

The Amber Spyglass Study Guide

The Amber Spyglass by Philip Pullman

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Plot Summary

The Amber Spyglass is the third book in the His Dark Materials trilogy, which tells the story of Lyra of Jordan College in another world's version of Oxford, her friend Will from our world, and Lord Asriel's revolt against the Kingdom of Heaven.

The Amber Spyglass begins with the reappearance of Lyra, who has been kidnapped by her mother, Mrs. Coulter, who keeps her daughter sedated. Lyra dreams of her friend Roger, whose death she feels she caused. She promises that they will free him from the World of the Dead. Lyra's friend Will, the bearer of the subtle knife, searches for her despite the urgings of two angels, Balthamos and Baruch, that he should go immediately to Lord Asriel and offer his knife and his services in Asriel's war against the Authority. On his journey to save Lyra, Will meets the bear-king Iorek Byrnison, and they join forces.

Dr. Mary Malone is also traveling through different worlds, after communicating with Shadows in her lab in our Oxford that directs her to destroy the equipment and "play the serpent." She finds the world of the Mulefa, a people who travel on wheels, and discovers that Dust is rapidly leaking out of the world. Mary begins investigating the cause of the problem. However, she does not know she is being tracked by Father Gomez, an agent of the Church who is on a secret assignment to kill Lyra, as the Church now knows Lyra is destined to be the new Eve and must be killed to save all creatures from sin. Lord Asriel strengthens his forces and sends out Gallivespians to spy both on the church and to find Lyra and Will.

Will finds and rescues Lyra just as the opposing armies find her, and he rescues her from the cave during an attack. They are followed by two Gallivespians, the Chevalier Tialys and the Lady Salmakia. However, he shatters the knife when he thinks he sees his mother's face when he is looking at Mrs. Coulter, and cannot cut through to make an escape. Iorek is able to repair the knife but warns that it may be more dangerous than they know.

Mrs. Coulter is captured by Lord Asriel's forces but steals a craft and returns to the Church. Father McPhail, the president of the Consistorial Court and the man who sent Father Gomez out to kill Lyra, does not trust her. He steals a lock of hair of Lyra's hair from Mrs. Coulter to use in a bomb that has been designed specifically to kill the girl. Mrs. Coulter tries to disable the bomb, but is unsuccessful. She is picked up once again by Lord Asriel's forces, this time by Asriel himself.

Lyra and Will find their way to the world of the dead, but must leave their daemons behind. They find Roger, Lee Scoresby, and Will's father. Lee saves Lyra from being killed by the bomb by directing Will to remove the matching lock of hair to another world, but the explosion opens an abyss in the world of the dead. Will and Lyra, accompanied by the dying Gallivespians, are able to lead the dead out into the world of the Mulefa, and the souls are free to join the universe. Lee and John Parry stay to fight Specters in the final battle, and Metatron, the Lord Reagent of Heaven, plans to take Will and Lyra's



daemons so that the children will have no choice but to follow him. The Authority is revealed to be an ancient and imprisoned angel. Lord Asriel and Mrs. Coulter together destroy Metatron.

But Dust is still escaping, the children's daemons are staying distant. Lyra loses the ability to use the alethiometer. Mary Malone tells Will and Lyra a story about how she left the church and how her life changed, and Will and Lyra realize they are in love with each other. Balthamos the angel reappears and leads Father Gomez to his death just as he is stalking the children. Dust returns to normal.

Will and Lyra learn that people cannot live long in a world other than their own and that every time the knife makes a cut, another Specter comes out of the Abyss. All of the open windows must be closed, except for the one that lets souls out from the world of the dead. Will and Lyra must return to their own worlds, teach people to do good, and thereby will keep the Specters in check. They part forever in the Botanic Garden in Will's Oxford, and Will destroys the knife by thinking of Lyra. The story ends with Lyra deciding that she will go to school, study the alethiometer, and work to establish the Republic of Heaven in her own world.



Chapter One, The Enchanted Sleeper

Chapter One, The Enchanted Sleeper Summary

The Amber Spyglass is the third book in the His Dark Materials trilogy, which tells the story of Lyra of Jordan College in another world's version of Oxford, her friend Will from our world, and Lord Asriel's revolt against the Kingdom of Heaven.

The book opens in a restful and natural outdoor setting. It is a shaded valley high up in the mountains, near the snow. A fresh, cold stream runs down the mountain and the air is full of the sound of water, birds, and tree branches moving in the wind. The sun filters in through the leaves and needles of the trees and the air is often damp with mist. There is a cave that was once occupied by a holy man, and Mrs. Coulter is living in it with Lyra, whom she has drugged into sleep. Ama, a young girl from a nearby village brings Mrs. Coulter food and is in awe of her. The villagers are worried about Mrs. Coulter's companion and when Ama asks about this person, Mrs. Coulter says yes, it is her daughter, and her daughter is under a spell and all she does is sleep. Mrs. Coulter shows Ama her daughter and seems so wise and caring of her poor, ill daughter that Ama is moved to tears. The golden monkey gently strokes the sleeping girl's hair. The woman cautions the girl that while she may tell her father, the two of them must keep this secret from everyone else. Mrs. Coulter has brought many of the supplies with her from the camp she had set up with Sir Charles, including a gun. As soon as Ama leaves, however, Mrs. Coulter brews up a potion of some kind and forces Lyra to drink it as Lyra seems to be regaining consciousness. In her semi-drugged state, Lyra calls for Roger. Mrs. Coulter is aware that her daemon does not approve of this arrangement, as Mrs. Coulter is without a doubt hiding and also perhaps fooling herself.

Chapter One, The Enchanted Sleeper Analysis

This chapter opens in a very different place than where the second book ends. The Subtle Knife concludes with Will in shock after finding and losing his father in a matter of moments, discovering that Lyra has disappeared, and being approached by angels. In contrast, The Enchanted Sleeper begins in a peaceful natural setting that changes very quickly for the reader as soon as Mrs. Coulter is identified. When Ama's daemon settles on the golden monkey's finger, it is a tense moment because the reader knows what the monkey is capable of doing.

When Mrs. Coulter decides to tell Ama about Lyra, she is amused because she is telling the truth for once. The person accompanying her is indeed her daughter, just as she explains to the village girl. However, Mrs. Coulter is keeping her daughter drugged. The golden monkey, meanwhile, feels that Mrs. Coulter is taking a terrible risk and making a mistake. They communicate with each other, but the monkey never speaks out loud in the text, the way Pan communicates with Lyra.



Between this chapter and the next is a section of italicized text. It breaks off in mid-sentence, and then begins again in the break between the next chapters. These fragments are about Lyra as she dreams, remembers, and struggles to break into consciousness. Lyra also continues to deal with the loss of her old friend Roger. In these fragments, Roger speaks to her from the world of the dead. The conversation ends between chapters Seven and Eight with Lyra's assertion "because he's Will," which is like Roger's belief that Lyra would come and find him because she's Lyra.



Chapter Two, Balthamos and Baruch

Chapter Two, Balthamos and Baruch Summary

The two angels who appear to Will at the end of the last chapter of *The Subtle Knife* insist that he come with them to Lord Asriel. Will refuses immediately and begins to question them. He determines that they always tell the truth and that they must obey him, and agrees to go to Lord Asriel after they find Lyra. The angels go on a scouting expedition for Will and cannot find Lyra, but find the remains of Mrs. Coulter's camp, the witch eaten by Specters, and the body of Sir Charles. Will goes to the site and sees the remains of the witches and determines that none of them are Serafina Pekkala. The angels feel that Will is making a mistake, but they will do as he commands them.

As he walks, it occurs to Will that his hand no longer hurts. His father healed it and he keeps going to look at the place last occupied by Mrs. Coulter. Balthamos the angel reminds him that Specters cannot hurt him. Will finds food and supplies at the deserted camp for the rest of his journey. When he asks Balthamos for advice, the angel rebukes him and argues with him when Will asks specific questions.

Will eats, looks at the alethiometer, and then tries something he has not considered before—he cuts into worlds other than his own and the one he is in now. The knowledge of the other worlds and the possibilities therein is daunting, but Will takes the time to think about it and figure it out, despite Balthamos' less-than-helpful opinions. The angel points out some approaching travelers, and Will moves on. Balthamos' companion Baruch returns and leads them through to Lyra's world. Will insists that Balthamos takes the form of a bird when they are in Lyra's world so that people will not be shocked to see him without a daemon. Balthamos finds it humiliating and complains to Will about their slow progress and Will tells the angel to be quiet.

While camping, the angel accepts a bite of cake. Will realizes that if he does not look at the angel straight on, he can get a clearer view. When Baruch returns, Will stirs up his campfire and the smoke also helps to bring the two beings into view for him. Baruch has found Lyra and draws a map in the dirt, which Will copies. Will realizes that he can cut between worlds, but he cannot cut distances between worlds, so he cannot progress any faster. As they discuss Mrs. Coulter, all three are attacked by another angel, a much more powerful one than Baruch and Balthamos. The attacking angel cries "Lord Regent! I have them! Lord Regent!" Balthamos begs Will to escape into another world immediately. Will kills the attacking angel first and barely escapes being struck with a spear. Once they are safe in another world, the angels explain to Will that they were attacked by Metatron. Will insists that he be told everything.

The angels explain that the Authority and all the names he goes by—God, the Lord, among others—is not the creator. He is an angel like themselves, and was the first angel and made from Dust. Now the Authority knows that Will has the knife. Will asks about life after death and is told that the dead go to a place that is more like a prison



camp, and that Heaven is a lie. The two angels want to bring this information to Lord Asriel, but they lack seniority and experience. That is why they want to take Will and the knife to Asriel, and also to help Asriel in his war against the Authority. Will rejects their reasons. He is very angry that they did not tell him the truth to begin with and says again that all he cares about is helping Lyra. If they want to contact Lord Asriel, they should do so on their own. Balthamos reminds Will that he needs Balthamos to impersonate a daemon. Will is angry and walks away, and the angels talk. They agree finally that Baruch will fly to Lord Asriel and try to talk to him, and Balthamos will stay with Will.

Chapter Two, Balthamos and Baruch Analysis

Balthamos and Baruch are very opinionated beings with distinct personalities, not at all like the popular images of angels as gentle, sweet women. However, they are always next to Will even when he cannot see them, just the way angels are supposed to be. Balthamos and Baruch are as close to each other as people from Lyra's world are to their daemons. The pair is devoted to one another. While Balthamos says "Baruch was a man. I was not. Now he is angelic," it is not entirely clear that Balthamos is female and the pronoun "he" is often used for this character.

Will asks the angels if they always speak the truth, which they do. He also holds Lyra's alethiometer, and the device always speaks the truth. Will determines right away that he is stronger than the angels, and rather than following their commands, he goes in search of Lyra.

This chapter has the most complete explanation of Dust available yet in the series, and the explanation comes in the form of the angels describing several key concepts to Will. Dust, Balthamos explains, "is only a name for what happens when matter begins to understand itself."



Chapter Three, Scavengers

Chapter Three, Scavengers Summary

Serafina Pekkala looks for Iorek Byrnison, the bear king, in his kingdom. She finds him in the middle of a hunt for food, which has gotten harder for the bears because the world has grown warmer and the ice and snow are melting. Serafina explains to Iorek that Lee Scoresby is dead—she was too late to save him from an army of attacking Muscovites, and that he died not knowing exactly what he was doing or why. Serafina tells Iorek how to reach Lee's body and explains that she has preserved it. Iorek says that he and his people must leave and he has chartered a ship for the journey. The scavenger foxes that wait to eat the remains of his kill are listening.

Iorek swims until he finds the land where Lee lies dead, and then he eats his old friend. He contemplates the changes in the world and swims south. Meanwhile one of the little foxes, that was eating the remains of the walrus that Iorek killed, is itself about to be eaten by a cliff-ghost. The fox tells the cliff-ghost some things first, however, about angels, Lee, the bear king, and the witches. The cliff ghost laughs and kills the fox.

Chapter Three, Scavengers Analysis

Iorek feeds on the body of his old friend, Lee Scoresby. It is a shocking moment in the book but is presented as Iorek's final tribute to his old friend. The act of eating Lee has a multi-dimensional overtone as the body of his friend nourishes both Iorek's body and his spirit as he faces the rest of his challenges. It is a very bear-ish thing to do, somehow, and is a reminder that Iorek is very different from humans. Iorek also ponders what Serafina has told him.



Chapter Four, Ama and the Bats

Chapter Four, Ama and the Bats Summary

Ama, the little village girl, cannot forget Lyra, and so she goes to a wise man, a healer, and asks for medicine to wake someone up. She lies and says the medicine is for a family member, a boy of about twelve years old. The healer's daemon, a bat, goes to the powders and potions before the healer does, despite the healer's insistence that he see the patient first and despite questions about why the parents have not come themselves. He gives Ama the medicine and tells her he knows she is lying.

Ama goes to the cave to look at Lyra and hides from Mrs. Coulter and the golden monkey when they return. She sees Lyra begin to wake up and hears her speak. Then Ama watches Mrs. Coulter force the sleeping medicine down Lyra's throat and watches as the woman slaps the girl to subdue her. Mrs. Coulter cuts off a lock of Lyra's hair and keeps it. Then Ama watches as Mrs. Coulter hands a live bat to the golden monkey and the monkey pull it apart. Ama is angry at Mrs. Coulter and angry because she has been lied to. Together, she and her daemon Kulang decide that they must sneak in again when Mrs. Coulter is gone, and give the sleeper the medicine.

Chapter Four, Ama and the Bats Analysis

Ama has seen something that she was not meant to see; now she knows the holy woman and her sleeping daughter are something other than what Mrs. Coulter represents them to be. Ama does not hesitate when she gets home, however, and knows that she must do something to wake the sleeping girl. Mrs. Coulter's daemon displays some of his more repellent aspects by tearing a part a live bat.



Chapter Five, The Adamant Tower

Chapter Five, The Adamant Tower Summary

An unnamed flyer is trying to travel without being seen, but he has been watched. It is Baruch and he does indeed make it to Lord Asriel's fortress, but is wounded. Inside the fortress, Lord Asriel is meeting with Lord Roke, a Gallivespian. Lord Roke is the size of Lord Asriel's hand, rides a hawk, and his heels end in poisonous spurs. Lord Roke's people are spies and they are working for Asriel to find out what the Church and its various branches are up to. The Lady Salmakia is a spy and has penetrated the Society of the Work of the Holy Spirit in order to learn that the Church regards Lyra as the most important child ever. Roke uses a lodestone resonator as a communications device to get the news from his spies which he then passes on to Asriel.

Asriel thinks about Lyra and about how he almost used her at Bolvangar. His guards tell him about Baruch and the mortally wounded angel is brought before Lord Asriel. Baruch tells Asriel the Authority has retired and Metatron is in control. The Authority has decided that creatures with consciousness have become too independent and Metatron wants inquisitions in every church in every world. Baruch tells Asriel about the knife and its powers, and that it is in the hands of a boy who is the son of Stanislaus Grumman. Asriel knew Grumman but did not know of any son. Baruch further explains that Will and Lyra are friends and Will is looking for Lyra. Baruch is dying, losing control of himself and the ability to form coherent thoughts and to speak clearly. The breeze from an opening door sends the angel drifting into pieces. Asriel calls in his own alethiometer specialist and asks for one of his generals to be contacted. When alethiometrist arrives, they begin to hunt for Lyra.

Chapter Five, The Adamant Tower Analysis

As we saw with the other angel Will had to kill, angels do not leave behind a physical body like humans, but rather dissolve and leave nothing behind. Baruch's last word is the name of his beloved friend Balthamos.

Lord Asriel talks to his daemon, Stelmaria, about Lyra, but seems still detached from her. He recalls sacrificing a child but does not express any regret over it. This child was Roger, Lyra's friend, and Lyra is burdened by guilt over him. Again, the text between chapters is a continued conversation between Lyra in her dreaming state and Roger, trapped in the land of the dead.



Chapter Six, Preemptive Absolution

Chapter Six, Preemptive Absolution Summary

Fra Pavel, a member of one of the church's religious orders and a witness to the torturing of the witch on the boat, tells the Inquirer of the Consistorial Court of Discipline everything he knows. He knows that the knife can kill angels, that Lyra is the new Eve, that there are other worlds, and that Mrs. Coulter does not know that her daughter is Eve. Fra Pavel is frightened because he is saying things to one branch of the Church that another branch might not like. He is also able to read the alethiometer.

The Inquirer dismisses him and the nuns who have been taking dictation during the meeting, and discusses Mrs. Coulter and her work at Bolvangar and as head of the Oblation Boards. The Oblation Board wants to discover exactly what Dust does; the Church wants to destroy it entirely. Father McPhail sends Father Gomez, to murder Lyra. Father Gomez wants this job as he has been doing preemptive penance for some time; performing acts of penance in advance so that he will be absolved from committing a crime. A Gallivespian spy overhears the whole conversation.

Dr. Cooper, one of the researchers from Bolvangar, is a prisoner in a cell. Father McPhail instructs the man, who is obviously afraid and has probably been tortured, to tell everything he knows or heard. Dr Cooper bows again and again even after McPhail has left his cell.

The Chevalier Tialys and the Lady Salmakia, Gallivespian spies, meet and discuss what Tialys overheard about the plan to assassinate Lyra. Tialys sends a message to Lord Roke via the lodestone resonator, but does not know that Father Gomez is already on Lyra's trail. Father McPhail has instructed Gomez to look for the child's tempter, not the child.

Chapter Six, Preemptive Absolution Analysis

Fra Pavel, a member of one of the religious societies of the church, was on board the ship where Mrs. Coulter was torturing the witch. He can read the alethiometer. He has witnessed much and relates his findings to the court. It is dangerous to tell the truth because the things he says are regarded as heresy (angels can die, there is more than one world, there is a knife that is the strongest object in all the words) even though these things are truth. He is terrified. His questioners do not have any patience with his fears and encourage him to talk and continue. Fra Pavel assures the court that Mrs. Coulter does not know Lyra is the new Eve and he knows that Mrs. Coulter has Lyra and is hiding, but he does not know that Mrs. Coulter found out the secret of Lyra's identity from another witch.

The prisoner in the cellars, Dr. Cooper, has the misfortune to be caught between the Oblation board and the Church. He is frightened of Father McPhail, probably for a good



reason. While it is never explicitly stated, it can be inferred from the book that Cooper has been tortured for information and will now say or do anything for McPhail to avoid further torment.

Luis Gomez believes that he has been entrusted with a sacred task on behalf of the Church and is ready, willing and eager to perform it.



Chapter Seven, Mary, Alone

Chapter Seven, Mary, Alone Summary

Dr. Mary Malone is traveling on foot through other worlds and is identified as the tempter. An old couple in this world are scared when they first see her, but the Specters in the trees flee as Dr. Malone arrive, so they feed her and want her to stay. Mary has seen this more than once; Specters leaving her alone, gangs of children orphaned by the Specters, and a few terrified adults.

Mary is on her own and all she knows to do is find Lyra and Will, and to play the serpent, which is what her computer told her when she was in her lab. She has brought her I Ching tools with her, the Book of Changes and the yarrow stalks for reading. She uses the pattern formed by the sticks and reads the commentary in the book that describes the meanings of the patterns and decides she should walk in the direction of a mountain and go upwards. As she follows the path, she finds an opening to another world. The opening was made in the eighteenth century and the world Mary finds herself in is a world with trees that are taller than redwoods and with wide prairies. After sleeping, she sees strange creatures that are the size of deer but very different from similar animals in her world. Their legs are arranged differently: two at the sides and one each at the front and back. She travels on through the still morning air and into a forest of the great trees, which shed enormous seedpods about three feet wide and four or five inches thick. The pods exude sweet-smelling oil. There also seem to be natural road-beds in this world, smooth and easy to walk on. Mary realizes that there is a lot she does not know about evolution or science in general since she could never have conceived of the aspects of this world. Then Mary sees what looks like a herd of wheeled animals that are looking for her, and that have long trunks and horns. The wheels are made out of the seedpods from the trees. Though she is unsure of what she is doing and where she is, Mary decides to be bold and she steps forward to show herself to the creatures. She touches herself and says "I am a human." The creature repeats the phrase and laughs. Mary realizes the creatures are intelligent and quickly bonds with the Mulefa as they feed her from the herd of grazing animals and invite her to come with them.

Chapter Seven, Mary, Alone Analysis

Dr. Mary Malone spends time consulting her own version of the alethiometer, the I Ching or Book of Changes. The readings give her suggestions and advice, which she sorely needs since she is in a strange world with no one to guide her and only the words from her communications with Shadows to go by: play the serpent. She has no idea what that means.

However, the reader knows that somehow Mary is the serpent, and knows something that she does not: Father Gomez is out to kill Lyra. As a scientist observing this new



world, Mary can appreciate she has very little understanding of all of the possible forms of life. She can also appreciate unique things and brings her scientific training and sensibility into play in evaluating her surroundings and communicating with the wheeled people, the Mulefa.

Between this chapter and the next one is the last bit of text from Lyra in her unconscious state: 'because he's Will,' she says in her sleep, expressing her confidence in her friend.



Chapter Eight , Vodka

Chapter Eight , Vodka Summary

Balthamos feels the death of Baruch and is beside himself with grief. Will convinces Balthamos to stand guard over Will despite the loss since it is what Baruch would have wanted. When Will wakes up, Balthamos says he will do everything he can to help Will find Lyra in honor of Baruch.

They travel to a very sad and run-down village where the dogs and the reindeer are thin and unhealthy. Balthamos acts as Will's daemon and advises him on how to behave and where to go. They meet the village priest, Otyets Semyon Boirsovitch or Father Semyon, who explains that there have been many changes in the world, including an earthquake and a river temporarily reversing its course. The priest shows Will a map of their location, somewhere in Siberia. Will wants to leave and get passage over the river, and the priest tells him armored bears have arrived and are a danger. The priest warns Will of the sexual dangers of the witches, and insists that Will drink vodka with him, which Will does. Sickened by the drink and the stench, Will endures a long prayer from the priest and then goes on his way.

At the river town where Will wants to cross, a battle between armored bears in a boat and the people on the shore is taking place. The bears want fuel but the townspeople will not sell it to them. Will rushes into the middle of the fight and stops it by challenging the bear to a fight. If he wins, the townspeople must refuel the boat and allow the bears to go on their way. The bear, who is lorek Byrnison, is angry at the challenge. Will wants a piece of the bear's armor, which he then cuts with the knife. The bear concedes, the people are happy to meet the bargain, and Will asks the bear privately to take him in the boat to the mountains. The bear wants to see the knife and Will says he will only show it to lorek Byrnison, and when lorek identifies himself, Will says that he recognizes the bear king. Will, with the angel Balthamos disguised as his daemon, boards the ship.

Chapter Eight , Vodka Analysis

Will needs directions and, with the help of Balthamos, goes to the house of a priest named Otyets Semyon Borisovitch. It is a stomach-churning event for Will in more ways than one. The priest insists on patting Will's thigh, warning him about the seductive powers of the witches, and he smells bad and is dirty. He then insists Will drink vodka before he allows the boy to travel on and, wishing to avoid trouble and heeding the warnings of Balthamos, Will submits. Here is another adult and a representative of the Church who is less than attractive and who seems to think he is acting in a child's best interest.

Once Will arrives at the town, he uses his wits in order to further his own quest to find Lyra. Will also uses the magic of making himself invisible after convincing lorek

Byrnison that the knife is stronger than the bear king's armor. Will uses his new-found abilities as a warrior, his cleverness gained by years of lying to people about his home life, and his ability to become inconspicuous to deflect attention.



Chapter Nine, Upriver

Chapter Nine, Upriver Summary

lorek examines the knife and Will tells him how he came to have possession of it. lorek agrees to help Will find Lyra. The bears are on a journey to find a new home since their old one is uninhabitable for them, and thus they are trying to find high mountains covered with snow and ice. lorek says that in the coming war, he will side with whoever offers the best advantage for the bears. Balthamos keeps giving Will information but is very unhappy.

Will and the bears disembark when the boat goes as far inland as it can. The other bears disperse, but Will and lorek travel on together. Will shows the bear-king how he can cut into other worlds, and the pair travel on to find Lyra. Lord Asriel's forces, under the command of the Afric King Ogunwe are also looking for Lyra, as are the forces of the church. Lord Asriel's forces want to save her life and the Church wants to end it. The Chevalier Tialys and the Lady Salmakia have stowed away on the zeppelin carrying the President of the Consistorial Court. They have brought insect larvae that will grow and hatch into their mounts, the large dragonflies. The Gallivespian spies can keep track of the activities on the zeppelin, but they know nothing of Father Gomez since the only person who knows about him, Father McPhail, has not told anyone else about the priest's mission.

Chapter Nine, Upriver Analysis

lorek is obsessed with the knife since he is an expert metal worker. He has never seen anything like the metal and while he understands the power of the one blade that cut his armor in his initial meeting with Will, he realizes the other edge is far different than anything he sees or can understand.

This chapter contrasts the aims of Lord Asriel's forces and those of the Consistorial Court—and Lord Asriel's people have a much harder job ahead of them since they want to get Lyra out alive, whereas the Court wants only her death.



Chapter Ten, Wheels

Chapter Ten, Wheels Summary

Father Gomez has made his way into Cittàgazze and is talking to Angelica and Paolo who confirm that Dr. Mary Malone has been through. They also identify Will and Lyra, and talk about their hatred for them and how they stole the knife, and Father Gomez contains his interest and excitement so they will still talk to him. They comment on how the Specters do not bother him and Father Gomez speculates that his "sacred task" is keeping him safe.

The Mulefa take Mary back to their village and, since she is riding, she has time to observe that they do not have a central spine like nearly every creature with a skeleton in our world, but the unusual-seeming arrangement apparently works for them. Over the next few days, Mary becomes absorbed in their culture. Mary learns to speak their language as well as she can, but considering that trunk gestures are a part of it, some words and variations elude her. Mary consults the I Ching again to see if she should move on or stay with the Mulefa, and, as a result, she stays. She learns how central to their lives the seed pods are and wonders which came first—the claw at the end of the foot that enables the wheel to stay in place, or the seed pod? She learns how they eat and how they make nets. Without hands, the Mulefa work together, using two people with their combined trunks to tie knots or perform other tasks that Mary can do with two hands. She realizes how much it makes these creatures depend on each other. One day, she is the first to spot the attackers that plague the Mulefa. The attackers are giant birds that destroy everything the Mulefa have done and seem to take delight in pushing the seed pod wheels into the water. After the birds ruin what they can, they return to the water. Mary is able to rescue some pods from the water for the Mulefa, who explain that they have become very concerned as the trees do not produce the same amount of pods they used to.

Chapter Ten, Wheels Analysis

For some reason, the Specters do not bother Father Gomez when he arrives in Cittàgazze. When Father Gomez speculates that the Specters are not bothering him because of his sacred task, Angelica and Paolo seem a bit skeptical. Mary realizes that the Mulefa are not creatures, they are people just as she is a person. They have language, she notes, and culture. They fish and they build, they marry and raise children. She does not feel separate or alien from them, and it is very important to her to be able to help the community. She does this by climbing onto the roof of their dwellings to help in the building, and she helps by getting into the water to retrieve some of the pods that the giant attacking birds try to ruin. Mary learns that the Mulefa and trees need one another to survive—the seeds cannot germinate unless they come free of the pods, but the pods are so hard that they do not crack unless they are used as wheels. The Mulefa believe that maturity comes from the oil exuded by the seed pods, that

children cannot absorb information and wisdom until they are ready to use the seeds as wheels. This is a kind of parallel idea to the daemons of Lyra's world that stop changing shape after their humans reach puberty.



Chapter Eleven, The Dragonflies

Chapter Eleven, The Dragonflies Summary

lorek and Will have found their way to the valley where Lyra is being held by her mother, and Ama comes across lorek and Will on her way to bring food to Mrs. Coulter. Ama tells them about the sleeping girl. Will and Ama sneak up to the cave and see Mrs. Coulter and the monkey, and Will sends Ama home with instructions to bring the medicine back with her when she returns with the food for Mrs. Coulter. He decides that the best thing is to walk up to Mrs. Coulter openly, and does so. Mrs. Coulter shows Lyra to him, fast asleep. Will memorizes the layout of the cave. Mrs. Coulter talks to him, tries to see the knife, and explains that she wants to keep Lyra safe from the Church and that she is keeping her daughter drugged for the girl's own safety. Mrs. Coulter says that Will's own mother would do the same for him. This is upsetting to Will, who in fact took care of his mother. He does not know if Mrs. Coulter knows this or hit a nerve by accident. Will says that now he will go help Lord Asriel, which surprises Mrs. Coulter, who wants him to help her. He takes his leave and goes back to lorek. Will does not believe a word Mrs. Coulter said, but he likes her. Balthamos says that Will will not take any action, however, because he wants to see Mrs. Coulter again. lorek joins in the rebuke. It is hard to work against that feeling, but Will does and makes a plan as lorek spots eight zeppelins in the distance. Inside one of the zeppelins, the Chevalier Tialys communicates with Lord Roke via the lodestone resonator. The Constitorial Court of Discipline intends to kill Lyra and cut off her head as proof of her death. Tialys and Salmakia are ordered to stay with Will and help him to save Lyra. Their dragonflies hatch, and the two Gallivespians fly away.

Chapter Eleven, The Dragonflies Analysis

Will is tempted by Mrs. Coulter on many levels. She claims to want to protect Lyra and compares herself to Will's own mother. The comparison is not apt and Will is taken aback and confused. He also finds her to be very beautiful and very attractive. This is a challenge Will has not faced before and he did not anticipate it. Balthamos has to point it out to him.

It is difficult to tell if Mrs. Coulter is indeed lying, as Will says she is, or if she has indeed had a change of heart and wants to protect Lyra. Readers rarely learn the interior thoughts of this character. However, Will seems able to realize that he is in some danger from this woman, so he sets his mind to work to find a place to take Lyra after they wake her with the potion Ama will supply.



Chapter Twelve, The Break

Chapter Twelve, The Break Summary

Everyone is converging on Lyra's location in the cave; King Ogunwe from Asriel's forces in his gyropoter, the Swiss Guard from the Consistorial Court in zeppelins, and Will, Balthamos, Iorek and Ama. Balthamos is still helping Will but his grief over Baruch makes him less and less communicative. Ama will not give Will the medicine to wake Lyra, so he must take her with him. Will plans to cut through to another world and then cut again to Lyra's location in the cave. However, the only world he can find that will work has a bright moon shining and it is possible that this light from the other world will give him away as he tries to rescue Lyra. Will gets into the cave only to discover that Mrs. Coulter has moved Lyra so that the girl is sleeping right next to her. The golden monkey hears the zeppelins, as does Iorek. Will grabs Ama by the wrist, there is shouting outside of the cave, and Mrs. Coulter wakes up. As Will prepares to cut back through, he looks up and sees Mrs. Coulter, but she looks like his mother. Will loses his concentration and the knife shatters onto the cave floor.

Will orders Ama to wake Lyra and the girl dusts the powder onto Lyra's lips. Will is ready to fight Mrs. Coulter. She does not move towards him, but she has a gun. Outside, the battle between the two opposing forces has engaged. Lyra and Pan struggle to wake up. Will collects the pieces of the knife and accuses Mrs. Coulter of breaking it, but she says she did not, that she wanted it in one piece so they could all get away, and she says she hopes the Africans win. Mrs. Coulter starts firing the gun into the fight and Will asks Balthamos for help, but Balthamos is terrified and cannot help. Just then, Mrs. Coulter grabs her ankle. She has been stung by the Lady Salmakia and the golden monkey pulls on the Gallivespian spy's arm. Mrs. Coulter drops her gun and Will catches it—but they are at a stalemate: the Chevalier Tialys has his spur at Mrs. Coulter's neck, but the golden monkey is still holding the Lady Salmakia's arm.

Chapter Twelve, The Break Analysis

The title of the chapter at first seems to refer to the "break-out" that Will has planned, or maybe the "break" supplied by the meeting of the two armies outside of the cave, but at the end of this section "break" means only one thing: the subtle knife, the knife that can cut through anything, is broken. When Will uses the knife to cut, he must concentrate on what he is doing, just like Lyra must concentrate when she reads the alethiometer or Dr. Mary Malone had to concentrate when she communicated with the Shadows. As soon as Will's mind wanders and he sees the face of his mother, unhappy, the knife shatters because "his mind left the point." He accuses Mrs. Coulter of breaking the knife, which she denies. It does not seem to be in her interest to break it so perhaps she is telling the truth. As with most things when it comes to Mrs. Coulter, it is impossible to know when she is telling the truth and when she is not.



Chapter Thirteen, Tialys and Salmakia

Chapter Thirteen, Tialys and Salmakia Summary

Will uses the gun to knock down the golden monkey who then releases the Lady Salmakia. Tialys orders Will to follow him and Salmakia, asking him if he has got the knife. He says he does, not mentioning that it is broken. Mrs. Coulter cries for Lyra to stay and grabs her. Lyra is obviously affected, but she is awake enough to loosen Mrs. Coulter's grip on her ankle and keeps going. Lyra cries as they leave. Tialys tells Will that they must give themselves up to the Africans. Will heads to the open window with Lyra and Ama, but their way is blocked by three Swiss Guards. Iorek attacks and kills other guards, but Balthamos throws himself between the children and the three guards in their path. The guards' daemons attack Balthamos, and the angel flies away. Will must use the gun and he kills a guard while the Gallivespians take care of the other two. Will sees Ama run away down another path, knows she will be safe, and he and Lyra run through the window. Will is sick at what he has had to do and the spies follow them into the other world.

Lyra is now fully awake. Will tells Lyra quietly that the knife is broken and by using the alethiometer, they determine that Iorek can fix the knife. Will tells her about all that happened and Lyra tells him about her dream of Roger. They ask the alethiometer if they could go to the world of the dead and save Roger.

Will asks the spies who they work for, and the Gallivespians confirm that they work for Lord Asriel and must take Lyra to him. Lyra laughs at them since they are so small, but they prove how powerful and dangerous they are. Salmakia grabs Pan and puts her spur to the daemon's neck, but Will grabs Tialys. The Lady orders him to put Tialys down, but he won't, not until she lets go of Pan. Lyra can tell that Will is prepared to kill the little spy, so Salmakia relents. Tialys berates Lyra and she apologizes, but when he tries to do the same to Will, the boy is having none of it. He states that he and Lyra are going to go back to the world of the cave where Lyra was kept captive by her mother and find Iorek, but does not say why since he still does not want the spies to know the knife is broken. Will and Lyra talk privately, away from the spies, and leave the knife behind as proof of their trust. The children decide to trust the spies in return—but not tell them the truth about the knife.

Chapter Thirteen, Tialys and Salmakia Analysis

After Lyra wakes and the escape into the other world from both Mrs. Coulter and the battle, Lyra explains what happened to Roger. This section will serve as a good reminder for readers who read the first book in the series some time ago, and will also help those who are not familiar with *The Golden Compass*. Lyra also makes a philosophical discovery as she and Will talk about the possibility of going to the world of the dead to free Roger. She hits upon the concept of the ghost, because after death,



what would be left to go to this world? She knows daemons vanish and that bodies decay, so the third component must be the "ghost," or the part of a person that can think about their body and also about their daemon at the same time.

Will has changed very much from the boy who tried to stay out of the way. He is ready to kill Tialys if Salmakia hurts Pan, and Lyra can tell. When the Gallivespian spies try to order the children to go to Lord Asriel, Will refuses, stating that he and Lyra are in charge.



Chapter Fourteen, Know What It Is

Chapter Fourteen, Know What It Is Summary

Will and Lyra wake. The Chevalier Tialys is watching them and updates them on the news: the Consistorial Court has retreated and Mrs. Coulter has been taken prisoner by King Ongunwe. Tialys explains that he knows this because he used the lodestone resonator. The spies and the children share food, and the spies are astonished at the window which they have a little time to examine. They cross back through and Will closes the window. Lyra confirms that Ama is safe as they walk through the devastation. Lyra watches Tialys use the lodestone resonator and he explains how it works.

As they begin walking again, Lyra is obviously in pain, so Will rubs the bloodmoss ointment into her feet. Tialys tells them that a gyropter is on the way to take them to Lord Asriel after they find lorek and Will pretends to agree. Lyra sees lorek first and the two old friends are reunited. However, he also has sad news and tells her about Lee Scoresby's death. Lyra is full of grief at the news.

The bear king leads them to a cave, starts a fire, and roasts some meat for the children. He says that the bear kingdom's move to the mountains is not working. The spies seem to have vanished and Will starts to talk to lorek about the knife, but then stops and demands that the spies come out and show themselves. Will demands that the Gallivespians show honor to lorek, but Tialys is angry that they were lied to about the knife. Will answers that he knows the spies would have used their venom to subdue Will and Lyra and would have taken them back to Asriel and to prevent that from happening, he tricked them.

lorek looks at the knife and agrees to fix it, but is reluctant to do so because the knife has its own intentions that might have nothing to do with what the bearer wants. Lyra convinces him that it must be done, despite the evil that comes from it. lorek thinks on the situation and agrees to do it. Lyra reads her alethiometer to find out about the knife's intentions. The device says that the knife could be good or bad and that it depends on the users, and that yes, the alethiometer has instructed them to fix it. Then, in private as they search for fuel so lorek can start a fire and create a forge to repair the knife, Lyra tells Will about the rest of the reading: the alethiometer said that the knife would be the death of Dust and was also the only way to keep Dust alive. It also said that if they go to the world of the dead, they might not survive. Will realizes they need to go. He also wants to see his mother again. Lyra says she understands now how he feels. Lyra thinks that she must have been sick and that Mrs. Coulter was helping to cure her. Will does not tell Lyra that she slept because her mother was drugging her. They find the wood they need and return.



Chapter Fourteen, Know What It Is Analysis

Lyra feels rebellious when the Lady Salmakia tells her to rest and talks back rudely to her, but does what the Lady says. Lyra also respects what The Chevalier Tialys is doing with the resonator and listens carefully and intelligently when he explains how it works. When Will explains to the spies that he lied to them on purpose and why, the Gallivespians do not argue.

lorek brings up the possibility of the knife as a force or agent of evil. The knife has "intention" and properties of its own unknown even to the bearer. Up until now, it has been seen as a force of good (or at least not bad) since it keeps the bearer protected from Specters and cuts into other worlds, providing ways of escape and travel for Will and Lyra. lorek asks questions that no one has yet asked. lorek also talks about his people, the bears, and how they have endured suffering every time they have dealt with humans. Earlier, when Will and lorek meet, the bear king answers the question of loyalty by saying he will support whichever side has the greatest benefit to the armored bears. However, he listens to Lyra's argument about repairing the knife, and against all of his experience with tools, metal, and humans, does what his friend asks.



Chapter Fifteen, The Forge

Chapter Fifteen, The Forge Summary

The Gallivespians discuss Will and Lyra. Salmakia believes that they can gain Lyra's trust but the problem is, as ever, how to get the knife to Lord Asriel. They both suspect Will is up to something they do not know about. Iorek prepares his forge. It looks primitive compared to the technology available to Asriel in his adamant fortress, but soon the Gallivespians see that the bear-king is a master of metal-working. Iorek instructs Will in exactly what he must do to keep the fire hot, and has Lyra find stones that will release a gas during the process. Iorek instructs Will to concentrate because what Will thinks during this process is just as important as what Iorek does. In the end, the knife is repaired by the joint effort of Will, Lyra and Iorek. However, Iorek is still troubled, and is troubled about feeling troubled. Bears do not experience doubt.

Iorek and Will have an argument. When Will refuses to tell Iorek what he and Lyra have planned to do, the bear-king knocks him down and Will tells him about the plan to visit the world of the dead. Iorek tells Will that he must no longer think about his mother, and they go back to the cave. Will cools the knife in the snow and notices how much less attractive it looks. The spies watch Will closely and Iorek talks to Lyra. He advises her to stay away from the world of the dead and tries to dissuade her from her plan. Lyra is firm: she and Will must do what they promised. Iorek departs, reminding her that as a bear, he has no soul and will not be in the world of the dead. If she dies, they will not meet again. The mountains have not been good to his people, so they will leave and try to live in the sea.

Against the objections of the spies, Will and Lyra cut through to another world. They are not going to Lord Asriel. The spies accuse them of lying. Lyra reminds them that she was the one who lied, not Will.

Chapter Fifteen, The Forge Analysis

The repair of the knife takes more than manual skill. It takes Will's full attention. Just as his distraction caused the knife to break, his concentration is required to fix it.

By explaining things very carefully to Iorek after the bear-king knocks him to the ground, Will is able to reach some clarity in his own mind. He is able to talk about missing his mother, which is why the knife broke. Will still blames Mrs. Coulter, however, and her cleverness. Iorek, in his direct bear-ish way, does not argue about who is or who is not at fault, but directs Will to put his mother out of his mind.

Through Iorek, we see some of the knife's less-attractive qualities. Not only does the bear king call into question the purpose of the knife, but his repairs, however strong, have made the knife ugly. However, when Will picks it up again and uses it to cut through to another world, he feels whole.

Will is very gentle and caring with Lyra. He tends to her feet with the bloodmoss ointment and does not tell her that her own mother kidnapped her and kept her drugged.



Chapter Sixteen, The Intention Craft

Chapter Sixteen, The Intention Craft Summary

Mrs. Coulter is Lord Asriel's prisoner. She is tied to a chair and her daemon is in chains. As Mrs. Coulter talks about how much she misses Lyra, how much she loves her, Asriel berates her for her weakness. When his commanders, King Ogunwe and Lord Roke come for a council, he allows her to stay. King Ogunwe explains that they killed seventeen Swiss Guards and suffered only minor wounds and damage to people and equipment, and that the Gallivespians stayed with Will and Lyra. The two small spies were, however, their eyes and ears in the Magisterium. Mrs. Coulter interrupts the conference to say that she has been very close to the Magisterium. At first Ogunwe does not want her in the council, but Mrs. Coulter claims that she is now the enemy of the Church since it wants to kill her daughter. She points out that she rescued Lyra three times. King Ogunwe relents and wants her to stay. Lord Asriel does not believe a word she says.

Mrs. Coulter accompanies the military leaders and an angel named Xaphania to see the intention craft. Xaphania was one of the original rebel angels and is very old. Mrs. Coulter pumps King Ogunwe for information the whole time, most of which he gives her. He explains that the Gallivespians are persecuted by the church in their own world, and so are happy to join with Lord Asriel. Then he tells her about the Authority and how he is not really the creator, but is an angel himself. Mrs. Coulter did not know this. King Ogunwe explains further that Lord Asriel intends to establish the Republic of Heaven, with no priests and no kings.

The party arrives at a foundry of enormous size, with anvils as big as houses and light so bright from the flames that it makes everyone flinch except the angel. The intention craft is revealed. It is a very complicated vehicle, resembling something for drilling and also a gyropter. It has a glass canopy and several levers and stands on six legs and has a confusing amount of wires and pipes. Mrs. Coulter is enthralled and looks at it. She witnesses the power of the craft when Lord Asriel pilots it into the sky and destroys a raiding party. In order to be driven, both human and daemon must work the controls.

When it lands, Mrs. Coulter abandons the idea she had of offering herself as a spy for Asriel's forces. Instead, she asks Asriel to explain how the craft works. He does so, and she pushes him out and steals it. Lord Asriel lets her go, asks Lord Roke to spy on her, and leads King Ogunwe to look at a more advanced intention craft than the one he allowed Mrs. Coulter to steal.

Chapter Sixteen, The Intention Craft Analysis

Lord Asriel does not seem overly fond of his daughter Lyra. He has nothing good to say about her, and is more irritated with her for getting in the way of his work than he is



worried about her general well-being. Mrs. Coulter says that she saved her daughter three times and that should be proof enough of her love for the girl. Some of Mrs. Coulter's actions in the past do not line up with this claim, but some of them do. When Mrs. Coulter learns from King Ogunwe that the Authority is not the creator, she is genuinely shocked. This is one of the few moments when the reader gets an "inside view" of what this character thinks.

The intention craft seems to materialize and dematerialize. It is not possible to see how it moves; one sees simply that it is in one spot one moment, and then another next. Mrs. Coulter believes she now has a powerful machine at her disposal. Asriel believes she will spy for him. We know that is what Mrs. Coulter was going to offer—until she saw the craft. "Intention" is a multi-layered word in this book. Iorek talks about the intention of a tool, and the reader is in the dark as to Mrs. Coulter's intentions. Lord Asriel's motives are clear. After all, he is planning his Republic of Heaven from his headquarters in his "adamant" tower.



Chapter Seventeen, Oil and Lacquer

Chapter Seventeen, Oil and Lacquer Summary

Mary Malone is building a scientific instrument with which she can study Shadows. The inspiration comes to her after she burned a design on a piece of wood using the sun and the magnifying glass in her Swiss Army knife. Thinking back on what she learned at Oxford, she considers that in the future, if someone studies the design on the wood, they would see Shadows, since a being with consciousness created the design. She explains her thinking to her Mulefa friend Atal, and is astonished that Atal understand exactly what she's talking about. The Mulefa word for Shadows or Dust is Sraf, and they also recognize the distinction between children and adults. Atal says, without hesitation, that the Mulefa are 33,000 years old. Atal then tells a story, a "make-like," about how the Mulefa gained consciousness. The key ingredient is the oil from the seed pods.

Mary makes a lens out of sap lacquer from the seed pod trees. The Mulefa already make a varnish from the sap and Mary picks up their technology to create a lens with layer after layer of lacquer applied to a piece of wood, which she then removes from the hardened, amber-colored sheet. After more experimentation, she cuts the sheet in two and discovers how to see shadows. By using two sheets of the amber "glass" held a hands-width apart and by coating the surface with the seed-pod tree oil she got on her hands after grooming her friend, the Shadows/Sraf/Dust become visible. Mary is excited and shows it to Atal, who is a little surprised that Mary could not see the Sraf before, without the aid of the device.

Then things change. The Mulefa reveal to Mary that they desperately need her help. The evil large birds, the tualapi, have been increasing in number and for the last three hundred years, the trees have begun to sicken despite the best efforts of the Mulefa to keep them alive. They respect and admire Mary. To them, she is as fast as a bird and they need her insight into things they do not understand. Mary agrees to help, although she is worried that she may not be able to help them.

Meanwhile, Father Gomez is patiently following Mary's trail, and sees before him the hut of the couple who sheltered Mary as she traveled from Cittàgasse to the world of the Mulefa.

Chapter Seventeen, Oil and Lacquer Analysis

This chapter takes the reader along on Mary Malone's journey of discovery in the world of the Mulefa. Much of the chapter is given over to detailed explanation of how Mary constructs the lenses of the amber spyglass using the raw materials and technology available to her. The technology is very different from that the reader is accustomed to. It is slow and takes advantage of natural properties rather than the creation and

construction of machinery or the depletion of natural resources. The Atal are clearly caretakers of their world.

Mary also learns more of the Mulefa history, which seems to parallel the history of the other worlds we have seen in the first two books. Atal tells the story of how a snake taught the first female Mulefa to use the oil. Once they learned the difference between themselves and other creatures, they set about naming everything and had a past, present, and future. Atal is very clear that the story is not a true and factual account of what happened, but that it is a metaphor, a story to help explain how consciousness came about.



Chapter Eighteen, The Suburbs of the Dead

Chapter Eighteen, The Suburbs of the Dead Summary

Lyra wakes first in the land Will picked for them to rest safely in, on their way to the world of the dead. Lyra asks the alethiometer how they should get rid of the Gallivespians, but the alethiometer tells her that their lives depend on the little spies. The alethiometer says they should follow the knife to reach the land of the dead.

Will and Lyra at first decide not to tell the spies what they are doing, and assert that the spies will just have to follow them. Then Will says they want a guarantee that the spies will not subdue them with their poisoned spurs. This infuriates the Gallivespians, who then say they will give the lodestone resonator to Will and Lyra, but Will and Lyra must tell them where they are going. When Lyra explains that they are journeying to the world of the dead, the spies do not believe it since, as far as they know, there is no such thing. Lyra explains about the promise she made to Roger. Will begins to cut through to another world and cannot help but think about his mother—and almost breaks the knife again. Since he cannot banish his mother from his mind, he acknowledges the distraction and gently directs himself to cut through to another world.

The world they enter has just been attacked. There is a dead man in some bushes and a terrible stench of death. They go into a farmhouse, load up on food, and Will cuts again as Salmakia reports that some men, presumably soldiers, are coming. The world they see through this new opening is exactly like the one they are in and there is a strange kind of barrier, like air pressure, that makes entering it very difficult. When Will, Lyra, and the spies enter the new world, they see the man who was dead in the bushes, seemingly alive, standing before them, terrified at their sudden appearance. Lyra speaks to him and he can talk, but he realizes he is a ghost and when Will tries to touch him, all he feels is cold air. The man, Dirk Jansen, begins to walk, saying he has to leave. Other dead people are coming from all over. The world begins to disappear, the colors fading, and the dead people realize they are dead. They are compelled to walk on and Will, Lyra, and the spies go with them. One of the dead people realizes that Will and Lyra are alive. He says, more or less to everyone around him, that now all will be separated into groups of the sinners and the righteous, and it is too late to pray. Tialys returns from a brief reconnaissance flight and reports that there is an old town up ahead, and it is filling up with dead people. It is a terrible place; grey, smoky, and smelling of garbage.

Chapter Eighteen, The Suburbs of the Dead Analysis

The Chevalier Tialys and the Lady Salmakia make themselves useful in the march to the city of the dead, despite the slights to their honor when Will suggests they will use



their poison against the children as they sleep. The Gallivespians fly on ahead and are the first to see where the long line of dead is headed.

The initial contact with dead people might not be what Will and Lyra expected, but it does not seem to be what the dead people expected either. The man they encounter in this different version of the world that had just seen some kind of military attack is terrified when he sees Lyra and Will and clutches his own throat. He knows how he was killed and does not want to look at his body. As the dead gather, they express fear and uncertainty, with the one exception of the man who expects to go wherever righteous people go.

All in all, it is a grim and terrible scenario. The dead travel but they do not know where. Their world is vanishing as they walk and as they begin forgetting what it was like to be alive. They settle into a lassitude that Lyra finds frustrating. In fact, she wants to do something for all of them, but is not sure what that would be. When they approach the town, it is the most unappealing, slum-like place the reader has seen in any of the three books.



Chapter Nineteen, Lyra and Her Death

Chapter Nineteen, Lyra and Her Death Summary

The city where the dead pass through is a depressing place, but the dead people seem eager to arrive. Lyra and Will are stopped by someone who is alive, just like they are. He is dressed in an old business suit and explains that since they are alive, they must go to a waiting area. He tells them that the dead must cross water to go to their final destination and he directs the party of the living to another part of the city. He holds out papers and Will takes them. The dragonflies are tired, so they ride on Will's rucksack and the spies sit on Lyra's shoulders.

Another man looks at their papers (even though the papers have nothing coherent written on them), and directs them on. There are strange groups of beings gathered around that are not human, but not Specters either. They are silent and will not respond to Will's questions. When Will and Lyra knock on the door of a house, they are regarded with some suspicion because they have not brought any death with them. Lyra explains that she comes from a world with daemons and makes it understood that they and the spies are harmless. All of the people living in the house are accompanied by shadowy figures; their deaths. The man who lets them in explains that all of the living people who are waiting in this town discover that their deaths have been with them all the time, they just did not know it at first. The people in this house explain it is comforting to have their deaths close by. The oldest woman in the house has her death very close by indeed. Everyone in the house eats and the deaths, who have been asked inside, have a bowl to pass around because they enjoy the scent of the food. When asked who they are, Lyra weaves a long story, full of lies and fabrications, about her life and about how Will found her. It gives her a lot pleasure to make all of this up, and she seems to have a ready audience.

However, they are really there to find a way into the land of the dead and the only being who knows is the old woman's death. He advises the children to invite their deaths along, to stop keeping their deaths at arm's length, to make their deaths welcome. Will asks how to do that and Tialys interrupts. Lyra goes outside with Tialys and he berates her, telling her she is foolish. Lyra argues back, accusing Tialys of lacking a heart and dares him to dig his spurs into her. She talks about how sorry she is about Roger and how she wants to see him and that if she dies, she will play with her friend forever in the land of the dead. Then Lyra's own death appears. She wants him to take her to the land of the dead. He speaks calmly and kindly, but is insistent that she will one day die and her daemon will vanish. He also promises to lead her. Tialys says he will go also. Lyra does not sleep well that night, as Pan is in torment and her death stays near.



Chapter Nineteen, Lyra and Her Death Analysis

The place where the dead pass through but the living must stay looks like a refugee camp. The buildings are in various stages of disrepair and dilapidation, and there are make-shift structures made from flattened gas canisters, plastic, and lumber scraps. Lyra and Will are identified as alive by some sort of official who hands them some papers and directs them to go on. The papers are meaningless, like the papers children would use in a game, pretending to be adults.

Lyra gets to tell a whopping big story about herself, Will, and the Gallivespians. She has not had the opportunity to lie in really elaborate detail for some time, and she feels it is what she is really best at. Lyra does not know it, but that is the old Lyra who is on the threshold of the worst experience of her life. This scene, where everyone listens to her ridiculous tale of moon people and whatnot, is perhaps Lyra's last childish moment in the series.

There is a lot of fear and anguish for the other characters in this chapter. The deaths that are in groups outside, not human and not Specter, make the hair stand up on Lyra's arms. The people who have lived in this place a long time, however, accept death and welcome their own into their home as guests and friends.



Chapter Twenty, Climbing

Chapter Twenty, Climbing Summary

Mary climbs high into the trees. She needs an observation post to find out what is happening to the sraf. Fortunately, she knows something about climbing and is able to run and knot her ropes in a safe manner. The Mulefa have turned her two panes of amber glass into a true spyglass by constructing a tube to hold the lenses. Mary looks at the flow of the sraf and notices that it is flowing out to sea. It is not falling into the open flowers of the trees to fertilize them. Therefore, explains Mary, the sraf has changed, not the trees. She reports her findings to the Mulefa in a large meeting attended by many of the people she has not seen before. She asks them to help her construct a platform so she can stay up there day and night to observe the pattern of the winds.

Father Gomez is still searching. He thinks he has lost sight of her, but then he finds the open window Mary used to go the world of the wheel-pod trees.

Chapter Twenty, Climbing Analysis

Mary Malone proves herself to be intelligent, resourceful, and ever the scientist. At some personal risk, she climbs to the top of the wheel-pod trees and, through observation, learns that the trees are not the problem. It is the flow of sraf. It goes out to the ocean rather than falling down and pollinating the flowers of the trees. If there is no pollination, then there can be no seed pods. If there are no seed pods, then there are no wheels. Without wheels, the Mulefa cannot survive.



Chapter Twenty-One, The Harpies

Chapter Twenty-One, The Harpies Summary

The Gallivespians, Lyra, Will, and Lyra's death set out for the harbor. Salmakia tells Lyra that she does not have to go through with this, and Lyra realizes what a fine person Salmakia is. Lyra is nearly overwhelmed with emotion, but insists they go through with their plan. On the way, they see an injured frog and Tialys says it would be kinder to kill it. Will refuses. He is tired of killing and the frog seems to want to live.

They arrive at the shore of a scummy body of water, in morning light that seems more like dusk. A boat comes to them, a battered old boat with an old boatman at the oar. Will gets in and then Lyra tries, but the boatman tells her that Pan must be left on the shore. The seriousness of what they are doing hits Lyra in all its force. Tialys and Salmakia try to convince the boatman to let Lyra take Pan. However, a bargain cannot be struck. It is a law of nature, like gravity. They will all leave something of themselves behind, explains the boatman, it is just that Lyra can see the part she will be leaving and the others cannot. Lyra cries and sobs, buries her face in Pan's fur. The boatman explains no one ever comes back and he has heard every excuse. He does not expect them to leave the world of the dead but if they do, they will have to come back by another way. Pan digs his claws into Lyra's clothing as Lyra tries to leave him behind. Then Pan does not say anything, to try and be kinder to Lyra. Girl and daemon look at each other as Lyra gets in the boat and the boatman pushes off from the shore. Lyra is in despair. Soon Will and the Gallivespians are feeling it too. Will realizes that whatever a daemon is, he has one too and it has been left behind on the shore with Pan.

Lyra and Will look ahead as they approach an island where there is a gate to the land of the dead. Will asks if they are now dead and the boatman says it does not matter. They get out of the boat and Lyra asks the boatman to tell Pan how much she loves him. The boatman agrees to do so, and leaves them there. Lyra feels exposed to the cold and thinks about Roger and how he must have felt. They find a door in the wall and try to enter, but a harpy knocks the Gallivespians away as they try to fly.

The harpies are hideous bird-like creatures with the face and breasts of a woman. They are covered in filth. The one who stopped them notices that the children are alive. Will says that they will fight their way in and the harpy talks about his mother. Salmakia stings the harpy, but it only makes the monster angrier and her cries draw others. Lyra asks the harpy her name. The harpy asks if Lyra would like to tell a story and Lyra starts in on her long, made-up despite a warning from Salmakia. The harpy screams "Liar! Liar!" at her and pulls out some of her hair. The screaming is relentless but Will cuts through the door with the knife, and they go in.



Chapter Twenty-One, The Harpies Analysis

Lyra must give up the most important part of herself, her daemon Pan. Pan cannot accompany the children and the spies on the boat, not because the boatman is cruel but because the boat will not move forward if the daemon gets in. In a wrenching sequence, Lyra must leave Pan behind, who at first clings to her. Since they entered the shantytown, Pan has begged Lyra to turn back. Lyra has always known, however, that they have to go on even if they do not want to. Will feels the same wrench at his heart when they cross. It is a terrible feeling, both physically and emotionally and for Will, it is as if he has betrayed his mother.

Lyra, despite the misery she must endure, is still able to remember why she is doing this. She thinks about Roger and how it must have been like this for him as he died. Will looks at her and sees what a sacrifice she makes. Reference is made in the chapter to a prophecy from the first book of the series, *The Golden Compass*, when the Master of Jordan College said Lyra would betray someone and it would hurt.

When the children encounter the harpy, Lyra gets ready to tell another story, thinking she can lie her way past the monster. However, the harpy, who knows exactly how to hurt someone, shrieks at her and calls her a liar, "so that Lyra and liar were one and the same thing."



Chapter Twenty-Two, The Whisperers

Chapter Twenty-Two, The Whisperers Summary

Will treats the gash that the harpy made in Lyra's head. Lyra's confidence is shaken since she thinks all she can do is tell lies, and telling lies did not impress the harpy. Will points out to her that she can do more than that, she can read the alethiometer. Now they turn their attention to their new surroundings. Before them stand a numberless quantity of people, both adults and children. These are the ghosts of the dead. They are listless and they cannot speak above a whisper. They are fascinated by Will and Lyra, but frightened, too. At the same time, they press close to the children, and the Gallivespians fly between Lyra and Will and the dead people to keep them from crowding in too close. The dead children press forward and brush up against the living children, but it is dangerous: Lyra and Will have only so much warmth to give. Lyra asks for help in finding her friend Roger. Will wants help finding his father, John Perry. However, the ghosts flee as the harpies arrive to scream, shriek, and mock. Will discovers that the harpies do not really want to touch them, that it was probably a mistake when the one, No-Name, hurt Lyra. Lyra is bleeding again, but she tells Will that she is glad they are there together, and Will takes heart. A ghost girl says she will help find Roger and John Perry. The other children ask Lyra about her daemon and talk about the daemons they lost. The children talk about how nothing ever happens in the world they have come to, and some others point out that it is not true: Lyra and Will have arrived and no one expected that. Lyra asks them what they want and if they could only see the world once more, would they do that? The children chorus that yes, they would.

Tialys and Salmakia talk and realize that they too have something that was ripped from them as they crossed in the boat. The lodestone resonator does not work. They both realize they must bring Lyra and Will to safety so that Lyra can fulfill her destiny; it is something other than leaving her daemon behind.

Lyra whispers her idea to Will, to take all of the dead outside by cutting an opening and letting them out. The Gallivespians fly ahead and spot Roger with the help of the other ghosts who are looking for him too. They fly back to Lyra to report and she has many questions, none of which Tialys can answer other than to keep walking, maybe for another hour.

Chapter Twenty-Two, The Whisperers Analysis

The ghosts are pitiful creatures. They are frightened at the sound of the harpies, and frightened of Will and Lyra. The ghosts are afraid of the harpies because the harpies torment the dead by saying awful things to them, screeching and wheeling overhead. The children in the world of the dead are more eager to get close to the living than the adults are and they crowd in too close, draining the live children of their energy.



Lyra and Will have arrived as saviors of the dead. Lyra has always known she is supposed to do something, and the idea for Will to cut through to the outside world and free the prisoners of this strange underworld, so unlike what they have been taught to expect, comes to her as they see the masses gathered. Lyra does indeed do more than tell lies. However, she is not aware of how much she cares about other people, even those she does not know, like the dead children who yearn for their vanished daemons when they see the Gallivespian dragonflies.

Tialys and Salmakia have changed from being angry and frustrated in their mission to realizing that helping Lyra and Will is the most important thing they can do. From a practical standpoint, their lodestone resonator no longer works. From a moral standpoint, they cross over to doing everything they can to help Lyra.



Chapter Twenty-Three, No Way Out

Chapter Twenty-Three, No Way Out Summary

Roger and Lyra meet again. Roger tries to embrace her, but he cannot. He also blames himself for what happened at Bolvangar. He has pretended to talk to her the whole time he has been in the land of the dead and he knew he would see her some day, but worried that she would be a grownup and have no interest in playing with him. He explains what the harpies do, that they wait until the dead are resting, then fly at them and torment them with all of the bad thoughts they ever had or anything stupid ever did. Lyra tells Roger that she knows the witches have a prophecy about her but she is not sure what it is other than she is supposed to do something important in another world. She thinks that rescuing the dead is her task. Roger said he told the others that would happen, but no one believed him because at first, they all thought someone would come for them and no one ever did.

Will tries to find a place where he can cut into another world. It is not easy, even with the spies distracting the harpies. He waits and relaxes and then is able to cut. All he finds are other underground worlds. The dead children want to hear about the worlds of the living. Lyra is afraid to try and Will advises her to tell them the truth. They want to keep their plan a secret from the dead until they can be sure it works. They are both sick and Will's hand has begun to bleed again. So Lyra tells them about the times she and Roger had in Oxford, about exploring the buildings and having fights with the children of the clayburners on the banks of the river. When she stops telling and looks up, she realizes the harpies are listening too, silently, without tormenting her. The harpies do not torment her because the stories are true.

No-Name explains they are given this job by the Authority, to see the worst in everyone and to feed on it. Then she spills the beans about Lyra's plan to lead the dead out and naturally, the harpies are worried. What will they do? Tialys proposes the harpies now ask everyone who comes to the world of the dead to tell them stories of their lives. When that is not enough for No-Name because there is no task involved, Salmakia adds that the harpies will lead the dead to the opening into the other world. In exchange, the dead must tell true stories. If they do not, the harpies do not have to show them the way out. The harpies agree and also offer to lead the travelers to a place closer to the upper world so that Will can cut through. Lyra reads the alethiometer to find out what will happen to the dead and she tells them: they will loosen and float apart and become part of everything, just like their daemons did when they died. One of the dead, a martyr, steps forward and reminds everyone that they have been lied to. They are not in Heaven, she says, they are in nothing. The ghost of a man disagrees. He says that this is heaven and that Lyra is evil and will lead them to Hell. Lyra doubts herself. Will reminds her of what she knows and they set off with ghosts behind them from every world, Mulefa included.



Chapter Twenty-Three, No Way Out Analysis

The harpies explain that they have been directed by the Authority to torment people. It is their task and their food, and it gives them something to live for, no matter how horrible. With Lyra's stories and the Gallivespians suggestions, the harpies are given some reason to stop being cruel to people and they realize that the true stories they hear are more satisfying than the ugly truths. The harpies have the potential for good in them, but they also give away the secret Lyra and Will want to keep from the dead.

The woman who was a martyr is explicit about their situation. She died because she was told she would spend eternity in the company of the Almighty and with saints and angels. They were all lied to. Everyone is in this place; the good as well as the bad. She would rather drift apart and become one with the natural world. Meanwhile, the man who still believes insists that they are living in a wonderful place and that they should stay. He calls Lyra an agent of the Evil One. It is a bad moment for Lyra as she doubts herself once again. Without her daemon, she feels unable to make decisions and even calls into question the times she has made mistakes. Will is like her daemon in this chapter and in Chapter Twenty-Two, reminding her of what she is capable of and what she can do.



Chapter Twenty-Four, Mrs. Coulter in Geneva

Chapter Twenty-Four, Mrs. Coulter in Geneva Summary

Mrs. Coulter drives the intention craft to the College of St. Jerome in Geneva. After sneaking in through the roof, she finds Father McPhail. Mrs. Coulter is very much herself, taking the opportunity to insult a young monk, Brother Louis, and demanding he fetch her something to drink. Mrs. Coulter does not explain anything about the intention craft, but says she stole a gyropter and landed if far from the College when it ran out of fuel. When McPhail asks why she did not turn Lyra over to them, Mrs. Coulter said she wants to protect her daughter from the priests. She tells him about Lord Asriel's fort and his foundries. McPhail knows about Will and the knife. Mrs. Coulter also confronts McPhail about God, so exhilarated at talking bluntly to him that she does not care what happens to her. McPhail orders her taken to a guest room and locked in. McPhail knows that some of what she tells him is the truth, and some is not.

In her room, much to her surprise, is Lord Roke, whom she sees after she has disabled all of the hidden listening devices. Roke tells her that they are doing something down in the cellar of the College, and that he is there to spy on her and also to help her. He does not mention an unknown concentration of something, perhaps angels, that has been spotted in the air to the west.

After Mrs. Coulter goes to sleep, Brother Louis lets himself into the room with a key. He is there to steal the locket around Mrs. Coulter's neck. He does not want to touch her while he does it. Roke gets outside of the room and follows Louis, who takes the locket to McPhail, Fra Pavel the alethiometrist, and Dr. Cooper who was being tortured in the basement. The locket contains the hair Mrs. Coulter snipped from Lyra's head. It is enough and the young monk is sent back to replace the locket. McPhail will use the hair to direct an aiming device to Lyra, regardless of what world she is in, and then they will generate the power for an explosion and Lyra will die. Dr. Cooper takes the envelope. Lord Roke flies after him, stings him, and takes the envelope with the hair. Lord Roke wakes Mrs. Coulter and tells her, but she sees it is only half of the lock of hair. Father McPhail bursts into her room and accuses her of having an accomplice. Mrs. Coulter denies the existence of an accomplice and makes a great show out of being indignant and not knowing what happened. McPhail orders her to be chained and kept prisoner in the cellar and Mrs. Coulter and Lord Roke have time to exchange glances.

Chapter Twenty-Four, Mrs. Coulter in Geneva Analysis

The Church is seen at its worst so far in this chapter. When Mrs. Coulter insults McPhail and explains what she wants to protect her daughter from, he does not deny any of it.



Her accusations against the Church are very different from how the institution apparently sees itself. Self-denial of food and comfort is practiced by McPhail and the other monks and priests. Their surroundings are not pleasant and even the drink they serve Mrs. Coulter is weak, a nod to their beliefs and not to the comfort of a guest. Brother Louis is revolted by and frightened of touching Mrs. Coulter—and perhaps not because he worries about waking her up.

Some of the servants of the Church seem unhappy with what is going on. Fra Pavel, the one who can read the alethiometer, never seems very excited about his tasks and almost reluctant, but he never speaks out. Dr. Cooper has been tortured into submission. McPhail dislikes Mrs. Coulter's lies, but he himself dissembles and distorts the truth to get what he wants. McPhail also refers to Dr. Cooper as a "guest" of the college. It is a terrible place to be a guest.



Chapter Twenty-Five, Saint-Jean-Les-Eaux

Chapter Twenty-Five, Saint-Jean-Les-Eaux Summary

The waterfall of Saint-Jean-Les-Eaux supplies the power to run the machinery for the explosion about to happen, the one that will kill Lyra. That is where McPhail has traveled, along with Mrs. Coulter, other priests and crew members, and Lord Roke, although McPhail does not know of the existence of the Gallivespian. There is a storm and it is hard for McPhail's zeppelin pilot to find a place to land. Roke hides inside Mrs. Coulter's heavy coat and the monkey tucks him in. Mrs. Coulter pretends that she cannot walk well and needs help. The young guard assigned to her will not unlock her handcuffs, but lets her (and Roke) know who has the key. Roke subdues two guards to get to the correct key, not easy considering Roke's size and that he is being battered by hail. He gets the key just as the two unconscious guards are discovered. Roke is caught in the beam of a floodlight but gets away and delivers the key to Mrs. Coulter. She frees herself and goes to the bomb. She wants to get Lyra's hair out before they detonate it, but they must wait until the bomb is set up. McPhail also wants to use the power of an incision to detonate the bomb, and wants that incision to be Mrs. Coulter and her daemon. Since Mrs. Coulter invented the technique to begin with, she sees the balance. Roke cannot sting people forever—he will run out of venom with no time for it to build up again.

McPhail has a witch working for him and she orders her to find Roke and kill him. He knows Mrs. Coulter has escaped. Roke is wounded, his leg broken. The golden monkey picks up the small spy to save him at Mrs. Coulter's instruction. Mrs. Coulter can see that McPhail is going to sacrifice himself since she is no longer available, and sacrifice himself by using his own incision as the galvanizing force for detonation. The witch finds Mrs. Coulter, shoots an arrow and she and Mrs. Coulter fight hand-to-hand. McPhail puts his daemon in the incision chamber. The witch's daemon seizes Lord Roke but the witch soon falls to the ground, Lord Roke's spur in her neck and Lord Roke dead. The witch says something is coming, but no one pays attention. There is gunfire. Mrs. Coulter and her monkey try to keep the machine from working. McPhail fights back. The monkey tries to get Lyra's hair out of the machine but there is a huge sound and a flash of light and the monkey is thrown into the air. Mrs. Coulter can see McPhail speak but cannot hear him and the blade drops down.

Mrs. Coulter feels hands lifting her—it is Lord Asriel, and his daemon is carrying the golden monkey in her mouth. She asks if the bomb went off but he says nothing. She tells him that Roke is dead and they fly away in the intention craft. Mrs. Coulter looks at the carnage with tears in her eyes.



Chapter Twenty-Five, Saint-Jean-Les-Eaux Analysis

There is much violence and action in this chapter as Father McPhail now has the final elements of his plan to kill Lyra—the hair of the girl and her mother and daemon for intercision. The intercision will release enough energy to detonate the bomb.

This is the first time we have seen Mrs. Coulter cry. It is not expected as she is such a forceful person and has been responsible for a number of horrible things herself, having committed murder, invented the intercision device, helped her daemon to torture bats, kidnapped children, and lied constantly to further her own murky plans. However, she works without hesitation to get to the bomb and take the golden hair of Lyra so that her child will not die, and without much thought to surviving the ordeal. It is strange to see her working so closely with someone as she does with Lord Roke, especially after their exchange in her room in the previous chapter.

Hugh McPhail does not hesitate to sacrifice himself, either, and immediately places himself and his own daemon into the machine to supply the power to set off the bomb. He is as willing to die for his cause as Mrs. Coulter is for hers.



Chapter Twenty-Six, The Abyss

Chapter Twenty-Six, The Abyss Summary

No-Name the harpy is leading the group deep into some caves. Salmakia is feeding her own blood to her dragonfly to try and keep it alive, since the shimmer of the large insects is the only light the group has. Lee Scoresby's ghost appears to warn Lyra of what is about to happen with the bomb. Lee's ghost asks if Will is there with the knife—and Will's father's ghost, the ghost of John Parry, is right next to the Texan. John Parry tells him to find the place on Lyra's head where the lock of hair was cut and instructs him to cut it off down to her scalp, then open a new window, put the hair through, and close the window. As soon as Will does so, the ground begins shaking. An explosion is taking place someplace near them, enough to make the rocks fall down and enough to shift them from where they were standing. None of the living die and none of the dead disappear, but a light is coming from someplace and a great abyss has opened. They have to cling to handholds and footholds in the rock. It is a terrible experience; the only ones who are not worried are the harpies, who fly above. Some of the dead are angry, saying that as bad as their world was, it was better than this. Salmakia urges them to trust Lyra, which inspires Lyra to keep going.

John Parry thinks that before they dissipate into the universe, they should help Lord Asriel fight and that perhaps they can defeat Specters. The Chevalier Tialys knows he does not have much longer to live, except as a ghost, but also knows that, thanks to Lyra, he will not stay a ghost for long.

Lyra gets dangerously dizzy while moving forward, but she wants to act like it does not matter to her. She tries to walk gracefully but slips and begins to slide down and then slips into the abyss, but is rescued by No-Name, the harpy. Lyra cannot speak, she is so shattered by what almost happened. After another hour of walking, Will sees something and soon everyone is climbing up, farther away from the abyss, as the slope gets less steep. The harpy advises going further before Will tries to open. When Will does try, his father stops him and tells him to let the ghosts into Lord Asriel's world to fight, and that Lyra and Will's daemons have gone there also. Then John Parry tells them people cannot survive in a world not their own. John Parry himself was as healthy as anyone, but by living in another world, unable to return to his own, he grew weaker and mortally ill.

Will cuts a window and cuts it wide enough for several ghosts to pass through at once. The first to step out is Roger, and he disappears from sight in a burst of happiness.

Chapter Twenty-Six, The Abyss Analysis

Will is reunited with his father, as is Lyra with Mr. Scoresby. It is very fitting and emotionally satisfying to have this meeting, especially since the ghosts are able to



continue the work they started before they were killed. John Parry comes up with the idea to fight Specters. Lee tells Will what to do so that they can counteract the effects of the bomb. The explosion from the bomb is so terrible that even though it occurs in another world, it still causes damage in the world of the dead.

While Lyra is certainly cured of telling lies after her encounter with the harpy, there is still plenty of vain and adventurous Lyra left over and she chooses exactly the wrong moment to show off and impress Roger. It is nearly her undoing and she is saved by the same creature who humiliated her when they arrived at the gate.



Chapter Twenty-Seven, The Platform

Chapter Twenty-Seven, The Platform Summary

The Mulefa build a platform so Mary can stay in the trees and observe the flow of sraf. It is comfortable and even though the situation is dire, Mary is happy up in the trees. She looks at the sraf through the spyglass. What she knows is that things were happening in multiple worlds three hundred years ago: the trees of the Mulefa began to fail, scientific discoveries were being made in her world, someone invented the alethiometer in Lyra's, and the subtle knife was created.

Mary feels herself lifted out of her body while she relaxes with the sway of the trees. She is born away in the wind that carries the Dust and she is going very fast. She tries to stop, but she has no arms to reach out with and as she is losing sight of her own body, she thinks of real and concrete things like the smell of coffee or the touch of her friend Atal, and then she stops. While she is still, almost tied to her body, the wind keeps going. However, the Dust, the conscious particles, reacts to her anxiety and brings her back to her body. She realizes that Dust is part of her and she is part of dust, and it is the same for every conscious being.

Father Gomez has arrived in the world of the Mulefa. He is about to be attacked by one of the large birds, but he kills it with his gun. The other birds understand what happened and they fear him. Father Gomez realizes that he can control them.

Chapter Twenty-Seven, The Platform Analysis

Mary's scientific skill comes into play again as she works on a hypothesis. Father Gomez reaches the conclusion that violence is an effective weapon as he subdues and dominates the large, dangerous birds.



Chapter Twenty-Eight, Midnight

Chapter Twenty-Eight, Midnight Summary

Lord Asriel lands the intention craft and Mrs. Coulter is no longer a prisoner and free to move about on her own, but she is very weary and cold. She calls for the alethiometrist who tells her Lyra is alive and yet in the world of the dead, and escaped the bomb. Mrs. Coulter is relieved and exhausted, but cannot sleep.

Lord Asriel and King Ogunwe see the Clouded Mountain in the distance. The Regent, Metatron, is directing its passage and now rules the kingdom. Lord Asriel says Metatron will be in charge of everything, and if his forces win, there will be a "permanent Inquisition" at all times, forever. Asriel and Ogunwe spot a huge number of angels gathering around the location of the Authority and Metatron. The wave of angels parts long enough for Asriel and Ogunwe to see that the Mountain is armed. The king seems to be despairing but Asriel reminds him they are still stronger than the angels because the humans have physical bodies. When Ogunwe suggests that perhaps all of those angels are looking for Lyra, Asriel praises his daughter and Will. Ogunwe suggests they consult Basilides, the alethiometer reader. Madam Oxentiel, Lord Roke's replacement, is also summoned. From all over, warriors who side with Asriel are assembling.

At a midnight meeting, Asriel, King Ogunwe, the angel Xaphania, Madam Oxentiel and Basilides gather. They have just learned new information. Metatron intends to capture Lyra and Will's daemons to force the children to follow him. That means Asriel's forces must find the daemons first. They discuss the angel Metatron, how he used to be a man and how strong he is. Asriel says that perhaps the only reason the Republic exists is to save Lyra. He also wants to destroy Metatron and he instructs Xaphania to find the way to the abyss that was opened when the bomb went off.

Mrs. Coulter and Asriel talk. Mrs. Coulter is fatigued and certain that everyone is doomed. She surprises Asriel by saying they should have married and raised Lyra together. She speaks about how frightened she is of oblivion. Asriel admits he wanted her to come with him in the north, after the experiments with the children were demolished, and that he told her a lie in order for that to happen. She stands and reaches inside her bag for her pistol. A messenger comes with the news that the daemons of Will and Lyra have been spotted. Instantly energized, Asriel jumps up and leaves the room. Mrs. Coulter and her daemon make a decision that is not revealed.

Chapter Twenty-Eight, Midnight Analysis

As the chapter begins, Mrs. Coulter is in the odd position of finding herself completely ignored. Lord Asriel has completely reversed his opinion of his daughter. After finding out that the girl has a central role to play in the war between the Authority's forces and the newly-founded Republic of Heaven, he is enthusiastic about her accomplishments



and wants to meet Will. After conferring with the alethiometer reader, he is much more serious as he begins to understand the true nature of her importance. By the end of conference, he realizes that whatever else happens, Lyra must live. He no longer sees himself as the center of action and rebellion, and concedes that the Republic of Heaven might not be the end result of all of the work and sacrifice of himself and others.

We also see Asriel and Mrs. Coulter together, seemingly reaching a moment of agreement or shared understanding. For a brief time, they are not antagonists. The golden monkey reflects Mrs. Coulter's mood of contrition as it ducks its head before Lord Asriel's leopard daemon. Mrs. Coulter expresses anguish and a fear of oblivion. Lord Asriel either cannot comfort her or chooses not to. Then she picks up her rucksack to bring out her gun. The reader has no idea what she is going to do. Was she getting ready to kill Asriel, herself, or perhaps both? Maybe she was going to throw the gun away? It is a mystery. The reader is so rarely let inside Mrs. Coulter's mind other than to observe emotions—and almost never to understand her plans—so we cannot know what she intends to do. The chapter ends with a similar frustration as she takes her daemon and leaves the room on an unknown errand.

Chapter Twenty-Nine, The Battle on the Plain

Chapter Twenty-Nine, The Battle on the Plain Summary

Will and Lyra are exhausted, but they still have to move on and find their daemons. The rest they had the night before when they let the ghosts out was not quite enough. Lyra almost cannot read the alethiometer because she is having trouble understanding it and keeping her focus. Lee Scoresby and John Parry are right there and Lee asks to be remembered to lorek. Lyra gives the nameless harpy a name, Gracious Wings, as a gift for saving her life. The harpy reminds Lyra that they will meet again one day, and Lyra said she will not be afraid, knowing that it will be Gracious Wing who greets her. Tialys and Salmakia are very weak and their dragonflies have died. Will prepares to cut through to Lord Asriel's world, but thinks how good it would be if he, his father, and his mother could all be together again. He stops himself before he breaks the knife, and Lyra helps him to concentrate so he can cut.

Will cuts directly into the battle. All kinds of beings are fighting, including Gallivespians, angels, and Specters, the latter which are gaining the upper hand. Lee and John Parry throw themselves into the fray. Lyra can tell that Pan is nearby. Then she feels a numbness and knows the Specters are now a danger to both herself and to Will: they must have grown up enough and the Specters are attacking their daemons. Lyra's pain eases and she knows that Pan and Will's daemon have escaped.

Witches arrive, and they are each holding a torch made of pine that's been dipped in bitumen. The witches fly at the angels and set their wings on fire. It begins to rain, but the rain will not put out the torches and the witches are able to keep fighting. Meanwhile, Lyra calls for Pan and the children stumble across the battlefield. Lyra must hold Salmakia because the Gallivespian is close to death. Will and Lyra feel the nausea again, and both know that their daemons are once more in danger.

Chapter Twenty-Nine, The Battle on the Plain Analysis

Lee Scoresby offers comfort to Lyra, as does the harpy. Lee says that death is over. The Gallivespians choose not to tell Lyra and Will they are dying because they do not want to distract them from the task of finding their daemons. There has been much death in the earlier books, but now it seems that final goodbyes are being made all around, as much as anyone has time to say goodbye.

Will must still struggle with his anxiety over his mother and he almost breaks the knife again. This time, he overcomes the thoughts and feelings by looking at Lyra. He

becomes very aware of her, of her breath, of the scent of her body, and this helps him in his task of cutting.



Chapter Thirty, The Clouded Mountain

Chapter Thirty, The Clouded Mountain Summary

One again, Mrs. Coulter is piloting the intention craft. This time, she is heading for the Clouded Mountain. As she approaches, she is slightly confused since the Clouded Mountain is not like anything familiar. She lands the craft and gets out, along with her daemon. She sees a group of angels carrying a litter and though it is hard to see inside, it is clear that there is an old angel, an impossibly old angel, being carried about. He has trouble controlling his hands as he points to the intention craft, and he howls in misery.

Mrs. Coulter presents herself to Metatron by talking her way past the angel guard. She says she knows where Lyra's daemon is, and as proof of her faith, she invites Metatron to look at her and tell her what she sees. Metatron looks at her and he trusts her because all he can see is that she is a "cesspool of moral filth." Mrs. Coulter feels triumph at this assessment. Then the angel tells the woman that he finds her attractive and desirable, and that of all of the wives he has ever had, he has never had one like her. Mrs. Coulter offers herself as his consort and offers to take him to Asriel.

The Authority is being taken to what should be a safe place, but a cliff-ghast notices the litter and follows it. In another part of the world, Lord Asriel descends down a crack in the mountain near the fortress. It is filled with Dust and he knows his daughter has been there.

Will and Lyra are still on the move. Tialys warns them of approaching enemy forces so they run, but then run into a band of cliff-ghasts hammering at something that looks like the glittering cage holding the very old angel.

Chapter Thirty, The Clouded Mountain Analysis

Mrs. Coulter undergoes a scouring under the eyes and intellect of Metatron, to whom she offers the whereabouts of Lord Asriel and Lyra's daemon. Mrs. Coulter invites the prince of angels to look at her, since he is too bright for her to look at. Look at her he does, and he sees all of her evil. She is happy when he sees it. She can also tell that he is attracted to her and so she offers herself as well. When she does that, she has her worst moment of fear of discovery, but she trusts what she knows about angels: they long for humans and to be close to humans. At last, the reader has some inkling of her plan—and her plan is to save Lyra, not herself. Despite her constant duplicity, despite the violence of which she is capable, it looks as though Mrs. Coulter might have told the truth a few times about how she feels towards her daughter. However, it is not certain. As Metatron draws closer, the description of the moment is illustrated with the following sentence: "There was a sound, like the murmur and crackle you hear before you realize that what you are hearing is your house on fire." Whose house? Mrs. Coulter's - or Metatron's?



Chapter Thirty-One, Authority's End

Chapter Thirty-One, Authority's End Summary

Mrs. Coulter leads Metatron to the fissure in the rock Lord Asriel is exploring. Metatron says he could kill Asriel right now, but Mrs. Coulter begs the favor of being allowed to see Asriel's face as he learns she has betrayed him. Metatron senses her divided loyalties, but she is able to rally and hold him off. Metatron is overwhelmed by his need to kill Lyra and to have Mrs. Coulter as his lover, so much so that he does not know what she is up to.

Mrs. Coulter goes to Asriel. They talk and stand in a shower of Dust. Mrs. Coulter knows they will not die and then move on like the ghosts, but instead they are about to go through something much worse than death in order to save Lyra: they must fall into the abyss and take Metatron with them. Mrs. Coulter at last speaks the truth of her heart to Asriel, and she calls Metatron to her side. Metatron comes forward, but sees both humans and both daemons ready to spring on him.

A fierce and anguishing fight ensues. The daemons tear at Metatron with claws and teeth and Mrs. Coulter leaps onto his back. Metatron smashes her against a rock and, stunned, she lets go of him. Asriel tries to crush the breath from the angel, but Metatron smashes his fists against Asriel's head again and again and just as the angel is about to kill the man, the golden monkey bites the angel's hand. Lord Asriel is dying and still fighting and he knows he must hang on and drag the angel down. Metatron falls down to his knees. Mrs. Coulter pulls his head back so that Asriel's daemon can sink her teeth into his neck. Asriel drags them backwards. Mrs. Coulter falls off and Asriel and the angel are over the pit, but the angel is strong enough to fly. Asriel calls, "Marisa! Marisa!" and Mrs. Coulter leaps, grabs the angel, and all go down into the abyss.

Lyra and Will attack the cliff-ghasts who are trying to break into the Authority's covered litter. Tialys dies as he spurs a cliff-ghost. Lyra and Will see the angel in the litter, terrified, curled up and crying. Will cuts open the crystal wall of the litter and helps the old one outside. As soon as the wind finds him, he dissolves. The mounted soldiers are coming. Salmakia tells Lyra to hold out her fist and Lady Oxentiel, riding the hawk, lands. She directs the children and Salmakia dies. Will and Lyra duck down as lorek and his bears arrive, destroying the enemy. A rider throws a net over the bear king but Will cuts it away with his knife. Freed, lorek kills an attacker and commands both of the children to get on his back.

Lady Oxentiel directs lorek to a grove of trees where there are Specters and ghosts - and the children's' daemons. Witches are arriving with burning branches of pine. Lee comes forward and speaks to lorek, the Lady tells Lyra and Will to move, and they plunge into the grove. Both daemons have taken the form of wildcats and are spitting and hissing as the Specters approach. Will is able to cut through to another world, a prairie world like the one Lee comes from. Lee holds off the Specters. Lyra grabs Will's



daemon and he grabs hers. Will speaks with his father, tells him that he fought because he had to, and that now he is free. Will and John Parry, their work completed, drift free. Lee knows he is on his way to see his daemon, Hester.

Chapter Thirty-One, Authority's End Analysis

Mrs. Coulter overcomes her worst fear, the fear of oblivion she told Lord Asriel about. She is so afraid of oblivion that she nearly decided torture would be better, because at least it would be feeling something. However, she goes into the abyss to save Lyra. The abyss cannot be escaped from. Even the dead, as they were leaving their world to go outside and join the universe, were afraid of the abyss. Metatron is blinded by lust, which is presumably a sin in the eyes of the Church, and the sin it has fought so hard to end. It is ironic that this sin should distract him so much that he believes what he wants to believe. The Authority has been a prisoner inside his crystal litter for many years, unable to get out, growing older and more terrified. When Will cuts the crystal cage, the exhausted creature seems relieved to disappear into the universe. Will frees himself from any expectations, even those of his father, when he realizes he does not want to fight and kill any longer. In spite of everything, a shock runs through both Lyra and Will when they realize they are holding each other's daemons, something considered too intimate and almost taboo.



Chapter Thirty-Two, Morning

Chapter Thirty-Two, Morning Summary

Lyra and Will are asleep in the world they were able to escape into after they found their daemons. They are thin from hunger and look more dead than alive. Lyra wakes and calls for Pan, then looks at the graves where they buried Tialys and Salmakia. She refreshes herself and comes back to find Will awake, carving the names of the Gallivespians on the headstone they put on the grave. They wonder where their daemons are, and it must be fairly close by because they do not feel like they did in the world of the dead. They hear the sound of wheels and are worried until Lyra reads the alethiometer and discovers that the creatures are friendly. They are approached by a group of Mulefa who have learned enough English to tell Will and Lyra to come and see Mary, and to ride.

After a long, bone-jarring ride, they walk, then ride again, and then arrive at the village where Dr. Mary Malone steps out of a hut to greet them. The Mulefa bring food and Will and Lyra eat it, but cannot eat much. Mary tells them that all they have to do is sleep, and they do. Mary knew Lyra and Will were coming from a dream she had. Her Mulefa friend, Atal, asks if the sraf will stop disappearing so quickly, but Mary does not know.

A group of Mulefa from another village comes to fetch Mary. They have seen something strange and want her to look at it. Mary travels with them until they reach the place with the anomaly. Mary sees an opening from another world—and sees ghosts coming out of it, looking joyful, and then vanishing. The ghost of an old woman comes out and says to Mary, "Tell them stories" before she vanishes. Mary almost remembers her dream from the night before but it vanishes, the way dreams do when we try to remember them.

Chapter Thirty-Two, Morning Analysis

The chapter begins slowly, giving the reader a break from the intensity and violence of the last several chapters. Lyra and Will try to talk about what happened with their daemons, but it is hard to discuss the fact that they held one another's daemon. Will does not know the name of his yet. They are also both weary and so unused to eating that they cannot accept much of the good rich food the Mulefa provide for them. Mary knew they were coming because of a dream, explains the "make-like" to her friend Atal, and then heeds the words of the old ghost coming out of the ground: "Tell them stories." The ghost woman is passing along a bit of advice to Mary: when it is Mary's turn to die and she goes to the world of the dead and encounters the harpies, she must tell them true stories because "they need the truth." Mary knows nothing of this situation, yet seems to find the advice meaningful in a way that she cannot even explain to herself.



Chapter Thirty-Three, Marzipan

Chapter Thirty-Three, Marzipan Summary

Lyra and Will join in the life of the Mulefa village. The children have slept and eaten, and are ready to help with the fishing nets. Lyra tells her story while they work. Later in the afternoon, Mary explains what she's theorized about the natural roads and the Mulefa not being vertebrates. Will does not understand why the witch killed his father and Mary says that "love is ferocious, too." Lyra looks at Will and feels that he is faithful like his father. Mary scans the horizon without telling the children she is on the lookout for the birds, and the three humans gather mollusks for the Mulefa. Mary talks theologically about spirit, soul, and body. Atal tells Mary that evening that a village was destroyed. Mary checks the sraf with her spyglass and sees that it is flowing faster than ever. She does not know what to do, except tell them stories.

That evening, Mary tells Will and Lyra the story of her life, how she became a nun and how she stopped being a nun. The pivotal point of her story involves an evening in Lisbon ten years earlier and the taste of marzipan. The taste brought back the memory of her first love. As she tells the story, Lyra is undergoing an emotional experience and listens intently. Something is changing for Lyra. Mary tells the rest of her story, about how she left the Church, about how she misses God—and then she is tired and runs out of stories.

Chapter Thirty-Three, Marzipan Analysis

In this chapter, Mary finally serves her role as tempter to Lyra. It all happens so naturally and quietly that it almost escapes notice without close reading.

Remember that Father Gomez has been sent out not so much to kill Lyra, but rather to find her tempter. He knows that Mary Malone is the tempter. Even though the admonition "tell them stories" from the ghost of the old woman seems to apply to a specific situation (the harpies in the world of the dead), it turns into the method by which Lyra is tempted. Mary tells stories. It is all she can think of to do and it fits in with the messages she has been given, both in her dream and by the old ghost. So she tells how she was a nun, how she became educated, and about the moment she lost her faith in the Church and in her vocation as a nun. The taste of marzipan eaten in a garden in Lisbon, under a lemon tree in the company of friends and in the company of a man she likes and admires, leads Mary to realize that what is missing from her life is love. When the man puts the marzipan in her mouth, she remembers the first time she ever loved anyone.



Chapter Thirty-Four, There is Now

Chapter Thirty-Four, There is Now Summary

Mary is wakeful and finally gives up trying to sleep. She feels that everything, the clouds, the trees, everything is alive and communicating. She goes outside to climb her platform into the tree, but the wind gets stronger and her tree falls down. She looks up with her spyglass and sees Dust moving faster than ever before into emptiness. She puts together all she has learned about the changes in different worlds that happened at about the same time three hundred years earlier. She realizes that the cuts made by the knife have caused the "leakage" of Dust. She realizes the moon, the stars, the trees, the clouds—everything, is trying to hold back the disappearance of Dust.

As she returns to the village, she sees one of the birds (maybe; they always move in a flock and this one is by itself) and then sees something get off. It is a man with a gun and he is going from house to house in the village. She watches him go into her house, come back out, and then leave, returning to the bird in the water.

Chapter Thirty-Four, There is Now Analysis

Mary goes out into the night and feels the interconnectedness of all things. She also has a moment where the knowledge of the possibility of something new almost steps in to take the place of her loss of faith in God. However, she does not feel connected and wants to climb the tree and try to get lost in the Dust again. The method for this quick-fix enlightenment is snatched from her when the tree falls down at her feet. However, she connects the dots of the changes and sees the terrible and true damage brought by the knife. She does not need the concept of God she once had—she sees purpose in life; "There is now!"

Mary's revelation about Dust, the disappearance and how hard the world is trying to hold on to it, is interrupted by the arrival of a stranger in the village, a man with a gun. She does not know that she has been stalked for some time by Father Gomez, but she knows there is a problem.



Chapter Thirty-Five, Over the Hills and Far Away

Chapter Thirty-Five, Over the Hills and Far Away Summary

As Lyra and Will prepare to go and look for their daemons, Mary cannot help but worry about the man with the gun. When Mary tells them, Lyra thinks he is just a traveler who has stumbled into this world, like Will's father. Mary makes the children promise they will not go into the trees because the man could be hiding there. They promise to be careful and off they go, armed with a picnic lunch.

Will and Lyra talk about looking for their daemons, about going home, about how daemons cannot live for long in any other world than the one they come from. Will has questions about daemons, and Lyra explains that they settle when their humans grow up. Will says he is used to hiding and cannot imagine having a daemon that everyone could see. At Mary's tree, the one that fell over the night before, Lyra thinks she spots Pan. Instead of chasing him, Will suggests they walk away. Lyra asks Will why he has to go back, and he says he needs to take care of his mother. Lyra asks him if he will keep the knife, so he can come and visit her in the future. The daemons are following, but Will and Lyra pretend they do not see them, but pretend very loudly and obviously. Lyra asks Will to remind her that they really did have to leave their daemons to enter the world of the dead and to free Roger and the others, and Will tells her that yes, they did. Then Will thinks that the daemons go into a group of trees, and Lyra and Will follow. Father Gomez sees them. He is worried about killing the boy but knows he has almost completed his mission and as he contemplates what he will do next, Balthamos grabs his daemon.

In the grove of trees, the daemons still have not shown themselves, so Will and Lyra sit down to eat. Lyra picks up one of the red fruits and lifts it to Will's mouth. They are both full of happiness, an incredible happiness. Lyra tells Will that she loves him.

Balthamos is walking away from the woods, clutching Father Gomez's daemon. The daemon, a beetle, is stinging and scratching, and Balthamos knows that Gomez can easily kill him. Gomez cannot see Balthamos, and the angel gives himself away when he steps in a stream, leaves a footprint, and Gomez gets close enough to feel the brush of wings. Balthamos leads Gomez away from the trees as quickly as he can. Gomez understands that if the angel could have killed him, it would have done so by now. Balthamos stops and Gomez launches himself at the angel, but he leaps too hard and goes much farther forward than he has to. Balthamos kicks the hand the priest puts out to support himself. Gomez hits his head and goes face down in a stream and Balthamos, even though he is weak, holds the priest's head under water until the man drowns. The angel stands up, calls to his dead friend Baruch, and vanishes.



Atal urges Mary to look at the sky and using the ambers spyglass, she does so. The Dust has stopped flowing away and is flowing straight down. She sees the children returning, hand-in-hand, talking. Mary does not need to look at them through the glass. She knows they look like gold.

Chapter Thirty-Five, Over the Hills and Far Away Analysis

Mary warns Lyra and Will not to go into the trees while they search for their daemons, but after searching and talking about what they think their futures will be like, the pair follow a stream into a grove of trees, but with a certain intention rather than in simple forgetfulness of Mary's warning. Once there, Lyra suddenly holds a piece of fruit to Will's mouth. It is the same gesture that Mary described to them the night before as she told them stories about the moment her life changed. Will understands instantly. Lyra tells him that she loves him, and they kiss: "Around them there was nothing but silence, as if all the world were holding its breath." There is no description in the text of what happens next and none is needed. Sexuality is very important and yet the author conveys this with great care and subtly. It is almost as if he is giving the characters their privacy. Their love, on their own terms and in their own time, is what stops the disappearance of Dust. They ignored the warnings of Mary to stay out of the trees and in looking for their daemons, found each other. Dust begins to fall, just like it should, rather than flow away into nothing.



Chapter Thirty-Six, The Broken Arrow

Chapter Thirty-Six, The Broken Arrow Summary

Pan and Will's daemon come to check on their humans, but are called to by a woman. It is Serafina Pekkala and she has come to talk to the daemons, who change into birds and fly up into a tree and join the witch. Serafina explains that witches all must do what Lyra and Will did—leave their daemons behind so that when they rejoin, the daemons can travel far away from their people. Will and Lyra, explains Serafina, have become like witches even though they will not live as long and even though Will is a man. Things are changing because of the two young people. The witch names Will's daemon Kirjava and then tells them what they are going to have to do. Neither daemon wants to hear it, so they both talk and talk about all they saw as they traveled together, away from Will and Lyra. The daemons were so unhappy over being left behind that they are still angry at their people and are punishing them by staying away. Then Serafina says that the daemons must tell Will and Lyra what they know, and what they know makes Pan cry. Serafina tells them they will settle into creatures that can climb high up in a tree.

Serafina gently wakes Mary by entering her dream and then, from within the dream, asks her to wake and talk. They discuss how Dust reversed its course and what the original rebel angel Xaphania told Serafina about wisdom and suppression. Serafina tells Mary she has a daemon and describes it to her: it is a bird. Then she tells Mary what she told the daemons and says that Metatron, Lord Asriel, and Mrs. Coulter are gone forever. Serafina breaks an arrow, the best one she has, because she once swore she would kill Mrs. Coulter. Mary asks Serafina if she knows what Lyra will do, but Serafina does not. Mary realizes she will probably have to go home, and the two women embrace and the witch flies away. Father Gomez's body becomes food for a family of scavenger lizards, and his gun turns to rust.

Chapter Thirty-Six, The Broken Arrow Analysis

Serafina Pekkala tells Lyra and Will's daemons something that makes Pan cry out with misery, something they already know and understand, but do not want to face. They tell her they do not want to hear what she has to say and that it is "too soon." However, the daemons know. They went from world to world on their own and saw what was happening. Serafina does not tell them to tell Lyra and Will what to do, but rather to tell their people what they know. By the end of chapter, we know it has something to do with returning to the worlds from which they came. Of course, earlier mention has been made of the consequences for people who try to live in a world other than their own. Doing so made John Parry sick and weak before his time, and Sir Charles had to go back to his own world periodically.



Chapter Thirty-Seven, The Dunes

Chapter Thirty-Seven, The Dunes Summary

The daemons come swooping back to Will and Lyra, but it is not the happy reunion that all have craved. Pan tells Lyra that Serafina is guiding the gyptians to the world of the Mulefa. Will's daemon turns into a cat and tells Will his name. Then the daemons explain about Dust and what makes it leak and flow away: Will's knife. Every time he cuts, the Dust leaks and heads towards the abyss. Therefore every opening must be closed, and either Will must live in Lyra's world or Lyra in Will's. But the daemons do not know that people cannot live a full life in any world but their own. Will and Lyra try to work it out, try to figure out some way they can be together, maybe by opening a window and shutting it quickly so Dust will not leak out. Then Will's daemon, Kirjava, explains that Specters are like the children of the abyss and every time a window is open, another one appears because the opening is like a part of the terrible darkness of the abyss. Specters feed on Dust and daemons. Will realizes that every time he has cut, he has made a Specter. Then he recalls that lorek said the knife had its own intentions. They both offer to live in the other's world, but realize that is not a good plan either, since one will die after only ten years or so. Will says he knows they have to live apart and build the Republic of Heaven in their own worlds. Lyra tries to read the alethiometer for an answer, but she has lost the ability.

Xaphania the angel arrives and asks Will's help in learning how to close the openings. She cannot help Will and Lyra, however. Xaphania explains that Lyra will be able to read the alethiometer again one day, but it will be due to hard work and study. Xaphania charges them with the task of being good in their own world to create enough Dust so that one window can be left open. Will thinks that means a window so he and Lyra can be together, but Lyra realizes the angel means the window that sets the dead free from their world.

Will falls into a sorrow much deeper than he has ever known. When he recovers, he shows the angel how to close by first making an opening into his own world. The angel holds out the possibility of future travel between worlds by use of imagination. Will asks if openings made by other means could be left open, but the angel says they will all be closed, otherwise Will will spend his life looking, and he has work to do. She leaves, and Will and Lyra ponder what has happened and what is about to happen. Their daemons come and each human touches the other's daemon, and the daemons and the humans know they will keep these forms forever, these forms that have been touched by a lover's hand.

Chapter Thirty-Seven, The Dunes Analysis

Will and Lyra search for ways to stay together, but quickly realize they will have to part, and part forever. There is no bargain they can strike, no trick, no loophole. Will is the



one who finally says that if they cannot spend their lives doing good together, then they will have spend their lives apart. Even after he says it, he still tries to find ways around their fate, but they both know there is nothing to be done. It will be up to Will and Lyra to let people in their own world know what life is about so that when others die, they will have stories for the harpies. When Will touches Lyra's daemon, it is even more intimate then when they touch each other. He does not hesitate and Lyra responds in kind. Their daemons are now fixed; Pan is a pine marten and Kirjava is a large and beautiful cat. They fulfill Serafina's prophecy that they will stay animals that can climb trees.



Chapter Thirty-Eight, The Botanic Garden

Chapter Thirty-Eight, The Botanic Garden Summary

The gyptians John Faa and Farder Coram arrive in their boats to take Lyra back to Oxford and Will back to the place where he can go back to his Oxford. The gyptians meet the Mulefa, and meet Will. The gyptians trade with the Mulefa and then the Mulefa show them the opening where the ghosts came out, a space the Mulefa treat as sacred. Mary departs with a bag of seeds and a vial of oil. Two weeks later, they land at Cittàgazze and everyone shares a last meal before going to the open window into Will's world. Mary tells Serafina she will go back with Will because she needs him; no one else will ever understand what she saw and what she knows. Will closes the old window from his world to Cittàgazze. Serafina teaches Mary how to see her daemon. Will cuts open a window and he, Lyra, Mary and Serafina step through together into Oxford. Lyra wants to go to the botanic garden and Mary reaches out for her daemon who steps onto her hand and then her shoulder. When they reach the botanic garden, Lyra says it is just the same as hers. They agree to both go there at the same time every year and they say their final goodbyes, smiling at each other but Lyra's tears winding up on Will's face. Will closes for the last time. He must now break the knife, but thinking about his mother does not work. He cuts through to another world and the knife remains whole. His daemon speaks Lyra's name, and Will presses the point of the knife onto Lyra's tear on his face—and the knife shatters. Mary promises to help Will keep his mother out of institutions, and says they can come and live with her.

Lyra attends a dinner in her Oxford three weeks later. Oxford has seen some turmoil and the Church is disorganized. People treat her differently and Lyra finds that she is seeing people she once disliked in a different way. She is not sure what to do with her life and she is at a loss now that she cannot use the alethiometer. Dame Hannah, a scholar at the dinner, tells Lyra she can study the alethiometer and go to school. The Master of Jordan College tells her she has a home there, always.

After the dinner, Lyra goes to the Botanic garden. She tells Pan she has decided to go to school, study, learn from the other girls at the school. They sit together in the garden and feel the wind and hear the bells and know that Will can feel and hear the same things. Lyra says they will build the Republic of Heaven.

Chapter Thirty-Eight, The Botanic Garden Analysis

Lyra and Will have taken their first steps towards growing up. They have accepted that they cannot be together, and they have accepted that they will have work to do in their own worlds as adults. They expect to live long and full lives teaching people the truth they know, and they both seem to understand that they have a lot to learn before they



can start doing that. Certainly Lyra does, as she has already decided to go to school and work with Dame Hannah even though the plan is for her to make an initial visit and then decide. Both characters are sad, both are determined to do the best they can. They do not blame anyone, they are not angry. Lyra has literally looked her death in the face, Will knows he is free to search for what he wants to be.



Characters

Lyra

Lyra was the main character in the first book of the trilogy and one of two main characters in the second. She has joined forces with Will Parry, whom she met in the second book, and together they are trying to reach Lord Asriel. This book begins with her kidnapping and drugging by her mother, Mrs. Coulter, who may or may not want Lyra dead. It is unclear from the last book exactly what her mother wants. Lyra is the daughter of Lord Asriel and Mrs. Coulter, and has been mostly ignored by the former and chased down by the latter. Lyra has been growing and maturing through the first two books and continues on her path to maturity in this one. She also wishes to make amends for the death of her friend, Roger, whom she inadvertently betrayed back in another world in a situation detailed in the first book, *The Golden Compass*. Lyra is headstrong and independent, ready to lie to anyone and to argue with anyone when she knows she is in the right. She is very brave and willing to fight and is in much pain in this book over the loss of old friends. She almost cannot forgive herself when she must be parted from her daemon, Pan, but she must let him go to find and follow her destiny. She falls deeply in love with her friend Will, and has the stirrings of love for her mother. Lyra is a natural at reading the alethiometer, a compass-like device that always tells the truth when asked a question. Her daemon is Pan, who has not yet settled on a permanent shape. Lyra is the new Eve, and this fact makes her the target of the Church.

Will

Will Parry. Will is 12 years old, from our world, and has turned into a deadly and powerful warrior as the book begins. He is the bearer of the subtle knife and lost two fingers of his left hand in the struggle over this object. His one weakness—if it can be counted a weakness—is the love he has for his mother, a vulnerability that is apparently exploited by Mrs. Coulter at a critical moment and that distracts him from his tasks. Having met and lost his father in a matter of moments in the previous book, he struggles to protect his companion Lyra and must stand up against other creatures who feel they know what he should do. Even though angels tell him to go to Lord Asriel, he will not abandon his search for Lyra. Will's experiences in his world of taking care of his mother serve him well in his struggles in the other worlds. He must think, plan, pay attention, weigh outcomes and possibilities, and make life-or-death decisions over and over again. He manages to outsmart the strong and formidable bear-king Iorek. His mistrust of adults serves him well in more than one instance. As he and Lyra travel to the world of the dead together, he realizes how much he loves her. He is honest and does not lie, but tells people straight out what he is going to do or does not tell them anything at all. Will fights when he must, hates killing, and even when someone else tells him that killing is the kindest thing to do a wounded animal, refuses to do so if it seems the animal wants to live.



Mrs. Coulter

Mrs. Coulter is Lyra's mother and a former servant of the Church when the book begins. While she has gone to any lengths and done anything in the past to advance her own aims, something seems to have changed inside of her after she kidnaps her daughter Lyra and keeps the girl drugged. However, Mrs. Coulter's motives are nearly always a mystery and it is hard to judge her final goals—and also judge when she is telling the truth and when she is lying. Mrs. Coulter is also very beautiful and does not hesitate to use her attractiveness to get men in power to do exactly what she wants. Even Metatron, the Regent of Heaven, is not immune to her charms. Mrs. Coulter is also brave and determined even though she lies and is manipulative. She does not hesitate to try and dismantle a bomb intended specifically for her daughter. She tells an official of the Church that he and his kind are disgusting. Her daemon is the golden monkey that is never named and never seems to speak, although the two understand each other completely. Lyra is the daughter she had with Lord Asriel, so a servant of the Church and the leader of a rebellion against the Church are linked much closer than either would like.

Lord Asriel

Lord Asriel is the leader of a rebellion against the Church and the Authority. He is bold, at times cruel, impatient with those around him (especially Lyra, whom he sees as an impediment before he learns of her importance) but also a charismatic leader who inspires other to follow. He is clever, tricking his former lover Mrs. Coulter into thinking she has stolen a valuable craft from him, when in fact he intended for her to steal it all along. Asriel believes in what he is doing, without any doubt as to its importance, the rightness of the cause, or the final outcome. Asriel changes towards the end of the book when he begins to understand Lyra's significance, and the part he must play. He is just as determined as ever, but is somber and more subdued.

Ama

Ama is a young girl in a Himalayan village who brings food to Mrs. Coulter. She believes at first that the woman in the cave is a holy woman who cares for her sick child. When Ama realizes Mrs. Coulter is drugging her daughter into a forced sleep, she becomes determined to free the girl from the unnatural enchantment. Once Will arrives, she will not hand the medicine to him, the medicine that will wake Lyra, but insists on performing the task herself.

Baruch and Balthamos

Two angels who want to bring Will and his knife to Lord Asriel. Balthamos is possibly female, but only responds in the negative when asked if he/she is a man. However, the pronoun "he" is used for Balthamos. Balthamos does not approve of Will's actions but is



powerless to stop Will from following his own course. He provides guidance to Will as Will travels. If there was a contest for Crabbiest Angel, Balthamos would win. Baruch is Balthamos' companion and a much younger angel who was a man in Will's world.

The Chevalier Tialys and the Lady Salmakia

The Gallivespians are small compared to humans. They ride hawks and large dragonflies, have a lifespan of about nine or ten years, and their heels end in poisonous spurs that they use to subdue or even kill their enemies. Gallivespians are very proud and take offense easily, and are the target of persecution by humans in their own world. They excel at spying.

Father Hugh McPhail

The President of the Consistorial Court of Discipline, a branch of the Church. McPhail is lean man who eats only bread and fruit, and is determined to serve the Church. He is in charge of building a very specific bomb to kill Lyra, no matter what world she is in, and is willing to die for the cause he believes in.

Father Luis Gomez

Fr. Luis Gomez. Father Gomez has been given a secret assignment by the Church, and that assignment is to kill Lyra. Father Hugh McPhail specifically tells him to search for Lyra's "tempter," and that will be the way to find the girl. Father Gomez is honored to be entrusted with this duty, and appears in the book at various intervals, patiently stalking Lyra's tempter as he follows Dr. Malone through all of the worlds through which she travels.

Lord Roke

Lord Roke is one of Lord Asriel's generals. He is the commander of the Gallivespian spies, and he rides a hawk. The humans have the utmost respect for him, especially since he is very proud, and so have added ledges at eye-height so Roke can land his hawk and speak to people eye-to-eye.

King Ogunwe

One of Asriel's generals. He is also a zeppelin pilot and commands the zeppelin forces. He is kind to Mrs. Coulter even though he does not want to be.



Atal

Atal is the female Mulefa who becomes good friends with Mary. Atal is responsible also for teaching Mary the language and the customs of the people. Atal is the one who notices when Mary has learned enough to be able to help the Mulefa.

Metatron

The Lord Regent. Metatron is an angel, possibly the strongest one since he likes to fight and often wins, unlike other angels who are not as physically strong as humans. He has taken over Heaven.

The Authority

The Authority is thought to be God, but he is really just an angel. While he was once the ruler of Heaven, he is now terribly old and held a prisoner in a crystal litter that stays inside the Clouded Mountain.



Objects/Places

The Alethiometer

A device about the size of a pocket compass that can answer questions posed by those who can read it. It has thirty-six pictures around the rim and a needle that points to pictures which reveal an answer to a question.

The Knife

The subtle knife cuts any material and cuts between worlds, but yet is not indestructible. If the bearer of the knife is distracted, the knife will shatter. The knife has intentions of its own, unanticipated by its creators. Will is the bearer of the knife.

Dust/Shadows/Sraf

All names for the same thing. Dust is consciousness. It is also vanishing.

The Amber Spyglass

Mary Malone makes the amber spyglass out of a lacquer made from the sap of seed-pod trees while in the world of the Mulefa. She cuts the sheet in half and creates two lenses. Through two lenses, she can see Dust. The Mulefa make a tube for the two lenses and thereby create a spyglass.

The Lodestone Generator

A communications device used by the Gallivespians to communicate intelligence gathered while spying.

The Consistorial Court

One of the powerful branches of the Church. An enforcement arm.

The Adamant Tower

Lord Asriel's fortress.



The World of the Dead

The place where all of the dead go. It is a dismal world of low light and listlessness.

Cittàgazze

The first alternate world Will enters and the place Will and Lyra first met. It is the birthplace of the knife and the place where Will eventually returns to his Oxford.

The Clouded Mountain

The residence of the Authority. The Clouded Mountain is mobile and not fixed.

The College of St. Jerome, Geneva

The home of the Consistorial Court. It is from here that Father McPhail gives Father Gomez his instructions.

Saint-Jean-les-Eaux

A waterfall that provides the power which will help detonate the bomb built to kill Lyra.



Themes

Technology and Evolution

The Mufela do not have a center spine and they roll rather than walk, using the pods from the seed-pod trees as wheels when they come to a certain age. In Lyra's world, there are gyropters and zeppelins rather than helicopters and jets. The Chevalier communicates with a lodestone resonator. Technology and evolution are "what if" themes that can be freely explored in fantasy/science fiction/speculative fiction. The intention craft only works with both human and daemon operating it together and seems to work by some sort of "soft" technology. Meanwhile, the "hard" technology available to the College of St. Jerome is going to be used to destroy Lyra and probably others. The anticipated explosion will be too large to harm only the one person the Church wants dead.

Compare the technology of the Mulefa to our own. They use metals only for ornamentation and their tools are made from the horns of their domestic animals, stone, wood, and shells. Mary Malone brings along a Swiss Army knife, which is completely foreign to the Mulefa. Atal, Mary's friend, is astonished by it. The knife also gives Mary the inspiration to create the amber spyglass of the title, with which she can observe the action of the Shadows. Mary also allows herself to "play" with the techniques for making lenses and not concerning herself overly with the end result. By this method, Mary discovers what she needs to know.

Multiple Choices, Multiple Worlds

Look at the following quote: , "When you choose one way out of many, all the ways you don't take are snuffed out like candles, as if they'd never existed." Just as multiple choices exist at the same moment, so do multiple worlds exist side by side in this book.

More than once, the two main characters contemplate their choices and the circumstances that brought them to their present location. One of the aleiometer readers (not Lyra), explains that the device often says "if this happens, then that might happen." The I-Ching is the same: it does not predict outcomes, it only offers commentary and speculation. It is always up to the characters to make their own choices and they are free to pay attention, interpret, or ignore the answers they receive.

The multiple worlds mirror and echo each other in their similarities and their differences. The Mulefa do not have a center spine or hands, yet they are intelligent and creative. Lyra's world and Will's world are very similar, with Oxfords and Arctics, Texas as a state and Texas as a country, zeppelins instead of fighter jets, for example. The Church of Lyra's world has the official position that more than one world is a heresy (and they have an imprisoned heretic mentioned by name at least once), but the Church is wrong.



Sacrifice

Once, both Lord Asriel and Mrs. Coulter were willing to sacrifice their own child to what each perceived as the greater good. However, while both characters might show reprehensible traits, neither is a hypocrite. Lord Asriel risks death as does Mrs. Coulter. Father McPhail is not a hypocrite either. When there is a need for a human and daemon separation to provide the power for an explosion, McPhail unhesitatingly sacrifices himself. When Lyra and Will take the boat to the land of the dead, Lyra must leave Pan behind. The full meaning of what she is doing hits her, and she must betray Pan and leave behind a part of herself. The Gallivespians are committed to their course of action and rather than worry the children when the group finds itself in the world of the dead, the two spies stay quiet and do not burden Will and Lyra with the knowledge of the approaching deaths. Will and Lyra must give each other up in the finale of the story when they learn neither can live in the other's world. They work hard at trying to find a solution, a "loophole," as Will says. However, they discover they have no choice, especially if they intend to grow up and help build the Republic of Heaven in their own worlds.

Story-Telling

The Mulefa have the term "make-like" for a metaphor; a way of describing something in terms of something else. Atal is very clear that her story about how the snake gave the knowledge of the seed pods to the Mulefa is a "make-like," a metaphor or a story, not an actual description of what really happened. When Lyra lies to the harpies, they punish her. When she tells the truth, they are still and listen. The former monsters realize that they get more satisfaction from a good story than they do from tormenting the dead. When the dead have been let out of their world and are joining the universe, a passing ghost gives Dr. Mary Malone a piece of advice: "Tell them stories." The ghost of the dead woman is referring to the harpies and she is telling the live woman, Mary, what to expect when she dies. Mary does not understand this, nor would she have any way to understand it. However, she uses this advice when she talks to the children that night and tells them about how she stopped being a nun and how a taste of marzipan changed her life. This story resonates with both Lyra and Will. We are given access to Lyra's thoughts and feelings, so we know a change comes over her. This is Lyra's "temptation," the thing the Church wanted to stop at all costs and the course Mary Malone was instructed to take by the Shadows in her own world.

Style

Point of View

The book is written in the third person from different viewpoints. The main views are Lyra's and Will's. Will dominates at the beginning because Lyra is trapped in a drugged sleep. We see Lyra and Will fall in love a little more intensely from Lyra's point of view, but we see Lyra through Will's eyes also. We also see the story from the point of view of supporting characters such as Ama. Since bears do not seem to do much introspection, we only get a glimpse of Lorek's internal thought process. As ever, Mrs. Coulter is hard to pin down on much of anything, a technique on the part of the writer that keeps us guessing as to what Mrs. Coulter will do next. Many of her actions remain unexplained, such as the moment when she almost pulls the pistol out of her rucksack when she and Lord Asriel have a private conversation. The golden monkey never speaks, only makes a noise every so often that is audible only to his human.

Setting

The book begins in the Himalayan mountains of Lyra's world. The reader knows this because the young girl, Ama, has a daemon. The book moves on to multiple worlds, so many that it is hard to keep track of them at times. Lord Asriel is building his army's strong-hold in another world. The Mulefa live in a world of grassy plains covered with natural roads and clusters of seed-pod trees. The world of the dead is important to the story and the point of Lyra and Will's journey. In fact, they refuse to go anywhere else even though they are told repeatedly that they must join Lord Asriel. Before they can go to the world of the dead, they must stay in a village across the water from the world of the dead, a place that seems like a refugee town, shabby, patched-together, and depressing. Lyra, Will and the Gallivespians pass through one of Will's cuts to a place that reminds them of a Dutch scene, a place where an attack on a civilian population has just taken place, and where horse-mounted soldiers are nearby. There are a few scenes that take place in some of the Church's strongholds, and one location, the Clouded Mountain which is the home of the Authority, moves as its true ruler, Metatron, sees fit.

Language and Meaning

The novel is written for a contemporary audience and a younger readership, but is well-written, well-plotted, and sophisticated enough to be enjoyed by adult readers. Lyra's way of speaking changes at the very end of the book as she matures from a spitfire little girl into a special young woman. Her slang goes away as she matures and realizes her love for Will. Will is very forthright and direct in his speech. He says what he needs to say and does not lie, but does not always tell everything he knows, either, if it is not to his and Lyra's advantage. He is very clear about his feelings when he can afford to be.



Mary Malone learns to speak the language of the Mulefa, and all of their dialogue appears in italics. Mary learns to wave her arms to mimic the use of the trunk in communication by the Mulefa. The Mulefa attempt to speak to Mary in her language when they first meet, repeating her phrases and laughing at the differences in sound. Lord Asriel is blunt, as fits his character. He is cold and cruel to Mrs. Coulter when she is a bound captive in his adamant tower and his tone is jeering and unforgiving. When both daemons appear together at the books end, they talk like excited children, without much sophistication but clearly with much understanding.

Structure

The novel consists of thirty-eight chapters, and each chapter has a title relevant to the events in the chapter. There are also several non-categorized sections in which Lyra, in her drugged sleep, talks to her dead friend Roger. These sections break off in mid-sentence between numbered chapters, with the dialogue or action picking back up again where it left off once the next chapter begins. The chapters are of varying length and complexity. Some chapters are heavy on explanation and some are heavy on action. A few of the shorter ones provide a bridge to the next, and are more like a quick aside. The actions of the character of Father Gomez are often the last paragraph of a chapter, and are set off from the rest of the action rather than being given their own chapter. This technique on the writer's part reminds the readers of what is going on without adding further length or exposition to the story.

The Amber Spyglass picks up where *The Subtle Knife* left off. The first chapter moves leisurely over the landscape of the Himalayan valley before leading the reader into the cave to discover Mrs. Coulter and Lyra.

The book is written in the third person and highlights different characters' thoughts and actions.



Quotes

"The golden monkey was right. She wasn't only hiding Lyra, she was hiding her own eyes." Chp. 1, *The Enchanted Sleeper*, p. 7.

"Will considered what to do. When you choose one way out of many, all the ways you don't take are snuffed out like candles, as if they'd never existed. At the moment all Will's choices existed at once. But to keep them all in existence meant doing nothing. He had to choose, after all." Chp. 1, *Balthamos and Baruch*, p. 13.

"He was an angel like ourselves—the first angel, true, the most powerful, but he was formed of Dust as we are, and Dust is only a name for what happens when matter begins to understand itself. Matter loves matter. It seeks to know more about itself, and Dust is formed." Chp. 2, *Balthamos and Baruch*, p. 31.

"But a complex web of thoughts was weaving itself in the bear-king's mind, with more strands in it than hunger and satisfaction. There was the memory of the little girl Lyra, whom he had named Silvertongue, and whom he had last seen crossing the fragile snow bridge across the crevasse in his own island of Svalbard. Then there was the agitation among the witches, the rumors of pacts and alliances and war; and then there was the surpassingly strange fact of this new world itself, and the witch's insistence that there were many more such worlds, and that the fate of them all hung somehow on the fate of the child." Chp. 3, *Scavengers*, p. 42.

"Don't tell," said her daemon. "More trouble. We've got the medicine. We can wake her. We can go there when the woman's away again, and wake the girl up, and take her away." Chp. 4, *Ama and the Bats*, p. 53.

"The Society thinks that your daughter is the most important child who has ever lived. They think that a great crisis will come before very long, and that the fate of everything will depend on how she behaves at that point." Chp. 5, *The Adamant Tower*, p. 59.

" But better a world with no Church and no Dust than a world where every day we have to struggle under the hideous burden of sin." Chp. 6, *Preemptive Absolution*, p. 71.

" Well, if you can laugh, I don't suppose you'll eat me," Mary said. Chp. 7, *Mary, Alone*, p.90.

"The bear watched and saw what he was doing and why, and understood more fully than Will himself did what the boy had achieved." Chp. 8, *Vodka*, p. 109.

"It was hard to understand, but they seemed to be saying that the oil was the center of their thinking and feeling; that young ones didn't have the wisdom of their elders



because they couldn't use the wheels, and thus could absorb no oil through their claws." Chp. 10 Wheels, p. 129.

"Did Mrs. Coulter love Lyra more than Elaine Parry loved him? But that was unfair: his mother wasn't well." Chp. 11, The Dragonflies, p. 141.

"I think that must be true! Because I can think about my body and I can think about my daemon—so there must be another part, to do the thinking!" Chp. 13, Tialys and Salmakia, p 166.

"The intentions of a tool are what it does. A hammer intends to strike, a vise intends to hold fast, a lever intends to lift. They are what it is made for. But sometimes a tool may have other uses that you don't know. Sometimes in doing what you intend, you also do what the knife intends, without knowing." Chp. 14, Know What It Is, p. 181.

"He went outside and found Lyra standing still, weeping, with Pantalaimon as a wolf raising his face to the black sky. She was quite silent. The only light came from the pale reflection in the snow bank on the remains of the fire, and that, in turn, was reflected from her wet cheeks, and her tears found their own reflection in Will's eyes, and so those photons wove the two children together in a silent web." Chp. 15, The Forge, p. 196-97.

"Who would have thought it? The pitiless agent of the Church, the fanatical persecutor of children, the inventor of hideous machines to slice them apart and look in their terrified little beings for any evidence of sin — and along comes a foul-mouthed, ignorant little brat with dirty fingernails, and you cluck and settle your feathers over her like a hen." Ch. 16, The Intention Craft, p. 200

"You can see things that we cannot, you can see connections and possibilities and alternatives that are invisible to us, just as Srafa was invisible to you. And while we cannot see a way to survive, we hope that you may. We hope that you will go swiftly to the cause of the trees' sickness and find a cure; we hope you will invent a means of dealing with the tualapi, who are so numerous and so powerful. And we hope you can do so soon, or we shall all die." Chp. 17, Oil and Lacquer, p. 234.

"The living ones found themselves looking to their left and right, above and below, for anything that was bright or lovely or joyful, and they were always disappointed until a little spark appeared ahead and raced toward them through the air. It was the Chevalier, and Salmakia urged her dragonfly ahead to meet him, with a cry of pleasure." Chp. 18, The Suburbs of the Dead, p. 249.

"Your death taps you on the shoulder, or takes your hand, and says, 'Come along o'me, it's time.' It might happen when you're sick with a fever, or when you choke on a piece of dry bread, or when you fall off a high building; in the middle of your pain and travail, your death comes to you kindly and says, 'Easy now, easy, child, you come along o'me,'



and you go with them in a boat out across the lake into the mist. What happens there, no one knows. No one's ever come back." Chp. 19, *Lyra and Her Death*, p. 261.

"So if you want to save the trees, and Mulefa life, we must find out why the sraf is doing that. I can't think of a way yet, but I will try." Chp. 20 *Climbing*, p. 275.

"Will could hardly watch. Lyra was doing the cruelest thing she had ever done, hating herself, hating the deed, suffering for Pan and with Pan and because of Pan; trying to put him down on the cold path, disengaging his cat claws from her clothes, weeping, weeping. Will closed his ears: the sound was too unhappy to bear. Time after time she pushed her daemon away, and still he cried and tried to cling. Chp. 21, *The Harpies*, p. 283.

"He heard a tone in her voice and he saw an expression on her face that he knew and liked more than anything he'd ever known: it showed she was thinking of something daring, but she wasn't ready to speak of it yet." Chp. 22, *The Whisperers*, p. 299.

"You are quite right. Everyone should have a task to do that's important, one that brings them honor, one they can perform with pride." Chp. 23, *No Way Out*, p. 318.

"There's probably a great deal that's mysterious to you, my Lord President, starting with the relations between a mother and her child. If you thought for one moment that I would release my daughter into the care—the care!—of a body of men with a feverish obsession with sexuality, men with dirty fingernails, reeking of ancient sweat, men whose furtive imaginations would crawl over her body like cockroaches—if you thought I would expose my child to that, my Lord President, you are more stupid than you take me for." Chp. 24, *Mrs. Coulter in Geneva*, p. 326.

"The problem for Mrs. Coulter was not how to get out of this situation alive: that was a secondary matter. The problem was how to get Lyra's hair out of the bomb before they set it off." Chp. 25, *Saint-Jean-Les-Eaux*, p. 344.

"And this is the reason for all those things: your daemon can only live its full life in the world it was born in. Elsewhere it will eventually sicken and die. We can travel, if there are openings into other worlds, but we can only live in our own. Lord Asriel's great enterprise will fail in the end for the same reason: we have to build the Republic of Heaven where we are, because for us there is not elsewhere." Chp. 26, *The Abyss*, p. 363.

"What had happened three hundred years ago? Was it the cause of the Dust current, or was it the other way around? Or were they both the results of a different cause altogether? Or were they simply not connected at all?" Chp. 27, *The Platform*, p. 366.

"My daughter!!" cried Lord Asriel, exulting, "Isn't it something to bring a child like that into the world? You'd think it was enough to go alone to the king of the armoured bears



and trick his kingdom out of his paws—but to go down into the world of the dead and calmly let them all out! And that boy; I want to meet that boy; I want to shake his hand." Chp. 28, *Midnight*, p.375.

"How wearily Lyra turned the wheels; on what leaden feet her thoughts moved. The ladders of meaning that led from every one of the alethiometer's thirty-six symbols, down which she used to move so lightly and confidently felt loose and shaky. And holding the connections between them in her mind . . . It had once been like running, or singing, or telling a story: something natural. Now she had to do it laboriously, and her grip was failing, and she mustn't fail because otherwise everything would fail . . . Chp. 29, *The Battle on the Plain* p. 385

"You have never from your earliest years shown a shred of compassion or sympathy or kindness without calculating how it would return to your advantage. You have tortured and killed without regret or hesitation; you have betrayed and intrigued and gloried in your treachery. You are a cesspit of moral filth." Chp. 30, *The Clouded Mountain*, p. 398.

"But I love Lyra. Where did this love come from? I don't know; it came to me like a thief in the night, and now I love her so much my heart is bursting with it. All I could hope was that my crimes were so monstrous that the love was no bigger than a mustard seed in the shadow of them, and I wished I'd committed even greater ones to hid it more deeply still . . . But the mustard seed had taken root and was growing, and the little green shoot was splitting my heart wide open, and I was so afraid he'd see . . ." Chp. 31, *Authority's End*, p. 405.

"One of the ghosts—an old woman—beckoned, urging her to come close. Then she spoke, and Mary heard her say: 'Tell them stories. They need the truth. You must tell them true stories, and everything will be well. Just tell them stories.'" Chp. 32, *Morning*, p. 432.

"As Mary said that, Lyra felt something strange happen to her body. She felt as if she had been handed the key to a great house she hadn't know was there, a house that was somehow inside her, and as she turned the key, she felt other doors opening deep in the darkness, and lights coming on." Chp. 33, *Marzipan*, p. 444.

"Suppose that all that time, little by little, Dust had been leaking out of the wounds the subtle knife had made in nature . . . The subtle knife was responsible for the small-scale, low-level leakage. It was damaging, and the universe was suffering because of it, and she must talk to Will and Lyra and find a way to stop it." Chp. 34, *There Is Now*, p. 451.

"She could see from his eyes that he knew at once what she meant, and that he was too joyful to speak. Her fingers were still at his lips, and he felt them tremble, and he put his own hand up to hers there, and then neither of them could look; they were confused; they were brimming with happiness." Chp. 35, *Over the Hills and Far Away*, p. 465.

"She said that the history of human life has been a struggle between wisdom and stupidity. She and the rebel angels, the followers of wisdom, have always tried to open



minds; the Authority and his churches have always tried to keep them closed." Chp. 36
The Broken Arrow, p. 479.

"And Will knew what it was to see his daemon. As she flew down to the sand, he felt his heart tighten and release in a way he never forgot. Sixty years and more would go by, and as an old man he would still feel some sensations as bright and fresh as ever: Lyra's fingers putting the fruit between his lips under the gold-and-silver trees; her warm mouth pressing against his; his daemon being torn from his unsuspecting breast as they entered the world of the dead; and the sweet rightfulness of her coming back to him at the edge of the moonlit dunes." Chp. 37, The Dunes, p. 482.

"But as the wave expanded its force and the waters withdrew, the bleak rocks remained; there was no arguing with fate: neither his despair nor Lyra's had moved them a single inch." Chp. 37, The Dunes, p. 493.



Topics for Discussion

On page 165, Lyra says that she thinks her mother never wanted to hurt her and was good to her. Think about what Mrs. Coulter explained to Will in a previous chapter, that she kept Lyra drugged for her own good because she wanted to protect the girl and Lyra would never stay on her own. Is this the case? What does Mrs. Coulter want for her daughter? If you have read all three books, do you think Mrs. Coulter's motives have changed from the first book to the third?

The snake is a force for good in the story Atal tells Mary (p. 224). Can you find other stories about snakes as bringers of knowledge or destruction in history, mythology, religion, etc?

Discuss lying in this story. Many of the characters do it and do it for various reasons. Why does Lyra lie? Why does Mrs. Coulter lie? What are the reasons and the consequences?

The Church of Lyra's world is criticized throughout this book and most of its members are destructive, evil, or blindly loyal. However, there is plenty of positive religious imagery in this story. Write one (or more than one) of your own definitions of "religion," and look up one dictionary definitions. Compare the definitions. Avoid defending or attacking any particular religion from our world, and instead work on defining the term.

In the afterwords to this book, author Phillip Pullman says that *Paradise Lost* by John Milton is one of the main influences for this work. Research *Paradise Lost* and find out more about this work. Look for some of the similarities between *Paradise Lost* and the *His Dark Materials* trilogy.

Sexuality plays a very important role in this story. Describe different attitudes towards sexuality and maturation as expressed by different characters.

Discuss story-telling. Is it different from lying? Why or why not? What are some examples of lying and what are some examples of story-telling from the book?