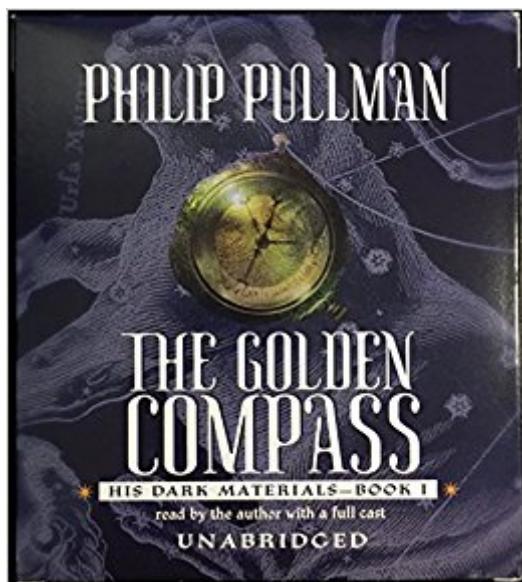


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# His Dark Materials, Book I: The Golden Compass



## Synopsis

In a landmark epic of fantasy and storytelling, Philip Pullman invites readers into a world as convincing and thoroughly realized as Narnia, Earthsea, or Redwall. Here lives an orphaned ward named Lyra Belacqua, whose carefree life among the scholars at Oxford's Jordan College is shattered by the arrival of two powerful visitors. First, her fearsome uncle, Lord Asriel, appears with evidence of mystery and danger in the far North, including photographs of a mysterious celestial phenomenon called Dust and the dim outline of a city suspended in the Aurora Borealis that he suspects is part of an alternate universe. He leaves Lyra in the care of Mrs. Coulter, an enigmatic scholar and explorer who offers to give Lyra the attention her uncle has long refused her. In this multilayered narrative, however, nothing is as it seems. Lyra sets out for the top of the world in search of her kidnapped playmate, Roger, bearing a rare truth-telling instrument, the compass of the title. All around her children are disappearing—victims of so-called "Gobblers" and being used as subjects in terrible experiments that separate humans from their daemons, creatures that reflect each person's inner being. And somehow, both Lord Asriel and Mrs. Coulter are involved. From the Hardcover edition.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Some books improve with age--the age of the reader, that is. Such is certainly the case with Philip Pullman's heroic, at times heart-wrenching novel, *The Golden Compass*, a story ostensibly for children but one perhaps even better appreciated by adults. The protagonist of this complex fantasy

is young Lyra Belacqua, a precocious orphan growing up within the precincts of Oxford University. But it quickly becomes clear that Lyra's Oxford is not precisely like our own--nor is her world. For one thing, people there each have a personal daemon, the manifestation of their souls in animal form. For another, hers is a universe in which science, theology, and magic are closely allied: As for what experimental theology was, Lyra had no more idea than the urchins. She had formed the notion that it was concerned with magic, with the movements of the stars and planets, with tiny particles of matter, but that was guesswork, really. Probably the stars had daemons just as humans did, and experimental theology involved talking to them. Not that Lyra spends much time worrying about it; what she likes best is "clambering over the College roofs with Roger the kitchen boy who was her particular friend, to spit plum stones on the heads of passing Scholars or to hoot like owls outside a window where a tutorial was going on, or racing through the narrow streets, or stealing apples from the market, or waging war." But Lyra's carefree existence changes forever when she and her daemon, Pantalaimon, first prevent an assassination attempt against her uncle, the powerful Lord Asriel, and then overhear a secret discussion about a mysterious entity known as Dust. Soon she and Pan are swept up in a dangerous game involving disappearing children, a beautiful woman with a golden monkey daemon, a trip to the far north, and a set of allies ranging from "gyptians" to witches to an armor-clad polar bear. In *The Golden Compass*, Philip Pullman has written a masterpiece that transcends genre. It is a children's book that will appeal to adults, a fantasy novel that will charm even the most hardened realist. Best of all, the author doesn't speak down to his audience, nor does he pull his punches; there is genuine terror in this book, and heartbreak, betrayal, and loss. There is also love, loyalty, and an abiding morality that infuses the story but never overwhelms it. This is one of those rare novels that one wishes would never end. Fortunately, its sequel, *The Subtle Knife*, will help put off that inevitability for a while longer. --Alix Wilber --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Philip Pullman's His Dark Materials trilogy now appears in sophisticated trade paperback editions, each title embossed within a runic emblem of antiqued gold. The backdrop of *The Golden Compass*: His Dark Materials, Book I sports a midnight blue map of the cosmos with the zodiacal ram at its center. The *Subtle Knife* and *The Amber Spyglass* carry similarly intriguing cover art, and all three titles offer details not seen in the originals: in *Compass* and *Knife*, for example, Pullman's stamp-size b&w art introduces each chapter; *Spyglass* chapters open with literary quotes from Blake, the Bible, Dickinson and more. Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Ahhhhhhh!!!! I had skimmed this when I was a kid looking for something to fill the emptiness that was finishing the latest Harry Potter and I didn't like it. All these years later I listened to it and it is the bomb!!!!!! Love it!!!!!! The movie didn't do it justice! Highly recommend!!!! In Audio too!

What a great story! I saw the movie before I knew that it was a book, and it in no sense detracted from my enjoyment of reading the story. I'm now reading Book 2: The Subtle Knife; so far, just as good a read as Book 1: The Golden Compass.

Just about to purchase the other two books in this series so I can continue my enjoyment. Interesting characters in a unique story.

Very fine work. Kept my attention waiting to find out what will happen next. Fascinating characters were developed and believable.

This particular book was an amazing read. I read the whole thing on a train while traveling and it kept me completely entertained and even reluctant to leave the train. The plot turns so many times and the pressure of suspense even makes you a tad bit stressed. ;) But the end does not actually end, it leaves even more doors opening into the next book, which I really liked. Over all, I found the concept completely original and gripping. 100% suggest!!!

Saw the movie years ago and loved it. I am equally enjoying the unabridged Audiobook version. Very well acted.

Although the film leaves out much that was in the book, I'm glad I watched it before beginning to read the novel. Pullman's writing focuses on what people are doing with very little physical description. Not usually a problem for me, but in this case, there are so many characters, that it helped to have mental images of them from the movie before reading the book. And it's a good movie anyway. Lot's of big-name talent--Nicole Kidman, Derek Jacobi, Ian McKellen, Sam Elliot, Christopher Lee, Jim Carter (Carson of Downton Abbey).

As someone who has been deeply moved (emotionally and intellectually) by this trilogy of books, owning such an extraordinary copy of the first book is nothing short of immensely satisfying. The

box, the cover slip, and the hardback cover are all beautifully rendered. An excellent purchase I do not regret. I only hope to see 20th Anniversary Editions made in this same style for the subsequent two books in the near future.

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