

The Golden Compass Study Guide

The Golden Compass by Philip Pullman

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Overview

Lyra, a young girl who lives within Jordan, a fictitious Oxford college otherwise full of adult, male scholars, is challenged when she is thrust into a mysterious quest for a substance called "dust." She first learns of it when she and her daemon, an external embodiment of a person's soul, are eavesdropping on a meeting between the scholars and a famous explorer. Lord Asriel, whom she knows because he has visited the college before and has taken a casual interest in her development, must be rescued from the Master of the college. Lyra sees the Master trying to poison Lord Asriel, warns him, and is then taken into his confidence.

However, his comments pique her curiosity about many things such as the church and her own history, which she has heretofore taken for granted. When other children start to disappear into the clutches of the mysterious Oblation Board, she becomes even more curious. One of kidnapped children is her friend Roger, and this spurs her to action. Then she finds out Lord Asriel is her father and is being held prisoner in the North. She embarks on their rescue, traveling with a group of river-gypsies known as "gyptians" who are looking for their lost children. She befriends a bear, witches and other unlikely characters, rescues many of the stolen children, but is unsuccessful in rescuing her friend before he is killed. The story ends when she sees Lord Asriel go off into a parallel world through a hole he has created by "severing" her young friend.

She runs after him but that is where this installment of the story ends, to be taken up again in *The Subtle Knife* and concluded in *The Amber Spyglass*.

About the Author

Philip Pullman was born October 19, 1946, in Norwich, Norfolk, England. The son of Alfred Outram and Audrey Evelyn (Merrifield), he has one brother. Before age eleven, he traveled extensively with his family. "A lot of my life before I was ten was spent on board a ship. My father and then my stepfather were both in the Royal Air Force, and my mother and my brother and I seemed to constantly following them around the world by sea." His journeys included trips to South Africa and Australia, through the Suez Canal, Bombay, Aden, Colombo, and Las Palmas. He attended schools in Southern Rhodesia, South Australia, and England until age eleven.

Then, when the family returned to England, he was educated at Ysgol Ardudwy, Harlech, in North Wales. These many exotic locations appear in some form, especially in *The Golden Compass*, but also in his "Sally Lockhart" books. The unregulated childhood and early travels of his own experiences are obvious in the habits and attitudes of Lyra Belacqua, the main character of the aforementioned novel.

After primary school, Pullman attended Exeter College and read English, receiving a B.A. from Oxford University in 1968. He still lives in Oxfordshire. He married Judith (Jude) Speller on August 15, 1970, and they have two sons, James (Jamie) and Thomas (Tom). He has described his wife and children as his first audience and repeatedly suggests that one should tell stories and read stories to children if one is to be a children's writer. His grandfather was the storyteller in his life. "My grandfather died before I published my first children's book, but I still measure what I write against his judgment." Pullman is also interested in music and drawing and describes visiting art and historical museums, either to sit and look or to drink a favorite cup of coffee as a way of getting re-inspired for when he is writing.

As well as writing sixteen children's books, and one adult novel, *Galatea*, he has also worked as a teacher for the Oxfordshire Education Authority (1972-1988) and as a part-time lecturer for Westminster College, Oxford (1988-96). His familiarity with middle-grade children is aptly demonstrated in the detailed portrait of Lyra and her few friends, but also in the institutional setting in *Bolvanger*. Children's tendencies to gang up on each other, to follow the crowd and to obey orders in the face of uncertainty are realistic elements of his plot. At the same time, Pullman's books are partly famous because both his male and female characters show creativity, intelligence, and courage beyond their years, but also a willingness, almost a passion, to question conventions of behavior and thought. The contrast between Lyra, a leader with a few loyal friends, and the masses of children she tries to rescue, is carefully drawn.

Pullman is often in the public eye, lecturing at bookstores, schools and conferences.

While he accepts a number of speaking engagements, he tries to limit them, especially speaking to children's or school groups only when they have read his books. He works in more than one medium, having rewritten Dumas, Mary Shelley, and Conan Doyle, as well as some of his own fiction, for play and television production. Thus there are many



sources for ascertaining his opinions on his work and on literature in general. He often contrasts himself with C. S. Lewis and the Narnia books, and brings up authors such as Milton, Kleist, and a host of contemporary popular writers such as Gary Paulsen, Jan Mark, Peter Dickinson, Henrietta Bradford, and Brian Moore.

Lewis is one writer he reacts against, especially with regard to portrayals of children and of institutionalized religion.

He has well-developed writing habits to which he attributes his success as an author. In a shed which has been set aside for that purpose, twelve feet by eight feet, with electricity, heating, insulation, a carpet and a table, computer, books, and musical instruments, he writes a minimum of three pages per day on narrow lined paper, by hand, with a ballpoint pen. Sunday is his day for answering letters, which seems to be a big task. Pullman, like many British writers of fantasy, past and present, lives in Oxford, his home since the 1960s. He acknowledges its influence on his work in creating settings and in providing a useful setting for a writer. Oxford appears in transmuted forms in *The Golden Compass*. The many medieval buildings, the narrow cobblestone streets, Oxford colleges, and the many excellent libraries figure in both his fiction and his writing habits. "But the experience of sitting in a medieval building, holding in your hand a book that is three or four hundred years old, has a special quality that you can't get from the Internet."

Perhaps this is why many of his books are set in the Victorian period, which he considers to be a major transition point in British culture. The "Sally Lockhart" series, which clinched his fame as a writer, was set in Victorian London, but with a teenaged female character who defied all conventions and grew up, through his stories, to start her own detective agency.

Pullman began receiving awards for his children's fiction in 1987 and continues to receive local, regional, national and international awards. He has received the most, to date, for *The Golden Compass*, including a Best Book for Young Adults citation from American Library Association, a Carnegie Medal, the Guardian Children's Fiction Award, and the Publishing News British Children's Book of the Year Award. Earlier honors include the Lancashire County Libraries/National and Provincial Children's Book Award, 1987, and the Children's Book Award for Older Readers from The International Reading Association, 1988, to name a few. *Ruby and the Smoke*, a mystery-thriller set in Victorian England and the first of four books with characters in common, first established his career as a young adult writer.



Plot Summary

The Golden Compass follows the ever-expanding adventure of Lyra Bacquela as she travels north in search of a kidnapped friend. The story begins in Jordan College, Oxford, where Lyra is an average eleven-year-old girl who enjoys playing with her friend, Roger. One day, while snooping around Jordan College, Lyra accidentally learns about a mysterious substance known as Dust, which is attracted to adults but not to children. She also learns that the Dust has something to do with the snowy north.

Rumors soon begin about a group known as Gobblers, who kidnap children, take them to the north, and perform experiments on them. The people of Jordan College give little credibility to these rumors, until the Gobblers arrive in Oxford. Several children are kidnapped, and after an extensive search, Lyra returns home to find that Roger is also missing.

Soon thereafter, Lyra is given a strange compass-like device known as an alethiometer, and then is forced to leave Oxford. Her new caretaker, Mrs. Coulter, takes her to London. Mrs. Coulter is an explorer and promises to take Lyra north on her next expedition. However, Mrs. Coulter does not hold true to her promise, and Lyra runs away, finding a family of Gyptians to take care of her.

The Gyptians head north toward the Fen, an area ruled by the Gyptian people, and where a meeting has been called about the mysterious disappearances of children. At the meeting, it is decided that a Gyptian rescue party will be formed to travel north and save the children. Although she is first denied a place in this party, Lyra, who has been practicing with the alethiometer, is later allowed to go because of her ability to read the truth-telling device.

The rescue party of one hundred and seventy Gyptians takes a boat to Trollesund, a city in the North. Here, they speak with a witch consul, who can communicate with witches, who tells them that they should seek out an armored bear. Iorek Byrnison is an armored bear, and happens to be in town. By using the alethiometer, Lyra helps Iorek find his armor, which had been stolen by the townspeople. As payment, Iorek agrees to help the rescue party.

On their journey north, Lyra is captured and taken to Bolvangar, the Gobbler's heavily guarded compound where experiments are performed on children. Here, Lyra is reunited with Roger. After learning the truth about the experiments, Lyra organizes an escape attempt. With the assistance of some witches and Iorek, the children manage to escape the compound before it is destroyed.

Iorek, Roger, Lyra, and a Texan aeronaut named Lee Scoresby travel by balloon to Svalbard, a land in the far north that is ruled by Iofur Rakinson, king of the bears. The balloon is attacked by cliff-ghasts and Lyra is thrown from the balloon and captured by some armored bears.



She is taken to Iofur Rakinson's castle and imprisoned. Lyra cleverly manipulates the bear guards to allow her to speak with the king, whom she tricks into battling Iorek one on one. When Iorek arrives, the two bears battle for the throne. Iorek wins, and orders that the castle be torn down.

Iorek, Lyra, Roger, and some armored bears head north to rescue Lord Asriel, who had been imprisoned. When they reach Asriel's spacious prison, they find he has been researching the Dust. Lyra wakes up the next morning to find Roger has been taken away by Lord Asriel, who is going to use the boy to complete an experiment. Iorek and Lyra chase Lord Asriel, but are too late, and Asriel uses Roger to open a bridge to another dimension. Lord Asriel enters the dimensional gateway, followed by Lyra.



Part 1, Chapter 1

Part 1, Chapter 1 Summary

Lyra and her daemon Pantalaimon, who is in the form of a well-camouflaged moth, enter the forbidden Retiring Room, which is reserved for the use of scholars and their guests, and never females. After examining the elegant meeting room, the two hear someone coming, and hide behind one of the fourteen large mahogany armchairs. It is the Butler, who is soon joined by the Master. After a brief conversation about the upcoming meeting, the Butler, who has decanted a special 1898 Tokay for Lord Asriel, is asked to leave the room. Lyra and Pantalaimon then watch as the Master removes a folded piece of paper from his pocket and pours its contents, a white powder, into the decanter of Tokay, which is a type of wine. Lyra watches in horror as he stirs this substance, which she believes to be poison, until it dissolves. After the Master leaves, Lyra and Pantalaimon attempt to make an escape, but are once again forced to take cover, this time in a wardrobe.

The Butler enters the room and prepares for the arrival of Lord Asriel, Lyra's uncle who soon enters the Retiring Room. Lord Asriel sends the Butler to get a screen and a projecting lantern, and also to tell his Porter to bring the two cases that Lord Asriel had left in the Lodge. The Butler exits, and after several minutes of stretching and relaxation, Lord Asriel pours himself a glass of Tokay. Lyra bolts from the wardrobe and wrenches the glass, which falls to the floor and breaks. At first very angry, Lord Asriel scolds Lyra for what she has done, but his anger subsides once Lyra explains her actions - that she was saving him from being poisoned. Lord Asriel instructs her to return to the wardrobe and to watch the Master's actions for anything out of the ordinary that may signify his guilt. The Porter knocks on the door, and Lyra returns to her hiding spot in the wardrobe. Carrying two large boxes, the Porter enters the room at Lord Asriel's bidding. When the porter nears the broken glass, Lord Asriel knocks the decanter off the table and blames the accident on the apologetic Porter, who runs off to get materials for cleaning the mess. As the Porter is cleaning the mess, the Butler and Thorold, Lord Asriel's manservant, enter the room and are instructed to set up a projecting lantern (movie projector) and a screen, which is made of linen. After the servants leave, the Master enters, and Lord Asriel informs him that he has "something very interesting to show."

Part 1, Chapter 1 Analysis

This chapter introduces several main themes of *The Golden Compass*, betrayal and power. Throughout the book, individuals who appear to be friends, become enemies, and quite often, those who appear to be enemies, are friends. This dichotomy is a perfect formula for betrayal. The Master's attempted poisoning of Lord Asriel demonstrates the first betrayal of the book. Another important theme is introduced in this chapter, power.



Lord Asriel is the epitome of this theme. The adjectives used to describe his stretching even allude to a sense of power; he is said to look like a lion when he yawns. The connection between Lord Asriel and power grows throughout the book. The spatial environment, which begins in a single room, and ultimately a wardrobe, also increases in magnitude and significance as the plot progresses.



Part 1, Chapter 2

Part 1, Chapter 2 Summary

The Master enters the Retiring Room and Lyra notices his eyes are instantly directed toward the table, where the Tokay had been. The group of Scholars begins filtering into the room; the group consists of: the Librarian, the Sub-Rector, the Enquirer, the Chaplain, and several others. The Master prepares some poppy, which is always served after a dinner in order to "clarify the mind and stimulate the tongue." After several minutes of banter, Lord Asriel gets the company's attention. Lord Asriel cleverly manipulates the seating arrangement so that the Sub-Rector, who is old and needs to be closer to the screen, is moved and the Master sits in his chair, which is conveniently located less than a yard from the wardrobe where Lyra is hiding. She hears a whispered conversation between the Librarian and the Master that clearly demonstrates their intent to kill Lord Asriel. They seem very concerned about the money that will be spent on Lord Asriel's next expedition.

Lord Asriel describes his exploration to the north, which he has just returned from, and the intentions of this expedition; to discover what happened to Grumman, who had disappeared eighteen months prior, and to investigate a strange phenomenon that had been mentioned in one of Grumman's final messages. Lord Asriel then shows a series of pictures, the first of which depicts a snow-covered landscape with a hut in the background and a man in furs with his hand raised in greeting in the foreground. The photogram (picture), Lord Asriel explains, had been taken with standard silver nitrate emulsion. This slide is then replaced by another, which depicts the same picture, only much darker. Most of the picture remains the same, however, the man in the foreground is bathed in a bright light, which appears to be emitting from his raised hand. Lord Asriel calls this light Dust. Another shape can be seen in Dust in the corner of this photogram; that of a child. The third slide depicts a group of tents in the foreground, next to which is a pile of wooden boxes and a sledge. The sky shows "streams and veils of light hung like curtains." Lord Asriel explains that this is the Aurora, or Northern Lights. As with the first picture, a darker reproduction of the slide is displayed. A city of lights can be seen in the Aurora. Dr. Grumman, says Lord Asriel, is dead. He then removes a vessel from one of the two boxes on the floor. The vessel, which Lyra cannot see, contains the scalped head of Stanislaus Grumman. Asriel finishes his speech, and the Scholars begin making idle chat. Lyra falls asleep with Pantalaimon, who is now in the form of an ermine, wrapped around her neck. She is awakened by her uncle, Lord Asriel, who informs her he has received funding for his next expedition, which he will be leaving for in ten minutes. Lyra tells her uncle about the Master's guilt, then pleads to go to the North, but is forbidden by her uncle to go on the expedition.

The point of view then follows the Master and the Librarian to the Master's quarters, where they discuss Lord Asriel's knowledge of their dubious plan. Charles, the Librarian, then explains how two renegade theologians, Barnard and Stokes, had proposed the existence of numerous other worlds. The city in the sky, believes the Librarian, may be



proof of this theory. The two Scholars begin discussion about a child, who is revealed to be Lyra. The Master says, "Lyra has a part to play in this, and a major one...if my plan with the Tokay had succeeded, she would have been safe for a little longer." The chapter ends with a statement that Lyra will be a betrayer.

Part 1, Chapter 2 Analysis

Again, the theme of betrayal plays a major part in this chapter when we find that the Librarian has also betrayed Lord Asriel. It is important to take notice of particular character's daemons, as they often allude to their master's personality. This is especially relevant to Lyra and Pantalaimon, who often takes forms that reflect what Lyra is feeling. It would not be unreasonable to view daemons and their actions as the physical manifestations of individuals' inner thoughts. Lyra's significance is mentioned for the first time in this chapter, and it should be noted that, like spatiality, this increases throughout the book.



Part 1, Chapter 3

Part 1, Chapter 3 Summary

The chapter begins with a description of Jordan College, "grandest and richest of all the colleges of Oxford." The college owns land all over England, and is unrivaled in its claim to the center of experimental theology. Lyra and Roger, a kitchen boy who is Lyra's closest friend, spend their days engaging in mock warfare. This warfare occurs between the twenty-four colleges, and also between the college children and the townies, and other groups such as the brick burners' children or the Gytptian families. This first section of the chapter describes Lyra's life before she "first heard about Dust."

There is a rumor about a recent string of disappearing children. One such disappearance is that of Tony Makarios, a boy who is unknown to Lyra. Tony is a poor boy who must steal his food in order to eat. While strolling through the market of his town, Tony, with the assistance of his sparrow daemon, steals a hot pie, but is seen in the process. He successfully flees, and, while eating his pie on the steps of an oratory, is observed by an attractive young woman with dark, shining hair. Her daemon is a golden monkey, which curiously approaches Tony's sparrow. The sparrow hops closer and closer to the monkey until it finally alights on its hand. The monkey, with sparrow in hand, returns to the side of his mistress, who asks Tony if he is interested in some chocolate. He says yes, and follows the woman to a large warehouse. When they enter the warehouse, Tony finds that there are a dozen other children, all twelve or younger, are being held in a warm cellar. He is given some chocolate. They will be going on a long voyage to the North, the woman explains, and will be given an opportunity to write their loved ones before they leave. The children write letters, and are then escorted onto a vessel that takes them to sea. Immediately after they depart, the woman dumps the letters into the flames of a furnace. Incidences of missing children continue to rise, and the kidnappers are given the name 'Gobblers.'

The children soon create a game called kids and Gobblers. One day, while playing Gobblers, Lyra and Roger enter the cellars where Tokay and wines are kept. Lyra takes one of the oldest bottles and breaks the neck, so the children can get to the alcohol. The two, as well as their daemons, soon become inebriated; a sensation that Lyra enjoys and Roger, who is vomiting, does not. On another day, while exploring the underground regions of the college, the children enter a crypt. Coffins with stone tablets giving the names of those inside, who are all past Masters, line the narrow passageways. Another section of the Catacombs house the skulls of past scholars. Inside the skulls are bronze discs with inscriptions of the particular scholar's daemon's shape. Lyra later tries to play a trick on these dead scholars by swapping the discs found in several skulls. However, she soon replaces the discs after she is visited by three ghostly figures when she is in bed. The Gobblers eventually come to Oxford.

While on their way to cause mischief at the yearly horse fair, Lyra and some friends hear an argument between a man and a woman. The woman is Ma Costa, and she is yelling



at a horse trader whom she blames for the disappearance of her son, Billy. After nearly getting into a fight, some Gypsy children and Lyra and her friends get into a conversation about the Gobblers and about Billy's disappearance. They determine the time of his disappearance to be about two hours ago and split up to search for the boy, who, one child suspects, may have been taken away in a white truck.

The children do not find the boy, and Lyra and her friends eventually tire. Lyra learns from Simon Parslow that a girl, Jessie Reynolds, had gone missing the day before. This is soon confirmed by a sixteen-year-old. After a short conversation with some older boys, Lyra realizes that she has not seen Roger all day. Frantic, she runs to the kitchen and asks about him, but none of the workers can verify his whereabouts. Lyra runs to her bedroom and climbs onto the roof, where she screams and then ponders Roger's disappearance. She is called to by Mrs. Lonsdale, the housekeeper, who tells Lyra that she must clean up because she has been invited to dinner with the Master and some guests. Lyra is surprised to find that three of the guests are women. She is first introduced to an elderly lady named Dame Hannah Reif, who was a Scholar from another college. Then, the Master introduces Mrs. Coulter, a beautiful young woman with sleek black hair; she has a golden monkey at her side.

Part 1, Chapter 3 Analysis

This chapter introduces several important characters and objects. Most importantly, the reader first learns about Mrs. Coulter, who goes unnamed, and the Gobblers. The Costas are introduced for the first time, and will play an important role in the rest of the book. A new theme is introduced in this chapter; womanhood, or femininity. The world in which Lyra lives is male-dominated. However, Mrs. Coulter and Lyra break this mould of femininity, of presumed weakness, and share a bond that runs deeper than Lyra knows. Also linked with this theme is that of motherhood. Lyra has never experienced a mother before, instead, she is watched after by Mrs. Lonsdale, her caretaker.



Part 1, Chapter 4

Part 1, Chapter 4 Summary

Lyra asks Mrs. Coulter if she is a Scholar, to which the young woman replies, "not really." She is, instead, a member of Dame Hannah's college, but does much of her work outside of Oxford. After a short conversation about Lyra's life, Mrs. Coulter, who is acquainted with Lord Asriel, asks what plans he has for Lyra; if she is to go to school. Lyra claims that she will not go to school, and will instead accompany her uncle on his next expedition to the North. To this, Mrs. Coulter replies that she is a member of the Royal Arctic Institute and has been to the North several times. From this point on, Lyra is enamored with the scholarly woman. After the guests have left, the Master instructs Lyra to wait for him in his study, where he tells her that she must leave Jordan, and that, as a girl, she is in need of female guidance. Lyra is at first very displeased with this proposition, but becomes excited when she finds out that she is to become Mrs. Coulter's personal assistant. Mrs. Coulter, who has entered the room, tells Lyra that they will be traveling to the North, and that she must be ready to leave by zeppelin early the next morning.

Lyra is jostled awake by Mrs. Lonsdale, who tells her that the Master is waiting in his study and urgently needs to see her before she leaves. As instructed, Lyra taps on the French window of the study, which opens almost immediately. "I'm going to give you something," the Master says, "but you must promise to keep it private." She promises, and he hands her a small package wrapped in black velvet. When Lyra opens the package, she finds something that looks to her like a large watch, or possibly a compass. The Master explains that it is an alethiometer, one of six that have ever been made, and that, if she could figure out how to use it, the device would tell the truth.

While on the zeppelin, Lyra begins to think about Roger, but soon forgets him when Mrs. Coulter begins a diatribe on the finest establishments in London. Lyra believes that her speech is coupled with the scent of grownups, which smells glamorous to her.

They arrive at Mrs. Coulter's fanciful apartment, which is filled with charming pictures, sconces with frilled shades, and flowery valences. Lyra remembers what the Master had told her, and she is confused because the Master had tried to kill her uncle, and Mrs. Coulter seems so nice. They go to the Royal Arctic Institute for lunch. Here, Lyra learns from Mrs. Coulter that calves' liver and seal liver are okay, but bears liver should never be eaten, because it is poisonous and will kill you. During lunch, Mrs. Coulter points out some prominent members of the Institute, including Colonel Carborne, the first man to cross the North Pole in a balloon, and Dr. Broken Arrow, a Skraeling who mapped the ocean currents in the Great Northern Ocean. Lyra is taken to the institute library after lunch, where she is shown several artifacts including: the harpoon which killed the great whale Grissdur, a stone with an ancient inscription, and a fire-striker used on a famous voyage. Afterwards, Mrs. Coulter and Lyra go shopping, and Mrs. Coulter purchases



new clothes for Lyra. When they return from shopping, Lyra takes a bath, puts on her new flannel pajamas, and goes to bed.

She thinks about the alethiometer, and retrieves the item from her overcoat pocket. "It was like a clock, or a compass, for there were hands pointing to places around the dial, but instead of the hours or the points of the compass there were several little pictures, each of them painted with extraordinary precision, as if on ivory with the finest and slenderest sable brush." The pictures showed various things, including; an anchor, an hourglass with a skull, a chameleon, a bull, and a beehive. On the side of the golden object is three winding wheels, each of which turn one of three hands, which can be positioned, through turning, at any point on the dial. However, one hand, which flows freely like a compass needle, does not have an accompanying wheel. Lyra plays with the wheels for a while, then quickly hides the alethiometer when there is a knock at the door. It is Mrs. Coulter, who tells her to go to bed.

Part 1, Chapter 4 Analysis

This chapter introduces the most important artifact of this book, the alethiometer, or golden compass. The alethiometer is important because, not only does it continually progress the plot, it also acts as a counterbalance for an aforementioned theme, betrayal, or deceit. The alethiometer's ability to tell the truth is linked with innocence, and youth, because only Lyra can read the device. This may be due to the Dust, however the reader is never fully certain of the Dust's effects on individuals.



Part 1, Chapter 5

Part 1, Chapter 5 Summary

Mrs. Coulter takes Lyra to many different places, continuing to show her the glamorous side of life. Mrs. Coulter purchases items such as furs and oilskins for her next expedition. When they are not socializing with the elite of London, Mrs. Coulter instructs Lyra in geography and mathematics. During a lesson about electrons, Lyra states, in explanation of the particles, that they are "sort of like Dust, except the Dust isn't charged." Mrs. Coulter's daemon, the golden monkey, is greatly agitated by this statement, and the woman must restrain the creature to keep it from attacking. Taken aback by Lyra's knowledge of Dust, Mrs. Coulter asks what the girl knows about Dust; Lyra says it lights people up and can only be seen by a special camera. Lyra lies when asked where she learned about Dust, saying she overheard some scholars talking about it.

Mrs. Coulter decides to host a cocktail party, and invites many of London's most prestigious citizens. Pantalaimon, who is getting tired of the life of luxury, attempts to convince Lyra to run away and head north. Lyra is not swayed, and prepares for the cocktail party. Mrs. Coulter asks Lyra to not wear her white handbag, in which she keeps the alethiometer, during the cocktail party. Lyra refuses to take off the bag. At hearing Lyra's refusal, Mrs. Coulter's golden monkey bounds across the room and pins Pantalaimon, who is in the form of a polecat, to the carpet. Lyra sobs, and begs Mrs. Coulter to call off her daemon, which she agrees to do if Lyra does her bidding. After Lyra promises to remove the handbag, the golden monkey saunters to its master's side. Mrs. Coulter asks Lyra to give her a kiss on the cheek; she does, and smells a metallic scent on Mrs. Coulter's skin.

The party begins and Lyra talks to some of the guests. It is revealed that her parents were a count and countess, and that her father's name was Count Belacqua. As Lyra passes a group of men, she overhears the word Dust, and stops walking in order to hear more of the conversation. They mention a man named Ruskonov, who discovered the Dust. They also say that the name of Dust is Rusakov Particles, and that one of the peculiar qualities of these particles is that they seem attracted to adult humans, but not to children. "That's the very reason the Oblation Board was set up," says one man, who goes on to state that Mrs. Coulter is the head of this board. Lyra becomes involved in this conversation, and mentions the Gobblers, but a man corrects her, saying that the Gobblers are just a silly name derived from the initials for the General Oblation Board. Oblation, Lyra discovers, has something to do with sacrifice. Lyra is approached by Adele Starminster, a journalist from Oxford who is very interested in Lyra, and Mrs. Coulter's personal life.

Mrs. Coulter notices this woman talking to Lyra and quickly approaches, then forces the uninvited Ms. Starminster to leave the party. After this encounter, Lyra smells something like heated metal emanating from Mrs. Coulter's body.



Pantalaimon tells Lyra that he saw the golden monkey, who has been absent from the prior scene, exiting the bedroom. Lyra and her daemon are concerned that the monkey knows about the alethiometer, and will tell his master.

Lyra has a conversation with Lord Boreal in which she tells him about Dust, the Oblation Board, and the pictures that she has seen. She says that oblation means sacrifice, but Lord Boreal soon corrects her, stating that all the children in the Oblation Board willingly follow Mrs. Coulter. As she is walking through the room, Lyra hears someone mention Lord Asriel. She learns that he is being held in the fortress of Svalbard, and is protected by armored bears known as panserbjorne.

Lyra and Pantalaimon retreat to her bedroom, where they decide to run away. With the assistance of Pantalaimon, who is in the form of a moth, she escapes undetected through the front door.

Part 1, Chapter 5 Analysis

Most chapters of *The Golden Compass* seem action oriented, however, the author occasionally decides to slow down the momentum of the story in order to reveal important information to the reader. This chapter is especially informative because the reader learns about the General Oblation Board, Dust (Rusakov Particles) and its link to children, and Lord Asriel's captivity. These three things are the driving forces behind the rest of the story. The spatial story increases from Oxford to London.



Part 1, Chapter 6

Part 1, Chapter 6 Summary

Lyra wanders the dark streets of London in search of shelter. After an hour, she comes to a coffee stall, where she orders a coffee and a ham sandwich. A nice gentleman offers to pay for her food, and Lyra accepts his offer. He also offers her brandy, which she refuses, then asks about her father, whom Lyra claims is a murderer. Lyra leaves the shop and begins searching for a place to sleep. Pantalaimon, whom Lyra affectionately refers to as Pan, notices a canal basin where they may find shelter.

While looking through the window of a hut in the basin, two men, one with a throwing net, run towards Lyra. She attempts to escape, but is soon caught in the throwing net. Pantalaimon attacks the net-throwers daemon, which is a fox, but is badly beaten. Lyra, incidentally, can feel the pain of this attack. Before they can fully bind Lyra's legs and hands, the two men are shot and killed by arrows.

Three people approach; and Lyra recognizes one of them as Tony Costa, a Gyptian boy who is the brother of Billy Costa, one of the missing children. The other two boys are named Jaxer and Kerim. As they leave the scene, Pantalaimon watches in horror as the dead men's daemons fade away. Lyra is taken to a narrow boat, which is captained by Ma Costa. Before she can find out where they are going, Lyra is asleep.

They are traveling up the Grand Junction Canal. Lyra recounts her story; telling Ma and Tony Costa about everything, except the alethiometer. Tony says that the kidnapped children never come back, and that they may be taken as guinea pigs for medical experiments, or become food for Tartars as part of a treaty between them and the Gobblers. Tony then talks about the dangers of the north, including: headless ghosts, called Nalkainens, that are the size of a child, Windsuckers, that drift formlessly through the air, and Breathless Ones, whose lungs were removed by North Tartars, that can only survive because their daemons pump their chest in lieu of lungs. He also mentions the panserbjorne, which are armored white bears that act as reliable mercenaries. The purpose of this boat ride, Lyra discovers, is to travel to the fens, a marsh like area to the north that is run by the Gyptians. Apparently, a meeting, called a byanroping, has been called by John Faa, king of the Gyptians.

Part 1, Chapter 6 Analysis

This chapter introduces a new, and pertinent, link between daemons and their masters - when a daemon is hurt, so is its master. This link becomes stronger as the story progresses. This connection between human and daemon can be said to be like that of the body to the mind. When the mind is troubled, so is the body, and vice versa. The Costas make their first significant appearance in this chapter, although they have

already been introduced. The Costas and Gyptian people play an enormous role in the rest of the book.



Part 1, Chapter 7

Part 1, Chapter 7 Summary

Lyra is put to work aboard the ship. Unbeknownst to Lyra, the police have been vigorously seeking her out because, as the Costas have come to realize, she is important. When the boat passes through a waterway that is being scoured by police, Lyra is hidden in a secret compartment of the vessel, which is lined with cedar wood, a wood that dulls the senses of the police's daemons. As they travel farther north, Lyra listens to stories about the Gyptians and begins to get a Gyptian accent. Ma Costa tells her, "You en't Gyptian...We're water people...you're a fire person...you got witch oil in your soul."

When they arrive at the Zaal, or meeting place, they discover that the Roping is this evening and that everyone is anxious to see the missing child, who is rumored to be on a Gyptian boat. People stare at them as they enter the meeting area, and it is obvious that Lyra does not appear as Gyptian as she thought. There are eight seats at the front of the meeting pavilion, six of which are filled by the six heads of the Gyptian families, one is filled by an elderly man named Farder Coram, and the final seat is filled by John Faa, lord of the western Gyptians. Faa addresses the crowd, stating that many have lost children, and that there has been talk of a missing girl, who is worth a one thousand sovereign reward. John Faa forbids any Gyptian from turning the missing girl, Lyra, over to anyone. Faa proposes that the Gyptian families pull money and fighters for an expedition north, to save the missing children. This is met with the agreement of the crowd.

After the meeting, Lyra is summoned to John Faa's parley room. Faa and Coram are seated at a table, at which Lyra takes a seat. At their request, Lyra talks about Mrs. Coulter, the Gobblers, and the plight of Lord Asriel. Lyra is told by Faa that she has been watched all her life by the Gyptian people, under the order of Farder Coram, who is a seer. Faa and Coram are very familiar with Lyra's life, and at first Lyra is frightened, because she thinks they will scold her for stealing the Costa's boat the prior summer. This, however, is not their intention, and they ask Lyra if she knows who her parents were. She replies that they were a baron and baroness, and died in an airship accident. John Faa corrects her, saying that her father is not dead; her father is Lord Asriel, who had fallen in love with and impregnated a married woman. Lord Asriel hid Lyra, but when the married woman's politician husband found out, he tracked her down and ransacked the cottage where she was hidden and cared for by a Gyptian woman. When Asriel found out he challenged the man, they fought, and Lord Asriel killed him by shooting the man with his own gun. The courts punished Lord Asriel, who was a rich man, by taking away all his land and property. Lyra was taken to stay with the Sisters of Obedience at Watlington, but Lord Asriel removed her and placed her at Jordan College.



The Master and the Scholars promised to protect Lyra, especially from her mother, whom Lord Asriel despised. Also, a kitchen servant named Bernie Johansen, whom Lyra had yelled at the day of Roger's disappearance, had been reporting to the gyptians about her progress. The name of the politician that was killed by Lord Asriel was Mr. Coulter, and his wife, and Lyra's mother, was Mrs. Coulter. Lyra shows the alethiometer to the two men, and learns from Farder Coram that there is a book that helps translate the mysterious messages that are delivered by the device. Farder Coram explains that he had seen an alethiometer used once, and that one must properly line up the three arrows then ask a question, to which the compass like needle would answer by pointing at a series of symbols. John Faa and Coram puzzle over the bizarre incidents relayed by Lyra; the attempted murder of Lord Asriel by the Master, who was his friend, and the Master's final message to Lyra about the alethiometer, which had been given to the College by Lord Asriel. Before leaving the meeting, Lyra learns that the woman who had been her nurse, and who had witnessed the duel between Lord Asriel and Mr. Coulter, was none other than Ma Costa.

Part 1, Chapter 7 Analysis

Lyra's growing significance is shown in this chapter; she is sought all throughout the country by police, and a one thousand sovereign reward is promised for her delivery. The story once again expands spatially, from the limited space of London to the vast labyrinth of the fen. John Faa, who reminds Lyra of Lord Asriel, is another exemplar of the power theme. Although Lyra believes that the size of an individual signifies their power, the reader will find that this is not the case.

The second half of this chapter is very informative, and reveals several important pieces of information. First, that Lord Asriel is her father. Second, that Mrs. Coulter is her mother. And finally, that Ma Costa was her nurse. The reader is also introduced to another important character, Farder Coram, who becomes a sort of grandfather figure to Lyra.



Part 1, Chapter 8

Part 1, Chapter 8 Summary

Lyra has difficulty accepting that Mrs. Coulter is her mother, and feels very confused about the matter. The search for her continues, with airships crisscrossing the cloudy skies above the fen. Ma Costa recounts the duel between Edward Coulter and her father, who knocked a gun out of Coulter's hand, then used the gun to shoot Coulter between the eyes. Lyra attempts to understand the alethiometer, and practices focusing on questions, but is unsuccessful at getting a reading.

Three days pass, then another roping is called. During the roping, the heads of each of the six families places a bag filled with their pulled gold in front of John Faa, then announces the number of men he will add to the rescue effort. The total number of men for the expedition is one hundred and seventy. Faa decides that rescuing Asriel is a secondary objective. When approached with the question of how he will punish the Gobblers, Faa states that they will first worry about rescuing the children, and then worry about punishment.

The meeting is adjourned and Lyra is angry that she is prohibited from going on the trip, as are all the women. She sneaks to Faa's parley room and knocks on the door, then makes an appeal to go north, stating that she can navigate and take readings of the Aurora. Faa refuses her petition.

Part 1, Chapter 8 Analysis

The story about Lord Asriel's murder of Mr. Coulter is one of several instances where excessive power results in uncontrolled rage. Power, in this book, is very much like a drug that numbs the senses and the mind. The story of Coulter's death is juxtaposed with the Gyptian people's request for vengeance, creating a layered microcosm/macrocosm. However, where Lord Asriel enacted his vengeance upon Mr. Coulter, John Faa, who uses his power appropriately, is not concerned with revenge. The reader is also reminded that this is a male-centered world because Lyra and other females are not permitted to go on the expedition north.



Part 1, Chapter 9

Part 1, Chapter 9 Summary

Lyra spends her time trying to figure out how to get to the North, and decides that she must stow away on a boat, but cannot figure out where to hide on the Gyptian's small vessels. She attempts to help in the preparation of the rescue, pestering the key members of the operation, and is viewed pathetically by Farder Coram, who takes her under his wing. Coram tells Lyra that the alethiometer decoder book is in Heidelberg. During this conversation, Lyra is astonished by the beauty of Coram's daemon, Sophonax, a magnificently colored cat with the softest looking fur. However, Lyra cannot touch the daemon because contact with a daemon is limited to its master.

Lyra attempts to use the alethiometer to discover what Mr. de Ruyter, head of espionage, is doing. After setting the three dials to a serpent, for cunning, a crucible, for knowledge, and a beehive, for hard work, Lyra concentrates on Benjamin de Ruyter's whereabouts. The fourth needle stops at the death symbol. Immediately after this reading, a young Gyptian man enters the room and says that Jacob Huismans, a member of de Ruyter's espionage group, has just returned from a mission, and is badly injured.

Farder and Lyra run to Jacob's side. He tells that that they captured three Gobblers and learned, through interrogation, that their headquarters was located in the Ministry of Theology. They also learned that the missing children had been taken north to Lapland. A team of spies, including Benjamin and Jacob, entered the Ministry of Theology and were ambushed by unknown attackers. The other men died, and Jacob was shot in the shoulder by an arrow. Soon after telling his story, Jacob dies.

The following day Lyra and Pantalaimon discuss her ability to use the alethiometer. Lyra is under the belief that the needle is moved by a spirit, but Pan believes that the needle is moved by elementary particles; he mentions an example to back his statement. The pair had witnessed, while at Gabriel College, a very holy object that was covered by a velvet cloth, which was similar to the cloth that covered the alethiometer. When the cloth was removed, a glass dome was revealed, and when sunlight struck this dome, a little weathervane-like object within the dome would move. From the movement of this object, the Intercessor, who could read the dome's messages, developed a moral lesson. Lyra is summoned to John Faa, who informs her that she'll be heading north because of her ability to use the alethiometer, and that she will be working under Farder Coram's wing.

Lyra spends the next two weeks traveling below the deck of Coram's narrow boat, practicing with the alethiometer. She tells Farder Coram that she can feel the meaning of the altimeter's messages. When she attempts to see what Mrs. Coulter is doing, the needle stops at the infant, the serpent, the elephant, and a lizard-like creature. This process is repeated several times with the same result, but they cannot determine the



meaning of the symbols. The boat reaches the estuary of the river Cole, and Lyra, who has not been above deck in weeks, asks Coram if she can go outside. He reluctantly allows her to, and Pantalaimon excitedly turns into a seagull.

While Pan is flying around the boat, he is attacked by two small, black creatures. One of the black creatures falls to deck, and Lyra captures it under a tin cup. The second black creature retreats after the tiller man's daemon, a cormorant, swoops in and attacks it. Coram places the black bug, which, according to Farder, is a mechanized spirit, inside an upside-down beer glass. "It was Morocco where I saw one of these last," says Farder Coram, "deadly dangerous; while the spirit's in it, it will never stop." Lyra and Farder Coram rethink the alethiometer's message and determine that the lizard is a chameleon, which they decide means air because chameleons live off air. They transfer the mechanical bug to a more secure box. The tiller man, Coram, and Lyra arrive in Colby when it's dark, and the trio walk through the empty streets to a dock, where Tony Costa awaits. They enter an enormous vessel, which will carry them across the ocean, and recant the occurrence with the black bugs to Faa. Lyra is given her own cabin for the journey north.

Part 1, Chapter 9 Analysis

Lyra accurately reads the alethiometer in this chapter. Although she does not translate the message until after learning about de Ruyter's death, this moment signifies an important step in the plot that will, from this point on, drive the story onward. The alethiometer is omniscient, and can therefore reveal information to Lyra whenever she requires it. This is an extremely effective storytelling tool because, rather than switch points of view, as he was formerly forced to do, Pullman can now use the alethiometer to uncover essential plot twists to the reader.



Part 2, Chapter 10

Part 2, Chapter 10 Summary

The Gyptian ship heads to Trollesund, the main port of Lapland, because John Faa knows of a witch consulate in the town. Faa also knows that they will need the witches' help. Farder Coram tells a story about an encounter he had with a Lapland witch: Forty years ago, a witch, who was being pursued by a giant red bird, fell from the sky and landed in the fen. Coram sought out this witch, and saved her from drowning. Farder describes how the witch had no daemon, and that witches have the ability to separate from the daemons. As a token of her gratitude, the witch asked Farder Coram to call on her if he ever needed her assistance.

Lyra becomes good friends with a seaman named Jerry, who tells her that the best cure for seasickness is hard work. Soon, Lyra becomes members with most of the ship's crew. She learns to sew from Jerry, and they make a waterproof bag for the alethiometer. One day, when Pantalaimon is swimming with a school of dolphins while in the form of a dolphin, Jerry tells Lyra that he knew an old seaman whose daemon had settled as a porpoise, and therefore, because he could not travel far from his daemon, the man was forever married to the sea. They have a discussion on why daemons must settle. Jerry tells Lyra it is because when a daemon settles, you finally learn who you really are. Lyra does not like this idea, and hopes Pantalaimon will always be able to change forms.

When they arrive in Trollesund, Farder Coram and Lyra immediately head to the witch consul's house. The consul, whose name is Dr. Martin Lanselius, greets them and asks how he can be of assistance. Farder states that he can tell him where to find Serafina Pekkala, the witch he had met forty years prior, and he can also tell him what the witches know about the Gobblers. Serafina Pekkala, says the consul, is the queen of a witch clan in the Lake Enara region. Dr. Lanselius says that he has heard of the child kidnappings, and that a company in town, called the Northern Progress Exploration Company, which is controlled by the General Oblation Board, had a great deal to do with the disappearances. After further questions, Dr. Lanselius can only say that the children do not stay in town long, and he has heard the phrases 'Maystadt process' and 'intercision' mentioned in conjunction with the kidnappings. Lyra and Farder then learn that twelve children left town yesterday by sledge, but their destination is unknown. Farder asks a final question of the consul; he asks the consul would ask if they were in his shoes. The consul replies, "I would ask where I could obtain the services of an armored bear."

It happens that an armored bear, named Iorek Byrnison, can be found at a sledge depot. Lyra is surprised when the consul asks her about the alethiometer, because the object has not yet been mentioned. Dr. Lanselius informs Lyra and Coram that the alethiometers are said to come from Prague, where a Scholar had invented the devices as a means to practice astrology. The devices did not work for this purpose, but had



other powers. The consul asks to see a demonstration of the alethiometer, and Lyra happily obliges his request. He asks what the Tartars intentions are with the city of Kamchatka. Lyra uses the alethiometer and replies that they will pretend to attack it, but will not. Dr. Lanselius is satisfied with this answer, and asks for one more demonstration. He points to a row of forty branches that are lined up against an outdoor shed, then asks Lyra which branch, or spray, is Serafina Pekkala's. Lyra consults the alethiometer and correctly picks Serafina's spray. While Lyra is outside, the consul tells Coram about an old witch prophesy that talks of a child who has a great destiny. This destiny can only be fulfilled in a far off world. Without the help of the child, Dr. Lanselius states, everyone will die.

After the visit with the consul, Lyra and Farder Coram walk to the depot, where they are told they can find the armored bear behind Einarsson's Bar after six. Coram takes Lyra shopping, buying her the best snow gear possible, then they return to the ship, where they update their activities with John Faa. John says that he talked to a man, who had a balloon, from the county Texas, in the land of New Dane..

At nighttime, Coram and Lyra go to the alley behind Einarsson's Bar, where they encounter the enormous white bear, Iorek Byrnison. They attempt to recruit the bear, but he is not interested in money, and says he is stuck in Trollesund because he has lost his armor. Apparently, a group of humans got him drunk one evening and stole his armor. Iorek agrees to join the rescue, if they can find his stolen armor.

Part 2, Chapter 10 Analysis

The story once again expands spatially, entering a new land. We are introduced to two key characters in this chapter: Serafina Pekkala and Iorek Byrnison.

The conversation between Jerry and Lyra regarding the settling of daemons is notable because it reveals that when daemons settle, their owners learn who they truly are. This confirms that daemons are somehow connected to their master's inner selves. Children, who switch between the personalities of those who are around them, have daemons that change forms. Adults, however, settle on a single personality, and therefore have 'settled' daemons.



Part 2, Chapter 11

Part 2, Chapter 11 Summary

Lyra uses the alethiometer to determine the location of the bear's armor. That evening, Lyra awakes suddenly, and feels the urge to put on her furs and go above deck. She sees the Aurora in the sky, and the city in the sky appears to her. Then, a giant grey goose lands on the deck of the ship, asking to see Coram.

When Coram, with John Faa, comes to the deck, he immediately recognizes the goose as Kaisa, Serafina Pekkala's daemon. Kaisa turns to Lyra and says that she has heard of her. Farder Coram tells Kaisa they intend to free the children and asks if Serafina's clan will assist them. The goose daemon says yes, but reports that all the clans will not help, and that some clans are associated with the Oblation Board. According to Kaisa, the Dust hunters and the children are four days northeast of their location, in a place called Bolvangar. Bolvangar is a mass of concrete buildings that the witches refer to as the 'fields of evil.' It is guarded by a company of armed Northern Tartars. When Lyra asks why the witches know about her, Kaisa responds that her father knows about other worlds, which she explains as the city in the sky. There are, says Kaisa, tens of thousands of dimensions, each ignorant of the others. Lord Asriel is trying to use the Dust in order to find a bridge between these dimensions.

When Lyra awakens the next morning, she is approached by Tony Costa, who asks her if she has seen the armored bear. She responds yes, then is interrupted by the Texan balloon aeronaut, Lee Scoresby, who says he has fought alongside Iorek on several occasions. The gyptians and Lee Scoresby begin playing a card game named hazard, so Lyra goes to sledge depot in search of Iorek. She watches from behind a chain link fence, as the bear dismantles a truck as though it were a tin can. When she becomes frightened and wants to leave, Pan insists on speaking with the bear. He changes into a bird to get through the fence, then changes into a badger and begins pulling himself across the ground. Since he cannot separate more than a few yards from Lyra, this becomes increasingly difficult, but eventually, Lyra is pulled through the fence. Lyra and Pan embrace, because the distance between them had caused her great sadness and physical pain.

Before revealing the location of the armor, Lyra makes the bear promise not to hurt anyone, then tells him that the armor can be found in the basement of the priest's house.

Iorek waits till sunset, then bounds through the streets in the direction of the priest's house. A sentry sees what is happening, and fires two shots into the air, then runs after the bear. By the time anyone reaches the priest's house, a number of servants, as well as the priest, have been flung from the front door.



A squad of police soon arrives. The cellar window begins shaking, then lorek busts through it, fully clad in rust colored armor. The policemen fire, but cannot even dent the heavy armor. lorek bites the sentry's head and dangles him from his jaws, but drops the sentry when Lyra reminds him of the promise not to harm anyone. lorek runs to the harbor, removes his armor, and leaps into the water.

The police, with the governor, arrive to reclaim the bears armor, but are surprised by Lee Scoresby, who is sitting atop the heap of armor with a large gun, which is aimed at the governor's stomach. Lee holds the police at bay until lorek returns with a dead seal. The bear removes some blubber from the seal and uses it to grease his rusty armor. The sysselman, or governor, tells the bear that he may leave, but warns him that he will be treated "mercilessly" if he should ever return to Trollesund.

Part 2, Chapter 11 Analysis

Kaisa, Pekkala's daemon, is an important character in this book. Not only does she demonstrate the independence of witches' daemons, but she helps to progress the story along at several points, including in this chapter.

Kaisa talks of tens of thousands of coexisting dimensions - a theory that is relevant in this book. The idea of different dimensions also falls into the category of overlapping micro/macrocossms.

The reader also learns about Bolvangar, which will be the objective for Part 2 of the book. We are introduced to Lee Scoresby, a key member of the expedition north. There is a new theme in this chapter - separation. Although this has been a theme throughout (i.e.: Lyra's separation from her parents) it becomes more evident at this point. The pain that Lyra feels when she is momentarily separated from Pantalaimon is a physical example of the anguish of isolation. The power/vengeance theme is revisited when lorek is about to crush the sentry between his jaws, but is stopped by Lyra.



Part 2, Chapter 12

Part 2, Chapter 12 Summary

John Faa asks Lyra to consult the alethiometer, and determine exactly how the Bolvangar is being defended. Lyra does this, and finds that there is a company of Tartars guarding the station, which is surrounded by wire. The company does not expect to get attacked. She is distracted for a moment, and the alethiometer tells her that there is a ghost in a village near the Bolvangar. John Faa persists in knowing more about the Bolvangar, and Lyra discovers that there are sixty men with rifles, some large guns, some cannons, and fire throwers. The Tartars, she says, all have wolf daemons. Sibirirsk regiments, which are the fiercest regiments known to any of the men, have wolf daemons. Lyra asks Lord Faa if she can go to the neighboring village, because the ghost may be that of one of the missing children. He says no, so Lyra asks Iorek if he will take her. He refuses because he is bound to Faa, but says he will take her if Faa allows it. Lyra convinces Faa that the alethiometer is trying to tell her something.

Lyra and Iorek, who travels much faster than the rest of the party, head toward the village, intending to catch up with the party later. In the middle of the journey, Iorek stops and tells Lyra to look up to the sky. She does, and sees hundreds of tiny black objects. "They are witches," says Iorek, who is concerned that they may be heading north to assist the Oblation Board.

When they arrive in the village, they are greeted by howling dogs and a man with a rifle, who initially thinks they are devils. Lyra attempts to speak to the man, but cannot understand his language. Luckily, Iorek can speak the language, and communicates to the man that they are searching for a ghost. The man says the ghost can be found in the fish house. Iorek waits as Lyra, who can see very little in the dark night, attempts to enter the fish house. An old man arrives with a lantern, which he gives to Lyra.

She enters the house and sees a daemon-less little boy huddled in a corner, clutching a piece of dried fish. It becomes apparent what the Gobblers are doing to the children; they are removing their demons through 'intercision,' and turning them into severed children.

Part 2, Chapter 12 Analysis

This chapter is mostly informative. The fortitude of the Bolvangar is revealed, as is the witches' involvement with the Oblation Board. However, much like the physical progression of Lyra, this chapter is mostly a digression from the main plot, with the exception of the encounter with the severed boy. This encounter furthers the theme of separation and reveals the truth behind the Oblation Board's activities.



Part 2, Chapter 13

Part 2, Chapter 13 Summary

The boy's name is Tony Makarios, and his missing daemon, whom he asks about, is Ratter. Lyra leaves the shed, sits in the snow, and sobs with Pantalaimon. However, she regains her composure and calls to Tony, who meekly exits the house, holding the dried fish. The man with the lantern tells Lyra that they must pay for the fish, but Lyra convinces him that the fish is a small sacrifice for the removal of the child. Lyra and Tony hop on Iorek's back, then head toward the Gyptian group. Tony continues to ask for Ratter.

When they arrive in camp, Faa, Coram, and the rest of the Gyptians are disgusted by the sight of the daemon-less child. Lyra convinces them to have pity on Tony, and they welcome him warmly. Before going to bed that evening, Lyra asks Iorek to tell Faa about the hundreds of witches they had seen on their way to the village.

In the morning, Lyra learns that Tony is dead. Because the ground is too frozen to dig a grave, Faa decides to cremate the child. Lyra goes to Tony's body, but cannot find the piece of dried fish that he was clutching in his arms. She searches the camp for the fish, and eventually discovers that a Gyptian has fed the fish to his dogs, not realizing its importance to the little boy. Lyra becomes very angry, then removes a gold coin from her pocket and, with the Gyptian's knife, inscribes the name Ratter on the coin. She places this coin in Tony's mouth; recalling how the Scholars had been buried at Jordan College. After the boy is cremated, the group sets off again.

Without saying her intent, Lyra asks Iorek to fashion two jars, one that is slightly larger than the spy bug, or spy-fly, tin and another that is the same size as the spy-fly tin. She replaces the empty, nearly identical tin in Farder Coram's kit bag, where the spy-fly tin had been kept. Then, Lyra places the real spy-fly tin into the larger tin, and places moss and lichen between the two tins in order to muffle the buzzing of the bug. Lyra learns from a conversation with Iorek, that he was exiled from Svalbard because he got angry and killed another bear. Iorek, like Asriel, was stripped of his wealth and rank, and also banished forever. The Svalstad bears took his armor away too, and Iorek was forced to make his own from sky metal. He tells Lyra that the king of the bears is Iofur Rakinson. Iorek then tells Lyra that she will never see her father again because the armored bears are too strong and too clever to be defeated. Lyra thinks the bears can be outwitted, but Iorek demonstrates, by fencing Lyra, who cannot touch him with her fencing stick, that bears see things before they are coming.

At the next resting spot, Lee Scoresby is to inflate his balloon and reconnoiter the area. Lyra becomes very interested in Scoresby and begins asking him a series of questions. He tells her, after being asked how to get to Svalbard, that one would need a zeppelin, or favorable south winds. She finds out that the balloon can carry Iorek with his armor, and that Tartars only put holes in the heads of their own people - which means that

Stanislaus Grumman, whose decapitated head had been shown to the Scholars, had been an honorary Tartar.

Part 2, Chapter 13 Analysis

Whereas Ma Costa could be seen as Lyra's motherly figure, Iorek becomes Lyra's nearest representation of a fatherly caregiver. When juxtaposed with Lord Asriel's story of banishment, Iorek's tale is very similar: both were powerful individuals, both killed a man over a woman, and both were removed of their rank and wealth. Because Lord Asriel is Lyra's real father, there is an immediate connection between fatherhood and Iorek, since his tale is so similar to Asriel's. Iorek's tale also reintroduces the theme of power. Once again, a powerful individual uses their strength for the wrong reasons, and once again that individual is punished for it. This chapter introduces Iofur Rakinson, who will become an important character.



Part 2, Chapter 14

Part 2, Chapter 14 Summary

The Gyptian party stops in order to rest the dogs and prepare for battle. It is too foggy for Scoresby to reconnoiter the area. Suddenly, a volley of arrows cuts through the thick fog and strikes the party; some Gyptians are killed. Lyra hears Iorek put on his armor, then bound into the fog. Moments later, she hears screams, crunching, and tearing.

In the midst of the battle, Lyra is captured; her hands are bound and a hood is placed on her head. She is placed on a sledge and driven away from the battle. Pan, who can see the kidnapers, tells Lyra that they look like Tartars. He also says that he saw Faa get hit by an arrow during the battle.

After some time, Lyra's hood is removed, and a man, who can barely speak English, asks her name. She tells him her name is Lizzie Brooks, and that the Gyptians were a bunch of traders. The sledge continues on until they come to a brightly lit arena, which is inside some sort of compound. A man, who reminds Lyra of a Scholar, exits a nearby building and asks her some questions regarding Pantalaimon. The man pays Lyra's kidnapers, who leave the compound, and invites her inside.

Lyra maintains her identity as Lizzie Brooks, and pretends to act dimwitted. A nurse named Sister Clara warmly welcomes Lyra to the compound, and asks Lyra her name and age. She replies that her name is Lizzie Brooks and she is eleven years old. Sister Clara tells Lyra to undress, then gives her a pair of clothes that remind Lyra of the clothes that Tony Makarios had been wearing. Lyra convinces the nurse that the alethiometer is a toy, and the nurse allows her to keep it. A phone rings, and while Sister Clara is responding to the call, Lyra removes the tin with the spy-fly in it and places it in the alethiometer bag. Sister Clara escorts Lyra through the compound.

The pair passes through a large room with white tables; Lyra notices a large photogram depicting a beach. The man reappears, and asks Lyra a series of questions. Lyra lies and tells him that her father is a trader. When she asks about the battle, the man tries to convince her that there was no battle, and that it was a bad nightmare. Lyra, who becomes sleepy, is taken to a room filled with beds. When she reaches her bed, she immediately falls asleep.

Lyra is awakened by someone shaking her. "They gave her a sleeping pill," she hears a girl say. After struggling to open her eyes, Lyra comes to, and is greeted by three girls. The girls inform her about the goings on in the compound. They say that the Gobblers are doing Dust research, and make them do exercises, and measure their temperatures and the weight of their daemons, which are put on scales and made to change forms. They say that when they take a child, the child does not return. They say that when Mrs. Coulter is there the children disappear faster, and that Mrs. Coulter is coming in two days.



Part 2, Chapter 14 Analysis

This chapter introduces Bolvangar, the focus of the second part of the book. Lyra utilizes her great cunning to her benefit for the first time in this chapter. Despite her size and lack of power, Lyra's ability to change a situation through cunning is a reversal of the size/power motif, which will ultimately be proven inaccurate. The transition between scenes through sleep is obvious in this chapter. It is a method that Pullman uses frequently.



Part 2, Chapter 15

Part 2, Chapter 15 Summary

The children are awakened at seven in the morning, then washed, dressed, and taken to the canteen, where Lyra immediately notices Roger. Lyra drops a handkerchief by Roger when she is passing by him, and then, to Roger's exuberance, says hello, but warns that they must pretend not to know each other.

Bolvangar reminds Lyra of a school because much of the day is spent in classrooms, where the children are taught sewing, gymnastics, and art. At snack time, Pantalaimon and Salcilia, Roger's daemon, become flies and discuss the situation. In this manner, Roger and Lyra can exchange information without being caught. Tony Makarios' name is mentioned, and the children begin discussing the reason for his disappearance. One girl believes it was because his daemon never changed. Others say that Tony was promised to be made 'more grown up.'

During lunch, Lyra is approached by Billy Costa, who tells her that many of the children are taken to hostels in the south after their operations. He also tells her about a hiding place in the ceiling.

After lunch, while Lyra is being tested for Dust, the fire alarm goes off and the children are taken outside the compound. Amidst the disorganization of the fire drill, Lyra, Billy, and Roger meet and decide to investigate the rest of the compound. Lyra throws a snowball into the mass of children, and a giant snowball fight begins.

Lyra, Billy, and Roger run to the side of the compound, and come to a door that read, "ENTRY STRICTLY FORBIDDEN." A large bird approaches from the sky, then alights near the trio. It is Serafina Pekkala's goose daemon, Kaisa, who informs Lyra that most of the gyptians survived the battle and that John Faa was wounded, though not severely.

With the assistance of the goose daemon, who unlocks the door, Lyra enters the building and discovers cages filled with daemons. Kaisa releases all the daemons, and tells them all to turn into birds, which they do with some difficulty. Kaisa and the weakened daemons fly away, and Lyra, Roger, and Billy return to the crowd of children. As they reenter the building, a zeppelin carrying Mrs. Coulter lands in the compound.

Part 2, Chapter 15 Analysis

Roger and Lyra are reunited in this chapter. Although this may appear to go against the theme of separation, it does not, because when there is a reunion in this book, there is almost immediately thereafter, a separation. The snowball fight is a reminder of the strength of the small. Although the children are captive, they still have playful spirits.



Inadvertently, the adults' inability to control the children's play is the reason for Lyra's discovery of the daemons.

Kaisa has another key part in the development of the plot. As with the goose's first appearance, it serves as a means to relay important information about distant events.

The reader is reminded of the separation theme when Lyra finds the cages full of daemons. The daemons have been separated from their master's and are miserable. There is a link between separation and sadness. The arrival of Mrs. Coulter creates a sense of urgency, which will not subside for a few chapters.



Part 2, Chapter 16

Part 2, Chapter 16 Summary

Lyra moves a panel in the ceiling, and hides her outdoor clothing, including the alethiometer. While in the canteen, Lyra tells the other children to prepare for an escape, and that once the fire alarm goes off, they should dress in warm clothes and run from the compound. In the evening, Lyra climbs into the hiding place in the ceiling, and then crawls to an area above the conference room, where Mrs. Coulter and three men are discussing the escaped daemons.

Mrs. Coulter determines that the escape was not due to the ineptness of the staff, but to the intervention of an outside force. The alarm, which should have sounded when the door to the cage area was sprung, was not heard because of the fire alarm. The conversation soon turns to a new separating machine, which uses a manganese and titanium blade to 'slice' the bond between child and daemon. Mrs. Coulter leaves, and Lyra stays to listen to the three men talk.

When Lyra's foot slips and makes a noise, one of the men lifts a panel in the ceiling and pulls Lyra to the floor. Despite biting the man in the arm, he does not let go. Suddenly, she becomes very weak, and realizes that another man has taken hold of Pantalaimon! The three men decide to keep this incident from Mrs. Coulter, and that their only option is to immediately separate Lyra and Pantalaimon, who are taken to a room and placed in adjoining mesh cages. As the Guillotine blade is being raised, Mrs. Coulter enters the room and asks what is happening. The golden monkey pulls Pan from his seat, and Lyra is saved, for now. Mrs. Coulter takes Lyra to a comfortable bed.

Part 2, Chapter 16 Analysis

This chapter introduces a theme that has run throughout the book, but has not yet been apparent; fate. The appearance of Kaisa and the synchronized alarms seem to be more than coincidences. From this point on, fate, especially in relation to Lyra and the witches, becomes an important part of this book. Mrs. Coulter again plays the role of mother, saving Lyra from danger and comforting her.



Part 3, Chapter 17

Part 3, Chapter 17 Summary

While she is still recovering from the guillotine incident, Lyra feels the probing fingers of the golden monkey as they examine the contents of her waist belt. Mrs. Coulter asks Lyra what happened to her in London, and Lyra fabricates a story. She says that a man and a woman tricked her, and put her in a car. Lyra says that she escaped the car when it was stopped, and was then captured by Gobblers and taken to Trollesund.

When asked about the Dust, Mrs. Coulter lies and says that it is evil and can infect daemons, because they can have troublesome thoughts. That is why, she says, they must separate children from their daemons - to save the children.

Mrs. Coulter then asks about the alethiometer, and Lyra removes the tin containing the spy-fly. "Did you put it (the alethiometer) in here to keep it safe?" Mrs. Coulter asks before using a knife to remove the lid of the tin can. The spy-fly immediately attacks the golden monkey, then turns on Mrs. Coulter.

Lyra and Pan seize the opportunity and run down the hall, setting off fire alarms as they go. Lyra runs into the kitchen, turns on a burner, and throws a large bag of flour, which she had heard can be explosive, on a table. She then runs to her dormitory, removes her outdoor clothes from the hiding place in the ceiling, and returns to the hallway, which is now filled with escaping children. There is an explosion and the roof caves in, allowing children to clamber over debris and reach the outside.

When she gets outside, Lyra, who is followed by the children, attempts to escape the compound, but is confronted by Tartar guards and their wolf daemons. The guards create a barricade, and Lyra tells the children to throw snowballs at the Tartars' eyes to temporarily blind them. They do, and the children run past the bewildered guards, but are again confronted by Tartars, who are taking aim with their rifles.

Arrows rain down from the skies as the witches begin attacking the Tartars. Iorek bounds into the compound and joins the fight. The children escape the battle and begin following Iorek's footprints toward John Faa's party. When they turn back, they see Scoresby deflating Mrs. Coulter's zeppelin and filling his own balloon with its gas. The children safely reach the Gyptian party.

Immediately thereafter, Pan is attacked by the golden monkey and Lyra is taken by Mrs. Coulter, who is guarded by Tartars, to a motorized sledge. Before Mrs. Coulter can take Lyra away, Iorek Byrnison attacks and Lyra is safely lifted from Mrs. Coulter's hands by a witch. The witch drops Lyra into Scoresby's balloon. The balloon is carried swiftly into the atmosphere by some witches, who are riding cloud pine branches. Lyra is approached by the witch who had saved her. It is Serafina Pekkala. Serafina tells Lyra they are heading north, and have much to talk about.



Part 3, Chapter 17 Analysis

The innocence over evil theme becomes apparent once more when the children throw snow in the Tartar's eyes. The playful activity of throwing snowballs saves, or assists, the children for a second time. The author's use of white objects to overcome evil people or places should certainly be noted in this section. Lyra uses flour to create the explosion that frees the children. The children also throw snowballs at the guards in order to blind them. It is difficult to discuss the use of white without linking it to goodness, and, in this chapter, innocence. The children represent innocence and purity, and therefore overcome their adversaries by using white objects.



Part 3, Chapter 18

Part 3, Chapter 18 Summary

Serafina and Scoresby discuss Lyra's importance. Scoresby also says he will not participate in a war, because he has only been paid for transportation, not for war. The two discuss fate, and how it affects everyone. They decide they are on Lyra's side of the war, whichever that may be.

When Lyra awakens, she asks about the future of Lord Asriel, and whether or not he will return to Jordan College after he is rescued. Serafina tells her that Asriel will not return to the College, because there is work to be done in other worlds. Lyra asks numerous questions about the witches, and learns they live hundreds of years, and that Pekkala is at least three hundred years old. She learns there are no male witches, only men that work for them, such as the consul of Trollesund. They can have children and, if the child is a female it becomes a witch, if it is male it becomes a human. Serafina tells Lyra that she is in love with Farder Coram, who has aged when Serafina has not, and that they once had a male child together. However, the boy died from an epidemic.

Pekkala also tells Lyra that Iorek is a highborn bear, and, if he had not killed another bear, he would be king. The fight between Iorek and the bear he killed was over a female. When asked about Dust, Serafina knows little, but can say that the Oblation Board was funded by the Church.

They encounter some rough winds, and Scoresby is forced to lower the balloon. A stinking, half human sized bat-like creature with the face of a frog lands on the balloon's basket and nears Scoresby. Iorek flicks the creature away and nonchalantly says, "Cliff-ghost." The witches are attacked by a group of cliff-ghosts and the balloon slams into a cliff, sending Lyra flying from the basket. She lands in a snow bank at the bottom of the cliff, and is approached by a bear, who she first thinks is Iorek, but finds that it is a Svalbard bear. She is taken captive, and led up the rocky cliff.

Part 3, Chapter 18 Analysis

We learn more about Lyra's significance, and, just as the setting expands to Svalbard, so expands Lyra's importance. Serafina and Scoresby discuss fate, which, when accorded with Lyra, is a pertinent aspect of this book.

The witches are an interesting reversal of the male-dominated world; there are no male witches, only men who work for them. This is an especially relevant reversal of roles because the witches are the most nature-loving of all the characters in this book. Nature, therefore, seems to be against a male-dominated society.

Iorek's past is a clear link between he and Asriel. The Church's participation in the Oblation Board is first mentioned in this chapter.



Part 3, Chapter 19

Part 3, Chapter 19 Summary

Lyra is taken to an enormous stone castle, which is surrounded by carved representations of warfare and tributes to Iofur Raknison. As she is led to her holding cell, she is overcome by the stink of seal fat, dung, blood, and garbage. The bears throw her into a dark cell and slam the door. Lyra immediately consults the alethiometer, with Pan in the form of a firefly so she can see in the dark. After consulting the alethiometer, she learns that Lorek is one day away, but heading toward the castle, intending to rescue her.

A man's voice is heard in the darkness of the cell. He introduces himself as Jotham Santelia, Regius Professor of Cosmology at the University of Gloucester. Lyra gets some information from the man, who is nearly mad, about Iofur Raknison, the bear king whom Jotham had served. She discovers that Iofur is quite fond of Mrs. Coulter, and remembers that the Palmerian Professor had once said that Iofur Raknison wanted a daemon more than anything in the world.

Lyra tricks the guards into taking her to see Iofur, saying that she has vital information regarding Lorek Byrnison, and it would be rude for anyone but the king to hear about it first. Iofur is the largest bear that Lyra has ever seen; she notices a stuffed doll resembling Mrs. Coulter sitting on his lap, as a daemon might. Lyra tells Iofur that she is Lorek's daemon, but would really like to be his daemon. She says that she was bonded to Lorek at Bolvangar, and, because Lorek is a bear, she is a human daemon, rather than an animal. Lyra explains that she is like a witch's daemon, and can therefore travel hundreds of miles away from her master. She says that she wants to become Iofur's daemon, but can only do so after Iofur has defeated Lorek in single combat.

The bear king asks for proof of her daemon abilities, asking her what the first creature she killed was. Lyra says she must have privacy, then goes to the adjoining room and consults the alethiometer, which tells her that the first creature Iofur ever killed was a solitary bear, who was his father. Iofur is satisfied with this answer, but asks one more question: "What did the Lady Coulter promise me when she was here?" Lyra goes into the adjoining room, consults the alethiometer, and returns with an answer: "She promised you that she'd get the Magisterium in Geneva to agree that you could be baptized as a Christian." After this, Iofur listens to every order that Lyra gives, and, at Lyra's suggestion, he tells all the bears about the single combat that will occur with Lorek.

Part 3, Chapter 19 Analysis

Power has a large part in this chapter, from the initial description of the castle, to the description of Iofur's gaudy jewels and his physical magnitude. The theme of small



overcoming the powerful is enacted by Lyra, who, through her cunning, is able to manipulate Iofur to do her bidding.

Iofur's desire to have a daemon is unnatural, as is his way of life. His will to power, and his unnatural desire for human things, are to be the downfall of Iofur.



Part 3, Chapter 20

Part 3, Chapter 20 Summary

The combat grounds are prepared for the battle between lorek and lofur. Lyra, who is wary of the battle because lorek has been traveling without food or rest, consults the alethiometer. It tells her that lorek is an hour away, and that she should trust him. Because of its pristine condition, additional chest protection, Lyra is terrified when she sees lofur's armor, which looks superior to lorek's.

The bears at the watchtower signal that lorek is coming, and Lyra goes to meet him outside the gates. She apologizes for getting him into this situation, but he is happy because all he wanted to do was fight lofur. The bears each go through a ritual of explaining the terms of their victory, and then prepare to battle.

The bears clash, and lorek is soon injured in his left paw, which can now barely support his weight. Noticing this weakness, lofur begins taunting the doomed lorek, who backs away from his opponent. However, lorek tricks lofur, because his left arm is not injured. lorek launches off a rock and slashes at lofur's jaw, which falls off, leaving lofur defenseless. lorek grabs lofur by the throat and kills him, then removes his heart and eats it.

As per his terms of victory, the palace is immediately dismantled. lorek Byrnison, now king of the bears, orders the human prisoners to be released. Roger and Lyra are reunited. Lyra, feeling weary, curls up and goes to sleep in a corner of the combat grounds.

Lyra is awakened by a young bear, who tells her that lorek would like to see her. lorek's council explains that Mrs. Coulter was behind the death of Hjalmur Hjalmurson, whom lorek had killed. Mrs. Coulter had apparently given Hjalmur a drug that made him 'forget himself.' Lyra also learns that Mrs. Coulter was trying to set up a station like Bolvangar on Svalgard, and needed to do so because human laws would not allow her to perform the experiments she wanted.

Lyra consults the alethiometer in order to determine the fate of her comrades. The witches were attacked by another witch clan, and Scoresby had escaped the battle and was still airborne, drifting toward Nova Zembla. The alethiometer tells Lyra that Mrs. Coulter is headed to Svalgard in a zeppelin, which is armed with machine guns. A regiment of Tartars is also headed to Svalgard, via the sea. Mrs. Coulter is coming for Lyra because she needs something from her, but Lyra does not know what, and assumes it is the alethiometer. They decide to immediately take the alethiometer to Lord Asriel.



Part 3, Chapter 20 Analysis

Iofur is well clad and enormous. His description is made even more impressive when he is put next to the smaller, rustily clad lorek. However, we know that size and power are not concurrent in this book. lorek's rusty armor has a characteristic that Iofur's does not, it was made by its wearer.

lorek states earlier in the book that the armor is his soul. If that is the case, lorek must be weathered and wise, as the battle dents portray, and concerned more with battle than aesthetics, as the rust may reveal. Iofur, on the other hand, is brilliantly clad, with polished armor. He is therefore not concerned so much with battle, as he is with looking good. His vanity will be his downfall when, once again, the powerful lorek is tricked by cunning. This is not surprising, although one might think it at first, because he has given up on his 'bearness,' or his natural self, and attempted to become human. In this exchange, Iofur has lost his bear instincts. After his victory, lorek, who is still a natural bear, orders the destruction of the unnatural castle.



Part 3, Chapter 21

Part 3, Chapter 21 Summary

Soren Eisarson, an elderly council of the bears who had witnessed the negotiation of Asriel's imprisonment, tells Lyra her father had been equipped with every necessity, including a laboratory.

Lord Asriel's elegant house is located on the top of a high crag. Lyra is greeted by fearfully by Lord Asriel, who tells her to get out. However, when Asriel sees Roger, he calms down and welcomes them into his house. Lyra, and Roger bathe while Lord Asriel speaks with lorek. Roger tells Lyra he is afraid of Lord Asriel, more so than he is afraid of Mrs. Coulter, and that Lord Asriel had looked at him like a wolf. Lyra wants to consult the alethiometer, but Roger convinces her not to. Thorold, Lord Asriel's servant, tells Roger to go to bed, and tells Lyra to meet with Asriel.

Lyra and Lord Asriel discuss many things, including: their relationship as father and daughter, Mrs. Coulter, and Dust. "Dust," Asriel explains, "is what makes the alethiometer work." According to Lord Asriel, Dust was discovered by a man named Rusakov, who was suspected by the Church to have been possessed. However, Rusakov proved to the Church that Dust did exist, and the Magisterium decided that Dust was the result of original sin. Asriel quotes the book of Genesis, then says when Adam and Eve ate the apple, their daemons became fixed in one form. The name Dust was derived from a passage in the Bible that reads, "for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return. Lord Asriel describes how the ambitious Mrs. Coulter, who had failed at gaining power through marriage, successfully gained power through the Church, and more specifically, by studying Dust, a subject that terrified the Church. By using the precedence of castration, Mrs. Coulter received permission to perform her experiments. She believed that by separating a child from their daemon, she could stop original sin. However, Mrs. Coulter missed something about this separation process; when a child was separated from their daemon, great amounts of energy were given off. Lord Asriel's intention is to harness this power and use it to connect to different universes. Lyra tries to give the alethiometer to Lord Asriel, but he has no interest in it.

Part 3, Chapter 21 Analysis

Although Lord Asriel has evil intentions, he still has fatherly instincts for his daughter, Lyra. When he first sees her at the door, he is terrified because, he "did not send for her." Asriel does not want to harm his own daughter. Asriel's ability to "send for people" is closely related to fate. Lord Asriel seems to be capable of manipulating fate to work in his favor, but this is not further explained. The Church's interest in Dust is finally revealed by Lord Asriel, who describes Dust as original sin. Dust, or original sin, is not attracted to children, who are innocent, but becomes attracted to adults. The theme of

separation/removal/banishment is again restated by the story of Adam and Eve, who are banished from the Garden of Eden.



Part 3, Chapter 22

Part 3, Chapter 22 Summary

Lyra is awakened by Thorold, who tells her that Lord Asriel took off in a sledge with Roger. "Lord Asriel has a way special to himself of bringing about what he wants, he just has to call for something," says Thorold. Lyra realizes that in her attempt to save Roger, she had betrayed him, by bringing Asriel the one thing he needed to complete his bridge - a child.

Lyra, on Iorek's back and with a group of bears, takes off after Asriel's sledge. The bears stop suddenly, and are attacked by a clan of witches. Soon after, Mrs. Coulter's zeppelin appears and begins firing machine gun rounds at the bears. The bears, who are equipped with a fire thrower, launch flaming rocks toward the zeppelin; a rock connects and the zeppelin, which is filled with gas, explodes. Iorek and Lyra continue following Asriel's sledge tracks, but Iorek must stop his pursuit at a small bridge, that only Lyra is light enough to cross. Lyra makes it to the other side, but the bridge collapses behind her.

Part 3, Chapter 22 Analysis

As it is the title of the chapter, betrayal plays a large role in this section. However, this betrayal is a betrayal through fate, because Lyra has no intentions of putting Roger in harms way. Therefore, rather than consider this a true betrayal, one could refer to it as fate, and furthermore as 'Lord Asriel manipulated' fate. Iorek and Lyra are forced at the bridge to separate. In a way, Lyra really was Iorek's daemon, as she claimed to be. The physical connection between the two is severed when the bridge collapses behind Lyra, leaving no return to her friend and caretaker.



Part 3, Chapter 23

Part 3, Chapter 23 Summary

The Aurora appears as brilliant as ever. Pan changes into an owl and reconnoiters the area, returning to tell Lyra that Asriel and Roger are just over the next peak. Suddenly, the Aurora goes out like a light bulb. When she summit's the next peak, Lyra sees Roger confined by Lord Asriel, and his daemon firmly clasped in Lord Asriel's snow leopard daemon's jaws. Asriel connects some wire and the Aurora flickers back on. Lyra realizes that Lord Asriel, with the assistance of a witch, who has flown a wire into the sky, is controlling the Aurora. Pantalaimon saves Roger's daemon from the snow leopard, and Lyra pulls Roger away from Lord Asriel. Roger's daemon is again trapped by the leopard, and Roger cannot run away from Lord Asriel, who attaches a wire to Roger's daemon and then to Roger.

There is a flash of light, and another world appears in the sky, shining sunlight upon this world. Mrs. Coulter appears and embraces Lord Asriel. She warns Asriel that the bridge between worlds will be opposed by the Church, which is more powerful than Asriel can imagine. He ignores her warning, saying he will find the source of Dust and destroy it. Asriel asks Mrs. Coulter to join him, but she refuses, then leaves. Lord Asriel enters the sun-drenched world, which is a beach with waving palm trees. Lyra and Pan discuss what they will do next, and decide to stop Lord Asriel. They enter the new world, leaving their world behind.

Part 3, Chapter 23 Analysis

The final twist of the story is revealed; Mrs. Coulter and Lord Asriel are still working together and are still very much in love. This is a short-lived reunion between her parents because, soon after they meet, they are separated. Mrs. Coulter leaves, and Lord Asriel steps into another universe. This is the final separation of the book, and Lyra follows in her father's footsteps, separating from her native world.



Characters

Lyra

Lyra is an intelligent and bold girl who grew up at Jordan College, Oxford. It is initially said that Lyra's parents were Baron and Baroness Belacqua, who were killed in an air ship accident; this is not true. Lyra's real parents are Lord Asriel and Mrs. Coulter. Lyra's daemon, Pantalaimon, should be considered part of Lyra, and not a separate character, because 'Pan' often serves to create physical manifestations of Lyra's thoughts. After learning about the North, Lyra is obsessed with the destination, and goes as a result of fate. She is the only character that can read the "Golden Compass," or alethiometer, and this ability gives her power, which she uses only when necessary. There is a greater purpose for Lyra's power, and, although this is alluded to throughout the book, the reader never knows the ultimate significance of Lyra's abilities.

Lord Asriel

A powerful man with an equally powerful presence. Lord Asriel is Lyra's real father, although he rarely acts in a fatherly manner towards her. He has a dark past - he killed Mrs. Coulter's husband in a duel. As a result of this, Asriel was stripped of his titles, land, and wealth. His main concern is manipulating the power of Dust to bridge different universes. This quest for knowledge, and power, will lead Lord Asriel toward evil misdeeds. These misdeeds, the worst of which involves Roger, are brought about by a mysterious ability that Asriel has; he can alter fate.

Mrs. Coulter

A beautiful, intelligent woman with long black hair. Her beauty is deceiving however, because Mrs. Coulter is the most sinister character of the book. As is often demonstrated by her golden monkey daemon, who mercilessly attacks other daemons, Coulter cares little for the lives and feelings of others. She is a cold woman who, although Lyra's mother, only shows her motherly side when she is trying to get something from her daughter. She has a great deal of influence and is in charge of the General Oblation Board.

Roger

Lyra's best friend from Jordan College who is kidnapped by the Gobblers. He is later rescued, only to be kidnapped by Lord Asriel.



Iorek Byrnison

An armored bear that Lyra meets in Trollesund. After she helps him recover his armor, which he calls his soul, Iorek becomes Lyra's protector. He kills Iofur Rakinson and becomes king of the bears.

John Faa

Leader of the Gyptian people who organizes a rescue party.

Farder Coram

Faa's elderly right hand man who becomes a grandfather figure to Lyra. He is a seer.

Serafina Pekkala

A witch queen who owes allegiance to Farder Coram because he saved her life.

Lee Scoresby

A Texan and aeronaut who flies a balloon, and assists the northern expedition. He is an old friend of Iorek.

Iofur Rakinson

King of the Svalgard bears who wants to be human. He is killed by Iorek in a duel.

Ma Costa

An intimidating woman with a good heart. She is mother to Tony and Billy, and was at one point Lyra's nurse.

Tony Costa

The eldest son of Ma Costa who rescues Lyra from capture and assists on the expedition north.

Billy Costa

One of the kidnapped children, and also Ma Costa's son, whom Lyra meets up with in Bolvangar.



The Master

Head of Jordan College who tries to poison Lord Asriel. He also gives the alethiometer to Lyra.

Tony Makarios

A boy who goes missing. It is later discovered he has been separated from his daemon, Ratter.

Mrs. Lonsdale

Lyra's caretaker at Jordan College.

Dr. Martin Lanselius

The witch consul.

Stanislaus Grumman

A northern explorer who studied Dust before disappearing in the North.

Dr. Ruskonov

The scientist who first discovered Dust, also known as Ruskonov Particles.

Jotham Santalia

A mad prisoner that Lyra meets while imprisoned in Svalgard.



Objects/Places

Jordan College at Oxford

Where Lyra grew up and setting where much of the initial story occurs.

Daemon

A familiar that every human is born with. When humans are children, their daemons have the ability to change forms. The daemons of adults, however, stay in a single form. Humans cannot separate from their daemons.

Tokay

A type of wine.

Dust

Mysterious particles that can only be seen with a special lens. These particles are attracted to adults, but not to children.

Aurora

The Aurora Borealis

Gobblers

The name given to a group of individuals who kidnap children. Also known as the General Oblation Board.

Alethiometer

A compass-like device that can tell the truth.

Royal Arctic Institute

An institute dedicated to exploration of the North. Mrs. Coulter is a member.



Tartars

Northern Warriors who are known for scalping their enemies and putting holes in the heads of their own (in order to let the Dust in).

Gyptians

A water faring people.

Fen

A thick marsh area that is inhabited by the gyptians.

Roping

A secret meeting held by Gyptians.

Spy-fly

A mechanical bug with that is powered by a trapped spirit.

Trollesund

A town in the North, in the country of Lapland. Home of the witch consul, and lorek Byrnison.

Intercision

Method by which a human is separated from their daemon.

Bolvangar

Heavily guarded compound where the children are taken and experimented on by the Oblation Board.

Witches

Females who have the ability to fly on branches. They live hundreds of years and can separate from their daemons, unlike humans.

Svalbard

An area in the far north that is ruled by armored bears.

Setting

The first part of this book is set in the city of Oxford, while the second and last parts of it are set in the far North of the planet. However, this Oxford is on an alternative earth, with humans whose souls are "familiars" in the form of animals that live outside the bodies of their human counterparts. Each individual's daemon is closely linked to his or her human and symbolizes something about their human's character.

At the same time, humans carry on verbal and mental conversations, even arguments, with their daemons, which are usually of the opposite sex. A daemon continues to change from one animal to another until the humans pass through puberty. At this point in a person's life, the daemon becomes fixed.

When the person dies, it seems to disappear.

The work follows the perspective of Lyra, first describing her unlikely home in an Oxford college where the rest of the residents are adult male scholars of various ages. Through her eyes, we first see a few rooms in Jordan College and then the rest of her childhood world in the city of Oxford.

The author intended this Oxford to be contemporary with ours, but a parallel world where technology and society have taken a different turn. The city is late Victorian in feel, with few electric (they are called Anbaric) devices available to the general populace and no hint of motorized transport. Steam trains are mentioned but they do not figure in Lyra's travel, which is either by foot, boat, steamship, and dogsled. Lyra is something of an adventurer who has not been subject to the discipline of a family or a primary school. Her education is spotty, being conducted by whatever junior scholar of Jordan College is available to take her on.

This also means that much of the time she is left to her own devices. We thus see the streets, alleys, buildings, and colleges from her perspective, but the wealth of detail makes them a rich background and her adventuresome spirit is the author's excuse for portraying the roofs, dungeons, burial crypts, riverbanks, and canals. To anyone who has been to Oxford, many of the descriptions are recognizable. What is missing are the railroad stations, modern buildings, including the modern shops and department stores of High and Broad streets, automobiles and all the bustle we associate with contemporary Britain. It is as if the city, and perhaps her whole world, is caught in some kind of time warp, caused by the dominance of a strictly Calvinist church with many and far-reaching political powers. For example, the explorers who inspire her and whom she joins later in the book use lighter-than-air balloons but not airplanes and certainly not jets. Then there is "magic," mostly in the form of daemons, ghosts, magical substances, and witches. Witches are able to fly sitting on a kind of pine-branch called cloud-pine.

Quasi-mechanical spies are powered by daemons, and the Lyra uses the all-important Alitheometer to assess people's characters and forecast future events (The Golden Compass of the American title).



Soon after the novel begins, Lyra is taken from Oxford to London, to live with her newfound mother, the glamorous Mrs. Coulter. This is also a retrofitted London with a highly stratified social and economic system. Then she escapes from her mother because that same woman is a member of the Oblation Board, a religious institution that steals and harms children. Lyra teams up with the gyptians, whose children are most at risk and then we are treated to another slice of alternative Britain. Finally, she journeys to north to Lapland with the gyptians, hoping to rescue her friend Roger and Lord Asriel, whom she discovers is her father. This is the device used by Pullman to introduce us to the many other civilizations of this alternative universe whose inhabitants live either in the fens on their boats (the gyptians), in small towns which are reminiscent of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century, or in frozen huts in the arctic. Some of the arctic inhabitants are sentient bears whose "souls" are their metal armor made from meteorites. While the settings begin with the familiar alternative universe Oxford, close to home for Pullman and known to many of his readers as a new city with very old roots and traditions, they become more and more exotic. The canals and fens on which the boat-bound gyptians live are almost like those of central England today, but they are in heavier use because of the absence of most other modern forms of transport. While she is with the gyptians, Lyra is able to observe details surrounding their rituals of decision-making and leadership, obviously developed over long generations of the gyptians' outcast status, giving the story more historical depth and an even more exotic appeal. By the time Lyra travels North through country that is reminiscent of Finland and up to the North Pole inhabited by other creatures, the fantastic element has been firmly established through landscape which is no longer so easily recognizable as the real North Pole and the author has begun to suggest that some natural phenomena such as the Northern Lights, which we take for granted, could have a very fantastic origin.

Lyra's travels in the North are also filled with exotic details. She first travels by steamship to a Northernmost settlement, Trollesund, described as the main port of Lapland, and enjoys all the associate pleasures of unfettered shipboard life. After she and the gyptian men arrive in the port, she is able to wander around the town unhindered, as she did in Oxford, and therefore to solve one of their problems. She meets, then arranges to free the bear lorek, who will become her guide and good friend. The descriptions of Trollesund evoke turn-of-the-century Alaskan gold rush settlements as much as they do recognizable Lapland villages of our own far north. One can almost smell the wet mud of the streets and steaming, damp bodies in the public buildings. That these locations, a frozen north Lapland where fish are the major source of food, and snow covers the landscape for much of the year, and wild Tartars roam around capturing children and killing other intruders, are also strange and frightening to Lyra only adds to the sense of adventure.

Then, when she and her gyptians friends travel even further North to Bolvangar seeking the lost children, she is thrust into a familiar situation with a terrible haunting difference. Bolvangar is a remote settlement, boasting only an institution, which is a cross between a boarding school and a hospital. Pullman is able to meld the strangeness of the frozen landscape with the common experience readers have with this sort of concentrated collection of young humans.



With an economy of words, he can evoke all the fear and frustrations, as well as the hopelessness that can attend to such settings. The group-bedrooms, the cafeteria, and the regimen of institutional life are all enriched by details of sight, sound, and smell. Before Lyra arrived we are to understand that the children, all of whom had been stolen from their homes in the south, apparently were content to follow orders while fearing their fate, a common phenomenon of institutional life. Finally, Lyra engineers their collective escape, but is herself captured by fierce Tartars and taken to the new snow-palace of the bear King, and to her father's lavish prison and observatory. It seems that only her additional knowledge of Mrs. Coulter, the mystery of "dust" and the Alethiometer and a sense of responsibility to her friends and her father set her apart and push her towards action, dangerous as it may appear.



Social Sensitivity

Pullman approaches the analysis of society primarily through the eyes of Lyra, and thus her observations and conclusions dominate the narrative. Since he also has a specific message about religion and other social institutions, namely that they foster corruption because individuals are given too much power, Lyra is put in many situations where she has to choose a path counter to that expected of her by the adults in her world. It is clear that the Master of Jordan College is largely indifferent to her until he learns that she has a destiny, as is her father, known only to her as Lord Asriel.

We get the impression that her world is socially stratified, largely indifferent to the rights of individuals, and that its social, political and religious institutions serve the ambitions of a few individuals more than they do the good of the whole population.

Pullman uses Lyra to constantly contrast the motives and actions of adults in positions of power with those of Lyra which seem to come from a "higher" morality.

She is loyal to her college until it interferes with her friends. She accepts the "outsider" position of gyptians until she learns that they will help her rescue her friends, even though her upbringing does not seem to have included many lessons on moral and social responsibility. One comes away from this book with a sense that any personal virtues developed by a child or an adult are there in spite of the efforts of society. The message is relatively clear: individual courage, intelligence, inventiveness and personal loyalty are always superior to and usually in conflict with social institutions.

Lyra's adventures teach her to distrust her mother, her father, the people who raised her, and most adults who are members of normal society, instead trusting outsiders like the gyptians, witches, bears and children her own age. This novel is a pointed examination of most social organizations with which we are familiar and focuses especially on its treatment of children and outsiders who are under its power.



Literary Qualities

The third-person narrator in this novel is usually associated with Lyra's experiences, so that the lens of the story is her eye. From time to time, the narrator includes background information that is important if the reader is to understand the story. Pullman tries, however, to stick to Lyra's unreliable viewpoint and thus uses her series of adventures to bring the reader to a knowledge of her very different world.

The novel is separated into three sections named after the physical location of the majority of the action, but each also representing a broadening of Lyra's knowledge.

Thus section one, Oxford, introduces us to this city and to Lyra's world as a child.

Section Two, Bolvangar, gives Lyra and the reader more extensive knowledge of her world, introducing bears, witches, tartars and wild animals. The Svalbard of section three is a place where Lyra must learn and react to the most painful lessons and in fact is where she can no longer be sure of which actions to take. As she says, "We got it all wrong about Roger. We thought we were helping him." It is also the physical place where she discovers the existence of parallel worlds to her own and goes off into one of them. So the physical journey and the journey of increasing self-knowledge and self-determination form parallel plots.

Beginnings of novels are very important and the amount of information that Pullman puts into his first scene is a measure of his skill as an author. We are introduced to his major creation, Daemons, in the very first pages of the story. They will play an important role both at the level of character and of plot.

Daemons are as much a literary device, and are used in many symbolic ways throughout the story. At once endearing and distinctive, they symbolize key aspects of human nature as we know it while also letting us know that we are viewing a world and people very different from us. It is hard to conceive of a more useful narrative device for grabbing the reader's attention and emphasizing the alienness of a setting. Lyra and her daemon are our first introduction to the story and her close relationship with this creature that changes into several different animals within the first chapter of the book draws us to her and arouses our sympathy. Pantalaimon is known affectionately as Pan. He has enough free will to argue with Lyra about her intended actions, suggest alternatives to get her out of trouble and run interference for her when she is caught. One easily gets the impression that she is a mischievous, creative and troublesome child and that the scenario that opens the novel is also symbolic as an example of a very common occurrence in her personal history. In other words, while the scene is immediate and exciting, it is also very similar to what she has experienced before. And at the same time, it sets off many events that will change her life.

Additionally, by the end of the first chapter, we know many more things about daemons: that adult daemons are fixed in shape, that they represent the essential nature of their humans, that they make their humans at once more knowledgeable and more



vulnerable. Their presence, both in life and death, serves to differentiate humans from other inhabitants of this alternative world. For example, on page six we are told about the Steward and his daemon.

"He was a servant, so she was a dog; but a superior servant, so a superior dog. In fact, she had the form of a red setter. The daemon seemed suspicious and cast around as if she'd sensed an intruder, but didn't make for the wardrobe, to Lyra's intense relief.

Lyra was afraid of the Steward, who had twice beaten her." The wealth of detail in this description is amazing but also typical of the whole novel. As we read between the lines, this is some of what it means to us: There are servants. Servants have dogs for daemons, but different kinds of dogs according to their status. Daemons have more senses than their masters, but do not act without their masters' permission. Lyra is not protected by her status from discipline administered by servants and Lyra has been in trouble for her transgressive behavior at least twice, but probably many more times.

One could take any number of passages in the novel and deconstruct how daemons operate on a symbolic and a narrative level.

They are used to differentiate humans from other creatures. Lyra and her friends and family all have daemons but the bears, who nevertheless act like humans, do not. Witches have daemons but they and their daemons can travel further apart than humans can from their daemons. Thus the daemons of witches are more versatile on a realistic level and as plot devices. They can be spies, carry messages, and act independently for the benefit of humans, but still make their humans more vulnerable to physical attack. One person can kill another by killing their daemon as well as by killing them.

Daemons are used by the author to present many details about characters. By the second chapter, we know enough about daemons to decode the nature of the many adults who surround Lyra, and like her, to read their truthfulness and level of dependability from the action of their daemons. The most marked example of this use of daemons is Mrs. Coulter's monkey. This golden monkey is despicable from the earliest chapters of the story because he attacks other people's daemons at the request of Mrs. Coulter.

His function in defining her character for the reader, and ultimately for Lyra, is very significant. He reflects her true feelings of disdain, anger, criticism and general nastiness while her face retains an impassive smile. He spies for her, burrowing into Lyra's things to find the Alitheometer for his mistress. Thus we know she is untrustworthy and is not above using even her own daughter to further her political ambitions.

Daemons also have a central function in plot of the story. After all, the story is about an elusive substance called "dust" which collects around adults with fixed daemons.

The motivation the Oblation Board has for stealing children is to sever them from their daemons thus turning them into zombies, and even causing their death. When daemons



are severed, the process itself releases some sort of energy that is craved both by the Oblation Board members and by Lyra's father. The Bear King's desire for a daemon and his attempts to become human help Lyra to defeat him. In fact, some factions of the institutionalized church seem almost to fear daemons and to want to "tame" them in order to achieve greater power over other individuals, thus adding to the motivation of the Oblation Board.

While daemons are central to Pullman's characterizations, he also skillfully uses language, appearance, social function, setting, and relationships to Lyra in creating his varied and interesting characters. Notice how Lyra's word choices and grammar change depending on whether she is talking to her young friends, the Scholars in Jordan College, her mother, the bears and witches, or the gyptians. Notice the attention the author pays to how she and others are dressed, which both tells us something about their social status and makes them more vivid. Of course, it is easiest to examine any of these ideas in relation to Lyra, whose mother immediately buys her new clothes when she takes her away from Jordan College and forces Lyra to think about her physical appearance more than the functionality of her clothing. When Lyra is in the North, she chooses clothes for their function, but we are still treated to an extensive description. Pullman is also lavish with details of the different settings in which Lyra finds herself, giving us vivid pictures of the exotic places as Lyra experiences them. The college, her mother's house (both on normal days and when she is having a party), the gyptian's boats, the fens where they live, the "hospital/school" at Bolvangar, and her father's prison, are each a rich visual pallet which engage a full range of our senses.



Themes

Power

Power is a theme manifested in several ways in this book. Firstly, power consumes the individuals who seek it. The most obvious examples of this are the stories of Iorek and Lord Asriel, who are both banished for enacting their vengeance on another individual. Their power leads them to accidentally harm others. Secondly, power blinds those who seek it. The best example of this is Iofur Rakinson's vanity, which is derived from his power. He is easily manipulated by Lyra; this leads to his downfall. Finally, power is manifested not in the strong, but in the weak. Those who appear to be most powerful, especially Iofur Rakinson, are not powerful, whereas those who appear weak, mainly Lyra, have power beyond their knowledge.

Separation

This is perhaps the most frequently appearing theme in *The Golden Compass*. The kidnappings bring about a physical separation between children and parents. The plot is mostly dedicated to the reunion of this separation. Lyra and her parents, Lord Asriel and Mrs. Coulter, are also separated. There is a physical reunion with both parents; however, there is no emotional reunion. Lyra is also separated from Roger, whom she is briefly reunited with, before once again being separated. There is also separation by intercision; that is an emotional and physical separation between daemon and human; between the mind and the body. This is a fearful concept to everyone in the book, and alludes to the idea of loneliness. The final separation occurs when Lyra leaves the world of her birth.

Fate/Destiny

This is a theme later in the book, and is introduced by the witches. Lyra is an excellent example of fate/destiny because she is constantly referred to as "more important than she knows." The reader knows that she has an important task in her future; possibly to save the world. Lyra is also destined to undo the evils done by her parents, and, because she is their daughter, is the only person who can do so. The alethiometer verifies the theme of fate because it accurately foretells the future. Therefore, the future is unchanging: the very definition of fate.

Betrayal

This is first introduced when the Master tries to poison Lord Asriel, and furthered when we find out that the Librarian is also involved in the plot. Mrs. Coulter is the epitome of betrayal; she betrays the children by misleading them toward their demise, and she also betrays Lyra when she pretends to care for her well being. Also, Lyra accidentally

betrays Roger by leading him directly to Lord Asriel, who then betrays Lyra's trust and kidnaps her friend.



Themes/Characters

Pullman has been very articulate about his intentions for the three books as a whole.

They are to be "A rewriting of Milton's *Paradise Lost*," for young adults, and the first novel is Lyra's story. In the second, he introduces another focal character and the third novel involves them both in an epic struggle. In this work, the good people, like Lyra and her friends, are on the side of the fallen angels and humans and against the established educational, governmental and religious institutions of her society. Indeed, Pullman has designated Lyra as "The New Eve," whose coming-to-knowledge is essential for the fulfilling, self-determined life of all humans.

When she sets out on her quest, Lyra is eleven years old and does not even reach the age of twelve by the end of book one.

The whole story chronicles the transition from innocence to experience, or the fall from the unself-conscious grace of childhood into the self-conscious action of adulthood, but Lyra is still very much a child at the end of the first novel. At the same time, she has gone through several painful rites of passage, beginning with her confusion when the Master of Jordan College tries to poison her "uncle," Lord Asriel, then gives her a gift from this same man, the precious Altheometer. She is confused when he insists that she hide it from Mrs. Coulter and does not tell her what it is or how to use it.

Then she has to learn further distrust the glamorous Mrs. Coulter, her newfound mother, who has dazzled her with rich clothes and an elaborate social life, but intends to use her to capture children for the sinister "Oblation Board" to use in their experiments. She discovers that the gyptians, whom she had thought of as social outcasts, are really her friends and will help her with her father. She learns that the church, which she has always known as part of her social background, is evolving into an institution that abuses children for their own ends and seeks to keep the majority of people ignorant about the natural and social world so that they can be more easily controlled. She also rapidly learns to place much more trust in her own judgment at the same time as she comes to understand that it is not infallible.

One symbol of her unconscious grace, her "pre-fallen" state, is her ability to use the mysterious Alethiometer, a small, golden mechanical device that is covered with symbols. She learns quickly to sink into a meditative state in order to "work" the machine, a sort of compass covered with symbols and an arrow pointing to them. She quickly learns it can be used to advise her about other peoples' true character, suggest possible future results of current actions and reveal facts that might not be obvious to anyone, much less a young girl. Pullman also signifies her innocence by making it clear that Lyra does not understand the sexual innuendo among the adults around her, like Mrs. Coulter and her friends, and the witches and the gyptians. Lyra is still in a state of unconscious grace, but she is neither guileless nor ignorant. In fact, her ability to dissemble, to tell lies, and to bend conversations to her own ends is essential to her success at every stage of the adventure. Besides saving her own life, it gets her and her



friends out of the hands of the Oblation Board and saves her friendly bear, Iorek Brynison. Lyra acts independently and creatively throughout the novel, impelled by a strong sense of loyalty and responsibility and is able to assess a number of ambiguous social and personal situations without hesitating about her place in the action. When she discovers that the Master is trying to poison her father, she stops it without asking which man is in the right and calls the Master's act an attempted murder. When she finds that her mother is involved with the Oblation Board, which has stolen her friend Roger and many other children away from their families, and that they "sever" the children from their daemons, she runs away from her mother and embarks on an expedition to stop this monstrosity, never questioning the wisdom of opposing established authorities. She tries to save a poor severed boy, helps Iorek the bear escape his servitude, opposes the authorities running the Bolvangar institution where severing is taking place, and tries to save her father. In each of these cases, she has had to reassess authority figures that should have governed her actions. This set of situations both endears her to young readers who often feel constrained by adult proscriptions and alerts adult readers to her special status, making us look for the underlying moral order which informs her actions.

The most powerful and attractive symbol in this novel is the daemon, followed closely by the bears of Lapland. Pullman describes the evolution of external souls that differentiate Lyra's world from our own from the outset of the novel. This defamiliarizing device did not come with the original idea for the novels, but once he had it, the versatility of such a literary invention, which can also be a symbol for many aspects of individual character and of collective strangeness, became clear. Their symbolic uses, in a technical sense, will be described below. Their thematic value is also interesting. They represent a certain degree of determinism, although Pullman resists this interpretation. When questioned, he associated the daemon with essential nature and inborn talent. He said: The concept doesn't determine outcomes, it suggests a nature. But then that's just a picture of what we are like. We're not all gifted in the same way ... but the things we can do something about still remain within our path.

They also allow Pullman to work with subjectivity, symbolizing puzzling aspects of the human character, and allowing readers to look into aspects of human personality that do not seem to fit. Pullman's welldeveloped concept of maturation is embodied in daemons, but they are so engaging that one cannot contemplate adulthood in this society without extreme sadness.

As one thinks through the functions of daemons, it is clear that their existence would create a totally different society at all levels.

People would know more about themselves earlier in their lives. They would have at least one close friend and thus, in a paradoxical way, be more secure about themselves in their adolescence and at once more vulnerable to the manipulation of others who could instantly perceive key aspects of their character. Those around you would know when you had passed through puberty and, embarrassing as it seems to young teenagers, this knowledge would be a matter of course for each person. We would each



have someone with whom to discuss our most difficult decisions and this would affect our need for external friendships.

This is only a suggestion from a long list of possible differences, and Pullman himself has not developed them even in the course of the whole series. Within the context of his novels, daemons hover between a fantastic construct, which is also a beloved pet, and a mere symbol of the character assessments we all do of each other, sometimes at the subconscious level.

Daemons form an essential thread in the complicated plot. This is another significance to their appearance. While Lyra's innocent adventures in Oxford make for a good story, the author gradually builds up our knowledge of their importance. For example, we follow her lively adventures in the crypts of Jordan College through Chapter Three. We learn that daemons disappear when people die, but in the crypt she finds coins with pictures of daemons on them wedged into the skulls of deceased scholars. When she switches them around, she receives ghostly visitors demanding that she put the coins back in the right places. Thus she and the reader begins to suspect the daemons, and their humans, still have some connection to the living.

The daemon is such an intimate part of each person's life that Lyra is immediately and inconsolably horrified to find that the Oblation Board is severing some children from their daemons. Thus they become a plot element that impels her actions for the majority of the novel. This intimacy was predicted by the episode with the deceased scholars but is reinforced regularly within the story. For example, she meets a severed boy on the way to Bolvangar and notes that he has adopted a dead fish in exchange for his "ratter." She notices that the usurping Bear-King, Iofur Raknison, has a human-shaped stuffed toy because he does not have a "real" daemon. To her, this means they she may be able to deceive him as she could not deceive more "natural" bears like her beloved lorek.

Pullman's view on original sin is closely linked to this transition from innocence to experience he embodies in Lyra. It is not a simple transition and his message is clearly that many adults fall by the wayside, putting their own desires for power, status and wealth above that of moral responsibility to other humans. He sees original sin as the best thing that ever happened to us, the symbol of our becoming human, and the entire three-book story is an attack on the rise of fundamentalist religions which menace societies all over the world. As he says on the Scholastic Authors and Books Web site, I think fundamentalist religion is one of the greatest dangers we have ever faced.

And so if there is a source of wickedness in the book, you can place it there. But when institutional religion tells us what to believe, and punishes us for believing something different, then its time to ring the alarm bells.

Magic and science are also blended in this work. Lyra's mother and her mother's friends, the Master of Jordan College, Lord Asriel, the Oblation Board and other church institutions are all more concerned about understanding, and even more so, controlling "dust" than they are about their children. On the other hand, Lyra's curiosity about this



mysterious substance, which spurs on her actions throughout all three books, never blinds her to the needs of the people around her. Again and again she discovers the monstrous actions of her elders only because she is trying to save friends and family. This curious display of loyalty to friends and family, singleness of purpose and courage in the face of overwhelming odds sets her against the many adults in her life who should know better and begs the equation of morality and innocence. Yet she goes through a maturation process which allows her to use her many talents in the service of "good" people like Farder Coram, John Faa, Ma Costa and her son Tony of the gyptians, Roger from the Jordan College kitchens, Iorek Byrnison and the many children stolen by the Oblation Board which she frees at Bolvangar.

Style

Point of View

The Golden Compass is written in the third person, limited omniscient viewpoint. Some believe that this viewpoint helps the reader to better visualize descriptions. Pullman may have chosen this viewpoint because visualization and imagination are key to the success of a fantasy book. The story is seen from an outsider's viewpoint and limited to the thoughts and feelings of Lyra; however, there is a section when the point of view follows the Master and the Librarian. This deviation is necessary because it reveals important plot information.

Later in the book, the author is able to avoid any such deviations, because the alethiometer grants him the ability to tell what is occurring beyond Lyra's sight. Although the book is in third person, limited omniscient, the alethiometer is third person, omniscient. Because the alethiometer can tell the truth of any situation, no matter the location, it becomes all knowing and all seeing. The alethiometer can therefore be viewed as a Deus Ex Machina, a god from the machine, which is a Greek term referring to characters (generally gods) or in this case machines that have the ability to effect the plot with a snap of their fingers. For all intensive purposes, the alethiometer represents the sight of a god.

Setting

There are five main settings in this book: Jordan College, London, the Fen, Lapland, and Svalbard. Throughout the book, setting expands as the plot progresses. Oxford is a school, London is a city, the Fen is a region, Lapland is a country, and Svalgard is the northern expanse. The setting also progresses northward, which means that exploration and uncertainty are directly linked to setting. This is a book of uncertainty, and Pullman strengthens this under riding current by taking the readers to stranger and more distant lands. He slowly draws the reader out of reality and into fantasy. Oxford and London are very human places, the names and locations of which can be pinpointed on any map of the world. The Fen is still human because it is inhabited by the Gyptians, and can be imagined to be like a bayou, a terrain which many people are at least familiar with. However, the Fen cannot be located on any map; the reader has begun their exploration of the fantasy world. Lapland is still a predominantly human region, but we are introduced to our first creature of fantasy (disregarding the daemons). Lapland is certainly not a location on any human maps, and a talking, armored bear is certainly not a creature that exists on earth. The reader has stepped into the world of fantasy. The final setting, and the reader's emersion into fantasy, is Svalbard, a land ruled by armored bears, whose borders are defended by flying imp-like creatures known as cliff ghastrs.



Language and Meaning

The language of *The Golden Compass* is fairly simple, because the book was written for a younger audience. However, some of the language may be difficult for the youngest readers, who may need to look up a few words. Also, American readers may have some difficulty with a few British words, such as flat, which means apartment. This British English is relevant to the story because the story begins in England. Without the occasional spattering of British English the reader may begin to question the credibility of the characters as British individuals. On the other hand, the occasional word from British English may simply be the author writing in his own voice. He is British, so we should expect some British words to be used. British English is not necessarily needed for increasing the stories believability because the story does not occur in our own dimension; however, the similarities between Lyra's and our own dimension may play a significant role in later books in this series. Despite the third person viewpoint that is centered on Lyra, who is eleven, the book is clearly written from the perspective of a more mature individual, perhaps Pullman himself. Pullman probably chose the third person perspective because it makes it easier for him to express his ideas in a descriptive manner. The reader is looking in on a scene, and can therefore view the entirety of what is going on, whereas with a first person viewpoint the reader is looking out at a scene, and limited to a single pair of eyes.

Structure

This book is divided into three sections, with a total of twenty-three chapters. The first section, Oxford, covers everything that occurs in Oxford, London, and the Fen. These are the human lands, where only humans live, which makes them familiar and easy to understand. The second section, Bolvangar, follows the plot from Trollesund to Bolvangar. These are the middle lands, where we are introduced to talking bears, but are still within the world of humanity. Bolvangar is somewhat more difficult to understand, but the reader can still feel comfortably part of a slightly skewed reality. The third section is concerned with Svalgard, and covers everything from the balloon crash to Lord Asriel's bridging of the universes. This section is the fantasyland, where the reader leaves behind all hope of returning to the human land. Each section adds to Pullman's progressive weaning of the reader from their own reality. The sections are also structured based on setting, and have a transition based on travel. For example, when the Gyptians begin sailing across the ocean, the transition is made to the second part of the book. Also, when Lyra is flown in Lee Scoresby's balloon across the ocean, the transition between the second and third section occurs. The final transition, which leads to a new book, occurs when Lyra travels through the stars and enters a separate dimension.



Quotes

"If my plan with the Tokay had succeeded, she would have been safe for a little longer. I would have liked to spare her the journey to the North." Part 1, pg. 31.

"It's an alethiometer. It's one of only six that were ever made. Lyra , I urge you again: keep it private. It would be better if Mrs. Coulter didn't know about it. Your uncle-" Part 1, pg. 73.

"They're usually called Ruskonov Particles after him (Ruskonov). Elementary particles that don't interact in any way with others - very hard to detect, but the extraordinary thing is that they appear to be attracted to human beings." Part 1, pg. 88.

"So what I'm proposing e'nt easy. And I need your agreement. I'm proposing that we send a band of fighters up north and rescue them kids and bring em' back alive." Part 1, pg. 115

"When he (the Master) set out to poison Lord Asriel, he must have thought that what Lord Asriel was a doing would place all of them in danger, and maybe all of us too; maybe all the world." Part 1, pg. 128.

"There'll come a time when you'll be tired of his changing about, and you'll want a settled kind of form for him (Pantalaimon)...there's compensations for a settled form...knowing what kind of person you are." Part 2, pg. 167.

"The witches have talked about this child for centuries past...because they live so close to the place where the veil between the worlds is thin, they hear immortal whispers from time to time, in the voices of those beings who pass between the worlds. And they have spoken of a child such as this, who has a great destiny that can only be fulfilled elsewhere - not in this world, but far beyond. Without this child, we shall all die." Part 2, pg. 176.

"I was a Svalgard bear, but I am not now. I was sent away as a punishment because I killed another bear. So I was deprived of my rank and my wealth and my armor and sent out to live at the edge of the human world." Part 2, pg. 223.

"Lord Asriel is under suspended sentence of death. One of the conditions of his exile in Svalbard was that he give up his philosophical work entirely. Unfortunately, he managed to obtain books and materials, and he's pushed his heretical investigations to the point where it's positively dangerous to let him live." Part 2, pg. 273.

We are all subject to the fates. But we must all act as if we are not...or die of despair. There is a curious prophecy about this girl: she is destined to bring about the end of destiny." Part 3, pg. 310.

"Iorek Byrnison was the first bear to get a daemon, but it should have been you, I would much rather be your daemon than his, that's why I came." Part 3, pg. 338.



"Get out... turn around, get out, go! I did not send for you!" Part 3, pg. 364.

"For dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Part 1, pg. 373.

"There was something else that happened when they made the cut...and they didn't see it. The energy that links body and daemon is immensely powerful. When the cut is made, all that energy dissipate in a fraction of a second...So they missed what it could do, and they never thought of harnessing it." Part 3, pg. 176.

"We could find the source of Dust and destroy it." Part 3, pg. 396.



Topics for Discussion

Justify the Master's attempted poisoning of Lord Asriel.

Power plays a large part in this book. Name two instances in which the vanity associated with power either causes a character to be easily manipulated, or leads to their downfall.

What, if anything, is the connection between humans and their daemons?

Discuss the connections between Lord Asriel and Iorek Byrnison.

Why could the setting of this book be considered ever-expanding? Be sure to discuss the different sections and how they tie into this concept.

Discuss the theme of separation. Give examples to back your statements.

The alethiometer is a device used to tell the truth. What is the significance of truth in this book?

You may wish to expand your argument to include the themes of fate and destiny.

1. This novel describes many kinds of courage. Lyra leaves her safe and luxurious home with her newfound mother to save her friends. Gyptian men and women risk their lives for her and to save or rescue other children. How does Pullman define courage? Do you agree with him?

2. Lyra is an example of someone who is loyal to her friends, but has to make many choices between different loyalties. She must choose between The Master of Jordan College and her uncle, between her mother and her young friends and between the gyptians and the non-gyptians who were her "family." How did she make these choices?

On what basis did she make them? Do you agree with her?

3. Morality is a basic concern in these novels. Lyra is a young woman who constantly disobeys her elders, and gets into trouble for testing limits and exploring forbidden places in Oxford, as well as for asking forbidden questions. She acts against authority, and yet seems to act out of some sense of morality. How would you explain her morality? Do you agree with it?

4. Religion is at the heart of problems Lyra encounters. How would you describe the religion of her world?

5. Through Lyra, Pullman is exploring basic questions about our acceptance of authority in our personal and public lives. Does Lyra accept the authority of her elders always, sometimes or never? How does she make these decisions?



6. Pullman's novel asks many basic questions concerning religion itself. For example, it is clear that Lyra must oppose human religious authorities in order to rescue her young friends. Do you think Pullman distrusts all established religions or is he giving us ideas about how people practice their religion morally or immorally?
7. Pullman also refers to the Christian religion and its doctrines. In interviews about the novel and its two sequels, he tells us that he is rewriting Milton's Paradise Lost. Do you think he agrees with the established religious doctrine that "the fall" of the angels and the fall of Eve are terrible events in human history? Does he give them another interpretation? What is that interpretation? Do you agree or disagree with him?
8. In Lyra's world, each person's soul is in the form of some kind of animal and lives outside his or her body. What are some characteristics he thinks we will know about a person by looking at their soul-animal? What are some of the ways that Pullman uses daemons to show the similarities and differences between characters such as social station, intelligence, age, and trustworthiness? Can you compare some daemons from the story?
9. This story makes use of many different kinds of intelligent beings, some human and some not. How would you describe Scholars, Lords and ladies, gyptians, witches, skraelings, tartars, and bears? How does Pullman give us some idea of their lives while still moving the story forward?
10. A stereotypical character is one who is supposed to represent general characteristics of a type of person and usually has no individualized characteristics. Are there any stereotypical characters in this novel? Who are they and what do you think they represent? Are they major or minor characters?
11. A person's daemon, like Lyra's Pantalaimon, changes shape until the human reaches the age of puberty. What do you think of this idea as a literary device? Pullman talks about the use of the daemon in this story? Why is the daemon usually of the opposite sex to their human? What do you think about this idea in his story? How are daemons an advantage for telling the story? How are they a disadvantage?
12. A daemon seems to be very close to his or her human. Yet it Pantalaimon often disagrees with Lyra. How realistic is this? Do you ever argue with yourself when facing major decisions in your life? How does Lyra decide what to do? How do you?
13. The Daemon is one of the many "literary devices" that Pullman uses to make his story more immediate and effective for his reader. The daemon has a metaphorical and an allegorical role in this story. What is metaphor? What are some examples of the daemon as a metaphor? What is allegory? How does the daemon function to create allegorical meanings in the story?
14. We all know that mind-affecting substances like alcohol and drugs are dangerous for both children and adults.



While we have decided in the United States to make alcohol legal and drugs illegal, they seem to both be tolerated in Lyra's world. What are some examples of how they are used in casual and formal settings in this story? How do you feel about this use in Pullman's novels?

15. What do you think of Lyra's world?

What kind of society is it? What are its different social classes? Are there social classes in other Western cultures? How do we define them? What is their relationship to a person's wealth? To their ancestors?

16. Technology on Lyra's world is different from our current technology. Some phenomena which we would call magic are represented as a regular part of everyone's life. Some technologies, such as the automobile and the telephone, which we take for granted, are not present in Lyra's world. Why do you think Pullman has created these differences?

How would it change Lyra's story if she had telephones, cars and airplanes to help her? What if she did not have "magic" such as the Alethiometer and the Witches and Bears? How would this change the story?



Ideas for Reports and Papers

1. Metaphor and allegory are important in Pullman's story. The daemon is both a metaphorical figure and serves an allegorical function. Explore the daemons of at least four major characters, including Lyra, and look at the characteristics of their daemons as metaphors for the nature of the human they serve. What does the author tell you about their daemons, and what do you know about them as a result of descriptions of daemons? In addition to Lyra, select from these characters: Lord Asriel, Mrs. Coulter, John Faa, Serafina Pekkala, Iofur Raknison.

2. The entire story is a religious allegory about the fall from grace of human beings. Allegory is defined as a story in which people, things and happenings have another meaning. Which people and things further the allegorical meaning in this story? Describe what additional meanings, besides an adventure story, you think Lyra's adventures convey. What are the big crises and decisions in her life?

3. Pullman sharply contrasts the world of children and adults. It has been especially remarked that many of his adults are immoral and specifically that they treat children as if they are only property. How would you describe the adults in this novel? Pick some examples of who you would consider to be moral and immoral adults and compare and contrast them. How does their social standing and political power affect these people?

4. Pullman has made a great effort to create a setting which can call upon our knowledge of modern day Oxford for background details and create an entirely different city of Oxford. Look up details in the history and current status of Oxford and compare them with differences in the Oxford of Lyra's story.

What are the major differences? What do these differences do for the story?

5. Pullman's story mixes what we know as science with practices that we associate with magic. What are some key differences between the technological features of Lyra's world and ours? What devices do they have in common with us, and what devices do they not they have? What devices do we not have?

Do you think Pullman has been consistent in his creation of a magic/ scientific alternative world?

6. In addition to daemons, Lyra is able to call upon the services to two kinds of creatures who have a different type of existence in her world, witches and bears who can talk and reason. What do they do for Lyra? Why do you think they are loyal to her rather than to her enemies?

7. Look through the book for indications of the kind of religion which is practiced on Lyra's world and contrast it with a form of Christianity with which you are familiar. What are the major similarities and differences? Where do daemons fit into the picture of religion Pullman has given us?



8. Which characters stand out from the others in this novel? Besides Lyra, who is the central viewpoint character, what other characters are important and why?

How does the author distinguish them from minor characters, in addition to their function in the plot? Pick three major characters (those which appear many times in the novel) and three minor characters and contrast their descriptions by the author.

Further Study

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Related Titles

Pullman wrote *The Golden Compass* (published in England as *His Dark Materials*), as the first book in a series. This one focuses on Lyra, while the second book, *The Subtle Knife*, puts Lyra in contact with a young boy, Will, who she meets in one of their alternative earths. The third, *The Amber Spyglass*, appeared in 2000 and resolves the place of the Compass and the Knife in the universe.

Also of interest might be J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings*, *The Book of Lost Tales*, *Farmer Giles of Ham*, and *Leaf by Niggle*; Mervyn Peake's *Titus Groan*, *Gormenghast*, and *Titus Alone*; and Diana Wynne Jones's *Charmed Lives*, *The Lives of Christopher Chant*, *A Sudden Wild Magic*, *The Ogre Downstairs*, *Howl's Moving Castle*, and *Fire and Hemlock*.



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