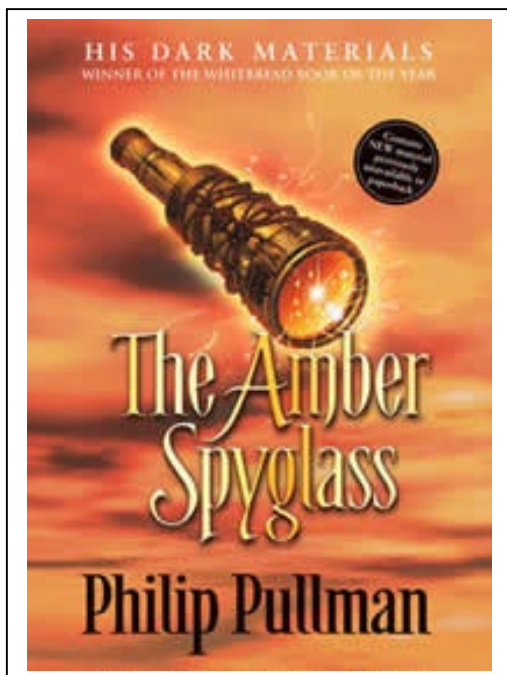
They are also adrift. The children's separate quests join as they seek the subtle knife, the last powerful symbol of the ancient philosophers and the only threat to the Spectres. It allows the true bearer to part and reseal the thinning membrane between all worlds. After a near-mortal combat, Will is recognised as the knife-bearer whose inexorable responsibility is to be strong against the dark forces of evil. Lyra, her consciousness extended by Will's acceptance, knows her first task is to help him to find his father. The reader is guided through the strong, flexible cat's-cradle of the plot by the author's narrative spell-binding, and by the *sigillum*, a location symbol on each page.

After the experience of *Northern Lights* readers expect a series of surprises as part of the structure. Although here there is nothing quite the same as the titanic bear fight, nor the skin-crawling gruesomeness of the silver guillotine, the inventions of suspense never flag. There is more, deeper, thought-action. Lyra's awareness of Will's concern for others lessens her egocentrism. She discovers mutual trust and learns to intuit Will's responses. (He has no visible daemon to demonstrate them.) The wise air-borne guardians are constantly watchful, but we feel their power is diminishing; or rather, it has passed to the heavenly intelligences. There are threads to be gathered up; a computer lady has followed the trail, perhaps.

The dimensions of Pullman's project for *His Dark Materials*, its fully epic structure, emerge clearly from this novel as something more extensive, profound and resonant than anything the present generation of young readers, including those from the Star Wars annexe, has yet encountered. Pullman accepts and responsibly transforms the inevitable didactic of writing for children: to make them strong enough, wise enough, to encounter the consequences of their actions and feelings, good or evil, as they anticipate their future. The sublime has long been out of fashion in literature, especially for children. Like Milton, whose epic poem lies behind this enterprise, Pullman has little time for fugitive and cloistered virtue. One needs to draw a longer critical breath to do justice to all his subtleties, but I have seen the effect on young readers who, in his company, go further than they ever thought they could.

Books for Keeps, January 1998





The Amber Spyglass

Scholastic, 2000

Whitbread Book of the Year, 2000

British Book Awards Children's Book of the Year, 2000

Translated into 40 languages

Reviews

Philip Pullman's novels are already significant landmarks on the horizon of contemporary fiction... Since the inclusion of *The Amber Spyglass* in the Booker long-list, Pullman has become news for being the first children's writer to be taken seriously by the literary establishment... Pullman shares with Tolkien a vision of a world on a grand scale, and the generosity not to

underestimate his readers' intelligence - his story is crammed with literary allusions, mythical references, science and philosophy, and his chapters are headed with quotations from Blake, Coleridge, Milton. But he is unafraid to imagine a world where good and evil are not absolute and mutually exclusive, where traditional Christian values are inverted with relish and humour, and children are allowed to grow into a self-knowledge and sexual awareness denied to the heroes of Lewis's allegories.

The Amber Spyglass is the third and final part of a trilogy, *His Dark Materials* (the name is taken from *Paradise Lost*), and continues the story begun in *Northern Lights* and *The Subtle Knife*. It is a redrawing of Milton's map from an atheist, humanist perspective: God is merely a minor angel who dies almost incidentally, the Rebel Angels bring wisdom and enlightenment, and the Church is a force for repression, the antithesis of joy and life. His teenage heroes, Will and Lyra, are a new Adam and Eve whose quest is to build 'the republic of heaven' - a humanist appreciation of the life we have, unencumbered by visions of a life beyond.

This is a gripping, erudite and vivid novel, full of magic - parallel worlds, talking armoured bears and demons, the animal incarnations of the soul - but solidly anchored in real emotions. To describe it as 'fantasy' would be as reductive as to label it 'children's fiction'.

The Observer, September 16 2001

Passing through warfare, cataclysm and the Valley of the Shadow, [Lyra and Will] encounter old friends and enemies - Mrs Coulter, the cliff-ghasts, the Arctic witch-clans, lorek Byrnison the armoured bear - and new ones: the diminutive Gallivespian spies, guardian angels, Metatron the usurping angel, God, death and harpies. They are pursued all the while by Father Gomez, sent by the Church to destroy them as a sacred duty.

As before, readers on whom the Dust has not yet fallen can devour the hair-raising adventures, wonder and shudder and grieve at glimpses of things not yet understood, invest with personality Lyra and Will who are, as can be seen now, basic prototypes. The rest of us, the Fallen, can enjoy the mind games and allusions, admire the vision of a formidable thinker, applaud the daring of the enterprise and marvel at its execution.

The Times Educational Supplement, November 3, 2000

The Scarecrow and His Servant

Doubleday, 2004

Shortlisted for the Carnegie Medal and Nestle Smarties Book Prize, 2004

Translated into: Brazilian Portuguese, Chinese, Danish, Dutch, Estonian, French, German, Greek, Hebrew, Hungarian, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Norwegian, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Spanish, Swedish, Ukrainian

Reviews

Philip Pullman, now acknowledged as one of the greatest children's authors of our time, is also one of the funniest and most accessible.

This may come as a surprise to those who have read only that saturnine Miltonic masterpiece, *His Dark Materials*, rather than *The Firework-Maker's Daughter*, *Clockwork* and *I was a Rat*. It was these books, written in simple yet sinewy prose, which taught my own children to read for pleasure, and which have proved unfailing sources of excitement, joy and inspiration to thousands of primary school children all over the world.

The Scarecrow and His Servant lives in this instantly appealing no-man's land between fairy story, pantomime and literary fiction. A scarecrow is constructed by an old man who hides a letter inside it. The old man dies, and the scarecrow is stolen repeatedly by farmers until one day, struck by lightning, it comes to life. He has a turnip for a head and a kindly, serious, profoundly stupid nature. Luckily for him, he acquires Jack, a poor orphan boy, as his servant and adviser. Dauntless, they set off to look for adventure and rapidly find it. Arms, legs and even a head transplant can't stop them.

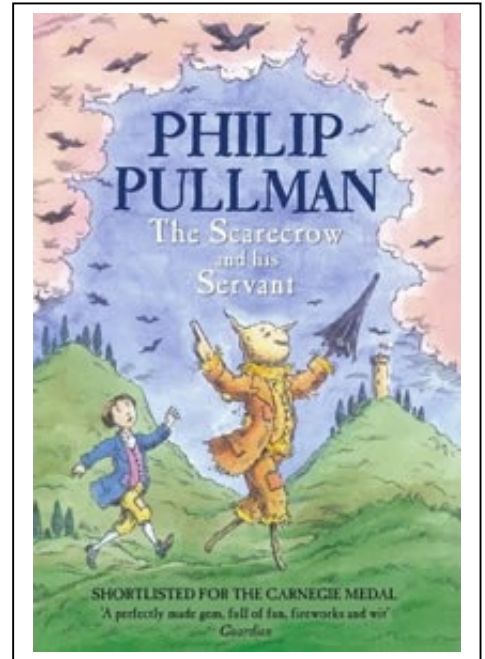
Pullman's inspiration bubbles up from the same sources as before...

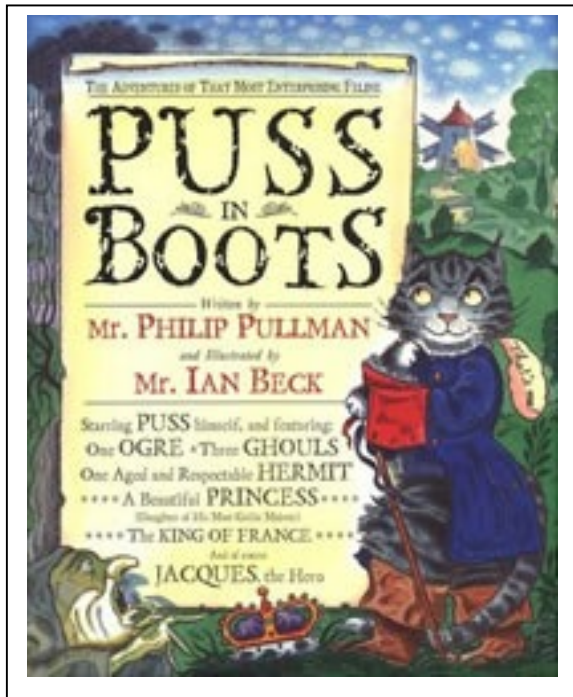
On another level, *The Scarecrow* is an incarnation of Don Quixote, with Jack as his Sancho Panza, and their adventures mirror prejudices and villainies in our own world. The Scarecrow is the obstinate romantic hero, and so stupid that he insists on being an officer when he and Jack enlist in the Army; yet completely charming, gentle and noble, sacrificing his own head in order to keep the starving boy alive. The lunacy of war is pointedly laughed at, as is the foolishness of quarrels between different peoples. The scarecrow endures a climactic courtroom trial in which the letter plays a crucial role. The story ends as confidently as it begins, written for children with utter respect for and delight in their intelligence, humour and imagination.

The Times (London), November 27 2004

A bit of *Don Quixote* and *The Wizard of Oz*, a few fairy tales and a little Nonsense — Pullman mixes elements of story like a word magician in this picaresque fable of corporate interests thwarted... Mostly, however, what makes this tale so entertaining is the delightful wit and intelligent nonsense of Pullman having uproarious fun with language and literary conventions. "She's going to marry a rake!" laments Scarecrow of a broom he adores. There are many one-darn-thing-after-another adventure stories, but Pullman's language has a comic flamboyance and precision that make this one outstanding.

The Horn Book Magazine, September/October 2005





Puss in Boots

Illustrated by Ian Beck

Doubleday, 2000

Based on a play commissioned by the Polka Theatre for Children in London and produced in 1997

Translated into Danish

Reviews

With characters supplying punch lines and side commentary in Beck's vigorously inked cartoon illustrations, Pullman briskly reworks Perrault's tale of an orphaned miller's son who, thanks to a quick-witted

feline companion, sets a new standard for rapid upward mobility. Though several incidents drawn from other folktales have been interpolated, the cat still does most of the work, pulling strings behind the scenes to help young Jacques, posing as the Marquis of Carabas, to meet the King of France's daughter, then to pass a pair (or a trio, according to the picture) of insomniac ghouls (" 'If we can't sleep . . . we'll take all your bones out through your nose and play pick-up-sticks with 'em . . . ' ") in order to rescue her from a wonderfully snaggle-toothed, coarse-featured ogre. The author sets his renowned gift for breathlessly paced storytelling at full throttle, and the result, at once briefer and broader than Fred Marcellino's urbane version (1990), will leave younger audiences enthralled.

Kirkus Reviews, July 15 2001

Pullman sets a pleasingly flip tone from the start as he retells the tale with gusto. After the miller's death, his property is divided among his three sons; "As for the youngest son, Jacques, all he got was-- 'The cat?' said Jacques. 'Father's left me the cat?' " How Puss takes charge ("I've got the wit, if you'll supply the courage," he tells his new master) and helps secure Jacques's future by passing him off as the Marquis of Carabas, makes for a rollicking read. The two encounter a cast of colorful characters, including their landlord, Monsieur Ogre; solve a trio of mysteries; and save the King of France's daughter from the ogre's clutches (she, of course, marries Jacques). Pullman packs his irreverent prose with sly asides ("O mighty and fragrant Ogre," gushes Puss) and lively asides ("In his foul and filthy castle, the ogre was getting peckish"). A fun frolic.

Publishers Weekly, 25th June 2001

Philip Pullman: a life in writing

Extracts from an interview to celebrate the launch of the Guardian children's books website, Thursday 3rd March 2011.

Gemma, 16

Why did you decide to write *The Good Man Jesus and the Scoundrel Christ*?

I've always been fascinated by the difference between the man Jesus, the son of Joseph and Mary, who I think almost certainly existed, and the idea of Christ, the son of God. The vast bulk of what people say about Christ seems to me nonsense, impossible, absurd. About Jesus, on the other hand, we can say many interesting things.

Were you surprised that people considered the book so shocking?

I wasn't surprised that people found the title shocking. Plenty of people wrote to me and told me I would go to hell for writing it. That was before it was even published, though. I think that if they actually read the book rather than squawking about the title, they might find it less appalling than they thought it would be.

Are you ever worried about offending people?

I think there's a difference between (a) offending people for its own sake, which I don't necessarily want to do, because some people are good and decent and it would be unkind to upset them simply to indulge my own self-importance, and (b) challenging their prejudices, their preconceptions, or their comfortable assumptions. I'm very happy to do that. But we need to be on our guard when people say they're offended. No one actually has the right to go through life without being offended. Some people think they can say "such-and-such offends me" and that will stop the "offensive" words or behaviour and force the "offender" to apologise. I'm very much against that tactic. No one should be able to shut down discussion by making their feelings more important than the search for truth. If such people are offended, they should put up with it.

Sophie, 11

Was there something that you read, or a painting that you saw, or a particular incident in your life that led you to write the *His Dark Materials* trilogy?

Well, one of the places it came from was John Milton's poem *Paradise Lost*. I don't think you'll be doing it in school for a year or two yet. I did it in the sixth form, and I loved it at once, mainly for the wonderful sound the words made when we read them aloud. I didn't understand them till much later. You don't have to "understand" poetry to enjoy it. Many adults think you do, and they go through it all explaining the "difficult" bits (or worse still, making you explain them), which aren't difficult at all if you don't fuss about it.

Last year, we studied Ovid's *Metamorphoses* at school and your book *I Was a Rat!* was recommended in our textbook as an excellent book to read afterwards. Was your book in any way inspired by *Metamorphoses*?

That's interesting. I didn't know I featured in a classics textbook! At the risk of being chucked out of it, I have to say that Ovid didn't really feature at all in the origin of "*I Was A Rat!*" (and the exclamation mark, and the quotation marks, are an important part of the title). The most immediate source for the story was "Cinderella".

Joanna, 14

Does the animal form that someone's *dæmon* finally takes in *His Dark Materials* reflect their personality, or is it the opposite to their personality? How does it work?

It symbolises an aspect of their personality. But our personalities have many aspects, and it might be a surprising one. (I have to confess that I don't know all there is to know about *dæmons*. There's a lot more I have to find out.)

Luke, 13

Why do you think it's so important that young people read?

For the same reason that I think it's important that they breathe, eat, drink, sleep, run about, fool around, and have people who love and look after them. It's part of what makes us fully human. Some people manage to get through life without reading; but I know that if I'd had to do that, an enormous part of my mind, or my soul if you like, would be missing. No one should be without the chance to let their soul grow.

Ciara, 15

What book are you reading at the moment?

Several books, as usual. Among them are *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* by Mohsin Hamid, *The Phantom Tollbooth* by Norton Juster, and a book about the brain called *The Master and His Emissary*, by Iain McGilchrist.

Hanna, 15

How do you choose your themes and storylines?

I don't exactly choose them so much as surrender to them. I couldn't write at all if I had to choose, in a sort of cold-blooded way, between this idea and that one. If they both excite me, I'll write about them both.

Do you use your own experiences or people you meet in your books?

Yes, I suppose I must do; but they're changed. People often forget that there's such a thing as imagination. What imagination does is to take the things we know and play with them so they're not always recognisable.

What advice would you give to anyone who wants to be a writer?

Some people would say "Always write about what you know". I don't think that's good advice at all. Nor is the advice to write what you think people will like. I think that's just silly. We shouldn't bother about other people at all when we write. It's none of their business what we write. How many people did we hear, in 1996 or thereabouts, saying "We wish someone would write the first Harry Potter book! No one's written about Harry Potter yet. We wish they'd hurry up"? One of the reasons for JK Rowling's success was that she didn't give a fig for what people thought they wanted. They didn't know they wanted Harry Potter till she wrote about him. That's the proper way round.

Claudia, 12

Were there any parts of *His Dark Materials* which you didn't enjoy writing?

Truthfully, no. What an interesting question. There are some parts of any book that feel like a chore when you're doing them, not a pleasure; but when you've finished you look back (as mountain climbers do, I imagine) and take some pleasure from the fact that it was a hard climb. Also there's the clear fact that if you only write when you want to, or when you feel like it, or when it's easy, you'll always be an amateur.

Maud, 13

When you wrote *Northern Lights* did you already know the plot of the other two books in the trilogy?

No – at least, not in any detail. I had a rough idea of where it was all going, and I knew a few things about some places I wanted to stop at on the way. I knew it had to end in a garden; I wanted to bring in the hornbeam trees along Sunderland Avenue in Oxford, where I live; I thought I might have to go to the world of the dead. That's all. I discovered most of it as I went along.

If you've read any Tolkien, what do you like about the way he writes? Did it inspire you to write any of your books?

I read *The Lord of the Rings* when I was 18 – I read it greedily, lapping it up, eager for more. But I haven't read it since then, though I've tried. It doesn't satisfy me any more, and I think that's because Tolkien, who created this marvellous vehicle, doesn't go anywhere in it. He just sits where he is. What I mean by that is that he always seems to be looking backwards, to a greater and more golden past; and what's more

he doesn't allow girls or women any important part in the story at all. Life is bigger and more interesting than *The Lord of the Rings* thinks it is.

Is Lyra just a made-up character or is she based on a relative or a girl you knew?

Lyra isn't any girl in particular. But I used to teach a lot of girls like Lyra. Lyra is not a special girl – she's very ordinary.

Charlie, 11

I would really, really love to have a dæmon, and if I had one I'd like it to be a monkey. What would yours be?

I think my dæmon is probably a raven or a rook or a magpie – one of the birds of that family – because she steals things, like ideas for stories, and images, and phrases. Unfortunately, you can't choose the form of your dæmon. You have to put up with whatever he or she turns out to be.

One thing I love about *His Dark Materials* is the subtle differences between your worlds and ours – the different types of light and different names for things like chocolatl and smokeleaf. How do you get the ideas for these differences? I want to know so I can write as well as you!

In some cases (such as chocolatl) I went back to the original language, which in that case was one of the languages of ancient Mexico. In others (like smokeleaf) I invented an English phrase that . . . well, explained what it was. You can play about a lot with English.

Which character in the books do you think is most like you?

Hm! I don't know. I'd like to be like Lee Scoresby, but I think I'm probably like one of those doddering old scholars.

Morag, 12

Why did you make the end of the *His Dark Materials* trilogy so sad?

Oh dear. I know it's sad, but I couldn't help it. Honestly. I think any other kind of ending would have been weaker.

Naomi, 10

How does Lyra compare to Lucy from Narnia?

Well, that's not really for me to say. That's a matter for readers to talk about, if they want to. But I'll repeat what I've said somewhere else: Lyra is a very ordinary girl. The world is full of Lyras. I can't work up much interest in stories where the hero or heroine is "special" in some way. I know the witches say that Lyra has a special destiny, but that's something outside her. She has no special gifts or talents or magic.

Adam, 16

What are your tips for aspiring novelists?

There are several things I think it's important for an aspiring writer to know. When I was young I read all kinds of that sort of advice, and I thought it was all rubbish. Later on I found out for myself how important a few things are, and I'll tell you three of them here.

One: work every day. Get into the habit of it. Work when you don't feel like it, when you've just broken up with your girlfriend or boyfriend, when you're feeling ill, when you've got homework to do. Put your work first. Habit is your greatest ally. Get into the habit of writing when you're young and it'll stay with you. Sixteen is a very good age to start.

Two: find out what way of working (place, time, writing instrument, desk light, and so on) suits you, and insist that you get it.

Three: don't listen to anyone who tells you you should study what the public wants, and give it to them. They don't know what they want, or they'd be writing it themselves. It's not their job to tell you what to write. It's your job to write something they could never have thought of, and then offer it to them. Good luck!