



The Subtle Knife

Philip Pullman

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Lost in a new world, Lyra finds Will—a boy on the run, a murderer—a worthy and welcome ally. For this is a world where soul-eating Specters stalk the streets and witches share the skies with troops of angels.

Each is searching—Lyra for the meaning of Dark Matter, Will for his missing father—but what they find instead is a deadly secret, a knife of untold power. And neither Lyra nor Will suspects how tightly their lives, their loves, and their destinies are bound together... until they are split apart.

The Subtle Knife Details

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Author : Philip Pullman

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From Reader Review The Subtle Knife for online ebook

Fabian says

Weird like the Wizard of Oz, magical like Harry Potter, and interesting, unlike "Chronicles of Narnia." The symbolism is so agog, so strange... Obviously, it makes for a great young adult novel!!

Shayantani Das says

Two very strange things happened last week. I gave I Am Half Sick Of Shadows: A Flavia De Luce Novel two stars and am now giving this book five star. It is strange because the former book's protagonist, my dear Flavia De Luce is my favorite obstinate pre teen. On the contrary, Lyra, another stubborn, precocious, pre-teen absolutely annoyed me in the previous book. Right now though, I can not for the life of me imagine why I did not like the first novel and Lyra. Well, at least I adore her right now.

Philip Pullman is a genius. I loved every aspect of this book, the concept, the characterization, the plot, the pacing, everything. I remember thinking that the last book was rather boring, but this part had me catching my breath. Specters, rebel angels, parallel universe, golden compasses and subtle knives, daemons and witches- each chapter keeps you hooked and also provide fodder for the brain to muse about. I love the anti CS Lewis atmosphere of the book.

The characters were another high point in this novel. Lyra Belacqua reappears with her daemon Pantalaimon and although she doesn't play as central a role as the previous novel, she is absolutely charming. I can not wait to find out the form Pantalaimon will finally take. Marisa Coulter and Serafina Pekkala are back and as interesting as ever. Lee Scoresby and his daemon are absolutely heart breaking. A bandwagon of new and amazing characters like Stanislaus Grumman, Will Parry, Mary Malone is introduced. The friendship between Will and Lyra and Will and Pantalaimon were some of the best parts of the story. I would read the next book just to meet all these characters again.

I am so glad I already have a copy of the next part. After that abrupt ending and the revelation about Lyra towards the end, having to wait for the next part would have been sheer torture. I never thought I would say this, but Flavia really is in grave danger of being dethroned as my favorite.

Amy | shoutame says

The second in the trilogy and possibly my favourite out of the three.

Lucy says

I am not a fan of forwarded emails. They frustrate me, because they usually come from the same group of

people, people I like a great deal but who never send me a normal "hey, how's it going?" message. Just "Support our Troops" or "Tell every woman you know she's special" or "Microsoft is running a test and if you send this you could get a check for \$1,000!" When I see the letters FWD in the subject line, I usually simply delete it.

I lost track of the number of emails I received telling me about the Anti-God movie The Golden Compass and the need to boycott the movies and the books. It was well over ten. Ten people wanted me to send that email on to everyone I know, telling them the same thing. Don't see this movie! Don't read these books! Alert! Alert! Alert!

Nothing like calling attention to something like a planned boycott. I haven't seen the movie, because I'm cheap and it's not something I'd take my kids to or something I'd be prone to see anyway, but as I had already read the first book in the series, enjoyed it and hadn't found it to be Anti-God, I was curious to read the next to see what the fuss was all about.

I don't know if the emails worked and I read with a bias, but I did not enjoy this second book. Not because it is Anti-God...which it really isn't, but more anti organized religion and organized religion's version of god, but because the writing is bad.

Dialogue - choppy.

Descriptions - cliched. (how do I get that little accent marking over the e?)

Storyline - totally falters.

I felt enormously disappointed in the direction of this book. Lyra, the young female protagonist in search of dust and her father, all but disappears in this second story. She still plays a part, but now as the sidekick to Will, a new character who is a giant "young adult fiction" stereotype (in search of the father he never knew while protecting his mother from bad guys and seems to be gifted in the combat department). I don't remember the writing being bad in the first book. I thought it descriptive and unique and thoughtful. Not so, in The Subtle Knife. Pullman changes gears and loses focus. There is a lot more going on and none of it is developed well. I stopped caring about the characters and their goals.

I think these books had great potential. There could be a lot to discuss with adolescents (not young children...at all). The nature of the soul, the natural man, the costs and benefits of religions. All appropriate things to discuss with youth ready to question and discover on their own.

Pullman takes that conversation away with his lack of metaphor. It becomes impossible to argue, "I think the dust means this." or "what do you think The Authority is for Pullman?" when he throws his opinion at you with real life Christian beliefs. It's inappropriate and unfair. Write a fantasy or a satire or a parable if you want to. Other authors have done it...and done it well.

Pullman didn't.

I won't be reading the third book.

David Schaafsma says

I share this review again in the fall of 2017 as a fourth volume (though Pullman later wrote two companion pieces to the trilogy, entitled Lyra's Oxford, and Once Upon a Time in the North), The Book of Dust, has been released, to encourage all ages to read. As with most great "children's" books, there are a range of levels on which Pullman is working. He's taking on the Roman Catholic view of reality, C.S. Lewis (in The Chronicles of Narnia), and is in conversation with John Milton, whose Paradise Lost he both loves and contends with in places. But you don't need to know any of that to love this series.

This is the middle book in the trilogy, and I like the first and third volumes more, big surprise. More exposition, less action, more trudging to final destinations, but you know, the writing is still exquisite, and it has surprises. One key surprise is that after focusing on Lyra in the first series, this second book opens with a focus on yet another central character, Will. When I first read this I was confused, and more than a little disappointed, as I saw a wonderful strong girl character shoved aside as usually happens in all books for a BOY main character.

That isn't quite how things work, really, though, as they share the stage, and they open up new vistas and back stories and new worlds together. This is seen as a sixth grade children's series, but in truth, the older you are, the more you will get out of it, as in all of the greatest "children's stories" of all time, including The Wrinkle in Time, and so on. Pullman is taking on our limited view of "reality"-- he's engaging in physics, theology, anthropology--with a laser beam on the Holy Roman Church in particular. It's not so much an attack on The Church as an exploration of the nature of true religion, and a wider, more generous, less sin-obsessed view of the world. It's a wonderful series, which I listened to while traveling around the country with the family, a wonderfully produced cd series. It's the second volume of a trilogy, so you obviously don't begin here, but you won't regret the time you spend on the adventure. It's awesome. And whether you have read it or not, I recommend this audio version, with Philip Pullman Himself narrating, joined by a wonderful cast of characters.

Antonio says

¡Ese FINAL!!!

te deja con la NECESIDAD de saber que sigue.

Estos no son libros infantiles, no se que se le metió al editor o a quien se lo ocurrió la brillante idea de clasificarlos de esa forma, pero a mi parecer que tengamos por protagonistas a niños no hace que el libro *ipso facto* sea infantil. Esta vez el centro de la historia, al parecer, es **la búsqueda del padre de Will**, pero una vez mas Pullman nos muestra que su trama es mas complicada de lo que aparenta ser.

Los puentes entre los mundos se han abierto, el caos ha comenzado, y por si fuera poco se esta preparando la mas terrible de todas la guerras del universo...

—Existen dos grandes poderes —declaró— que se enfrentan desde el comienzo de los tiempos. Todo avance en la vida del hombre, todo jirón de conocimiento, sabiduría y decencia que

poseemos se lo ha arrancado de los dientes un bando al otro. Cada pequeño incremento en la libertad humana se ha conseguido a costa de una lucha feroz entre quienes desean que sepamos más y seamos más sabios y fuertes y quienes pretenden que obedezcamos y seamos humildes y sumisos.

... **Lord Asriel** esta formando y comandando un ejercito como nunca antes se ha visto, con seres y guerreros de todos los mundos, pero ¿A que se enfrenta? ¿Quién lidera el otro bando? nada menos que **Dios**

¿todavía siguen pensando que es un libro infantil?

Mientras todo esto sucede **Lyra** esta perdida en un nuevo mundo donde conoce a **Will** (un chico de nuestro mundo) juntos tendrán que atravesar una serie de dificultades entablando amistad en el proceso.

La expansión del **worldbuilding ahora siendo un multiverso, mas las nuevas incorporaciones como los espantos, los ángeles, los chamanes, la daga sutil, y la antesala de la guerra neo-apocalíptica** me hace **amar este libro**, ademas la trama tiene, conflictos religiosos y científicos, drama filosófico y mas sobre las brujas.

Lo que no me gusto, fue ese final porque te deja en **suspeso**, pero esto tiene su punto bueno, hace que quieras leer la continuación de inmediato, y es lo que hay que hacer para conocer el desenlace de la historia.

Para mas de mis reseñas sobre los libros de La Materia Oscura pueden ver los siguientes enlaces:

Luces del norte aquí

EL Catalejo lacado aquí

El Oxford de Lyra aquí

Xime García says

Reseña de "Luces del Norte" (La Materia Oscura 1)

Reseña de "El Catalejo Lacado" (La Materia Oscura 3)

¿Habéis intervenido en la evolución humana?

SÍ.

¿Por qué?

VENGANZA.

Este segundo libro me gustó muchísimo más que el primero. Se dieron muchos giros, conocimos nuevos personajes y arribamos a nuevos mundos. Todo lo planteado en *Luces del Norte* gana mayor terreno (diría

que *colosal*) y todo lo que pensábamos que podía ser de una forma, termina siendo de otra.

Sin embargo, puedo ver por qué hay algunos que no gustaron de esta saga, porque es con este libro con el que la historia despega hacia una dirección totalmente opuesta a la que creíamos (o no quisimos ver) que iba a tener. En mi opinión personal, **se pone mejor** y lo que nos espera en la última parte de la trilogía tiene que ser **magnánimo**.

En resumen:

LO MEJOR:</blockquote>

El argumento. Sin duda, este libro fue lo que los yanquis llaman un *roller coaster of emotions*, y no fue solamente el final, o los capítulos anteriores, sino que es todo el libro un continuo torrente de sucesos, información, descubrimientos y giros que me dejaron sin aire. En más de una ocasión me quedaba mirando la hoja con una tremenda cara de feliz cumpleaños y suspirando un "¡Aaaaaaaaaahhhh!" de sorpresa.

LO BUENO:</blockquote>

Los nuevos personajes. Amé a Will, y no puedo concebir mejor compañero y complemento a Lyra que él. Con tan solo sus acciones nos damos cuenta de cómo es: un guerrero, como bien dicen, independiente, maduro para su edad y, sobre todas las cosas, valiente. Me gusta cómo en ningún momento se lo describe (a diferencia de en el libro anterior en el que muchos personajes se decantaban diciendo lo inteligente o diferente que era Lyra) pero lo bien que el pequeño nuevo protagonista demuestra cómo es. En este caso, lo de que una imagen dice más que mil palabras se aplica perfectamente.

LO MALO:</blockquote>

El cliffhanger, y algunas inverosimilitudes.

Me sorprende la confianza con la que algunos personajes reciben a desconocidos y cuentan todo lo que saben (me refiero a más de una ocasión), y también me asombra la rapidez con la que los protagonistas consiguen respuestas. Sin embargo, fue todo tan agobiante y tan abrumador, que lo dejo pasar, porque la narración de Pullman se disfruta mucho, y hasta me parece que se vuelve mejor conforme avanzan los libros.

LO PEOR:</blockquote>

Los cambios, que en mi parecer no fueron malos (FUERON GLORIOSOS), pero pueden levantar controversia en los lectores. Están advertidos todos aquellos que comenzaron con *Luces del Norte* y pretenden seguir la saga, que esto **ya no es fantasía, sino que pasó a un plano totalmente religioso o metafísico**. Insisto en que esta no puede ser una saga para niños, tocando temas tan delicados (que trajeron sus problemas al autor según pude leer un poco en Wikipedia sin spoilarme) y explorándolos a sus anchas sin ninguna regla ni restricción. Porque eso mismo es lo que hace Pullman: agarra el cristianismo y te lo retuerce delante de tu cara. Fuerte. Para aquellos que buscaban una simple saga de fantasía, tal vez estos libros no sean lo que esperaban. Más de una persona me dijo que la historia derivaba en algo totalmente distinto a lo que se esperaba desde un principio, y una amiga (ya lejana, por desgracia) se los había comprado hace unos años y luego los revendió porque "no eran lo que había pensado". Ahora comprendo todo.

Para aquellos interesados en continuar, creo que es una saga que vale la pena. Yo sinceramente no esperaba nada, ni fantasía ni metafísica, y por eso el rumbo que está tomando no me disgusta en absoluto. De hecho me encanta, pues me siento bastante "letrada", si pudiera decirse, en el tema, y disfruto sin prejuicios de historias de este estilo, cuando están bien hechas.

—Existen dos grandes poderes —declaró— que se enfrentan desde el comienzo de los tiempos. Todo avance en la vida del hombre, todo jirón de conocimiento, sabiduría y decencia que poseemos se lo ha arrancado de los dientes un bando al otro. Cada pequeño incremento en la libertad humana se ha conseguido a costa de una lucha feroz entre quienes desean que sepamos más y seamos más sabios y fuertes y quienes pretenden que obedezcamos y seamos humildes y sumisos.

Bookdragon Sean says

When I read this the first time I completely overlooked a main component of the book. I approached it as if was the second book in the series, a massive mistake. I wrote a review criticising the fact that the novel felt awkward; it had no beginning or end: it just felt like the typical content you'd find in the middle of the story. The ironic point of this is that most critics

take the trilogy as one whole book, rather than three separate works. And this really is the best way to approach the story.

The Golden Compass is the beginning of it all, the setting of the stage. This, then, is the middling part of the work. The second protagonist of the series, the Adam to Pullman's Eve, takes the lead here. Initially, I was very resistant to this idea. I had grown to respect Lyra; she's a really strong heroine, but after a while it started to make sense. Pullman has expanded his story considerably. Lyra has three chapters told from her perspective. The same amount, roughly speaking, is told from the perspective of Will. The rest of the chapters are from side characters of the previous book. So there's a strong move away from a Lyra centred story.

I have mixed feeling about this. It felt like an odd authorial decision. At times this felt like an entirely different series altogether, again, something I eventually got over. There is no sense of closure at the end of this. The first book had a strong ending, but this has very little. This book seemed to be a mere set-up for the next instalment, which makes it rather difficult to review; it's like picking out the middle bit of a story and trying to criticise it as a separate entity from the rest of it: it's not easy to do. Any criticism you make are negated by the fact that this is not a separate book: it's a chunk of a greater work.

So I'm going to read the third book before I speak any more about this- I need to see where these elements

Pullman added go to. Perhaps a review of all three works together would be the best option. At this moment though, I find the witches one of the most interesting aspects of the work. I'm not entirely sure what to make of them as of yet. Hopefully, the third book will give me all the answers I need.

"All through that day the witches came, like flakes of black snow on the wings of a storm, filling the skies with the darting flutter of their silk and the swish of air through the needles of their cloud-pine branches. Men who hunted in the dripping forests or fished among melting ice-floes heard the sky-wide whisper through the fog, and if the sky was clear they would look up to see the witches flying, like scraps of darkness drifting on a secret tide."

Lina says

For a moment, just imagine that after reading *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* you were so enthralled by the protagonist (even if you weren't bare with me), his friends and the entire world that has been established. It has moral undertones, but at it's heart it is a fun fantasy novel. Then you pick up *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* and suddenly Harry has been downgraded as a protagonist in favor of Dan, our brand new second main character. He's super awesome and whatnot and sort of leeches

attention away from Harry. Also the relationship between Harry, Ron and Hermione has been almost removed to the point that when see Ron or Hermione appear you suddenly remember "oh yeah" that person. On top of that, the moral undertones are now hammers that are pounded at you. It's not horrible, but after reading the first book, this is not what you imagined it would become. That is how I feel about The Subtle Knife. I did not hate this book, but after the awesomeness that was The Golden Compass, I'm really disappointed in this new world that we were brought into and the changes made to how the story was constructed.

I thought that this was going to be Lyra's story, but it was taken over by Will and this really clumsy world building that I just could not enjoy as much as the previous book. I also was not a fan of all the different perspectives that were going on. In the previous novel they did a great job of putting Lyra in situations that advanced the plot and allowed her to grow as a character and we don't get that here. It makes everything come off as sloppy.

That being said, this was not horrible, it was just a lackluster sequel. I am legitimately surprised that this is the highest ranked book in the series. Onward to Book 3.

Oh and we get it...down with the establishment enough with the sermon.

Jayson says

(A-) 81% | Very Good

Notes: Changes direction from the last book, expanding the mythology and affirming religion as the key theme of the series.

Dan says

The second entry in a trilogy is often, in my opinion, the best. The author doesn't have to introduce the universe or the characters, as they did in the first installment, but they don't need to worry about wrapping up all the plot points either. Instead, the focus can be on 'the good stuff': elaborating on the story, teasing us more, giving action, chopping off Luke's hand and so on. Instead of the good stuff, in *The Subtle Knife* I feel as though we've had a bait and switch pulled on us.

In *The Golden Compass*, we were treated to a rich alternate universe that had elements that were similar to our own, like some of the geopolitical structure, and elements that were entirely fantastical, like armored polar bears and witches. *The Subtle Knife*, however decides that most of this is insignificant and takes place almost entirely in different universes. It seems like Philip Pullman wanted to reel us in with fantasy before he could preach at us.

Some of these elements are expanded upon in *The Amber Spyglass*, which I'm currently reading, so forgive me if they don't all apply. I had heard before I started the series that they were 'about killing God.' This seemed highly unlikely, and was probably a knee-jerk reaction from

people who heard it from other people who read a synopsis of the book, etc. But... no. Some of the main characters have decided to wage war on 'The Authority.'

Herein lies my main concern with the series as a whole: it's not (excuse the pun) subtle. I'm an agnostic, so these complaints don't come from someone insulted by the material, they come from someone unhappy by their handling. I love plots that put a spin on traditional religion (Waiting for the Galactic Bus, for example), but it seems like Pullman came up with a story involving a culture's religion and then decided to make it fit with the Judeo-Christian framework no matter how hard he had to push.

The concept of Dust is interesting. Adapting it to fit with concepts of physics in our world works because it uses something we only know a little about. Once you try to toss in angels and consciousness and so on (which is insulting in a children's book, as he's claiming that children are entirely self involved until puberty), though, it seems contrived and silly.

I may have been more willing to swallow his philosophy, such as it is, if there hadn't been a complete lack of the elements I liked in *The Golden Compass*: there were no Gyptians, there were no *panserbjörne*... they seem to make a reappearance in the final book of the series, but why spend so much time on their culture in the first book if you aren't going to include them in the second? (I know that the *panserbjörne*'s culture is basically that of any warrior society, but they're still armored polar bears

and the ten year old in me think
that's awesome)

It's not so much that the book is bad, per se, though I do think it becomes too dark for the age group I initially thought it was written for. I just don't think Pullman is writing for the same reason I want to read: he wants to write religious commentary while I want to read fantasy.

Kinga says

Why, no, I have never read His Dark Materials before. It was not a thing in Poland and after seeing that nonsensical film I was not exactly inspired to read it.

However, when I was in New York a few weeks ago, my friend there practically forced these books on me. And then it got really cold, the water in our pipes froze and reading some good children's fantasy novel seemed like the best idea.

This series is definitely improving as it goes on. I liked this better than the first part. The first few chapters brought back that feeling of excitement I used to have when starting a new book as a child.

Of course it is a lot of fun. But gosh, children book writers are ruthless, aren't they? They just kill the characters willy nilly, as if they were solely responsible for teaching all the children of the world about mortality. Have some mercy on my heart.

So while I enjoyed this one better than the first one, I had to take

off one star for not so subtle
(subtle, ha, ha, see what I did
there?) religious symbolism. It's
like Narnia in reverse and could we
please keep strong religious
messages out of children's books?

Also, I missed the fully fleshed
world from the first book. This
world seemed somewhat stunted. But
hey, at least Lyra is a lot less
annoying here.

Carmen de la Rosa says

Vaya final!
Ha sido muy inesperado!.
Sin duda esta segunda parte es mucho
mejor que la primera.

Las aventuras de Lyra continúan, un
poco después del final de la Brújula
Dorada y ahora está con Will Parry,
un niño de 12 años de nuestro mundo.
Los dos se encuentran cuando Will,
tratando de escapar de los problemas
en su ciudad natal de Oxford,
Inglaterra, se desliza a través de
una ventana invisible (como una hoja
de aire en el aire) hacia un tercer
mundo, Cittagazze, donde se topa con
Lyra. Recopilan sus historias y
deducen que hay muchos mundos, todos
"enganchados" entre sí, que
coexisten, y que solo aquellos que
han descubierto las ventanas pueden
viajar entre ellos.

Estas aventuras tienen un propósito,
que se desarrolla y se convierte en
capas y más claras a medida que los
dos viajan y se enfrentan a ángeles,
espectros devoradores de almas,
humanos calculadores, una multitud
de niños desesperados, aliados
mágicos y amigos de mentalidad
superior. El propósito, que

involucra al padre separado de Lyra, Lord Asriel, y su madre diabólica y bella, la Sra. Coulter, tiene mucho que ver con la Autoridad, la conciencia y el pasado y el futuro de la humanidad.

No, no es demasiado. Esta es una historia fabulosa, maravillosa, profundamente moral que se revela en todo momento. Por momentos, me encontraba leyendo con excitación que giraba la página; hacia el clímax, lloré cuando un personaje, que parecía secundario, sube al escenario y realiza, por devoción singular, un sangriento acto de valentía y amor.

Una cosa que puedo decir sobre Pullman es que él es un maestro en los detalles, en el personaje, en el escenario. Su imaginación es inmensa.

Por lo general, soy una lectora que gravita hacia el Realismo. Esta trilogía, llena de brujas, talismanes y poderes sobrehumanos, arroja una luz brillante sobre la condición humana de una manera que no muchos libros logran. ¿Mejor de todo? Es un paseo emocionante.

Elizabeth says

Just as fantastic all these years later. Still shocking, still clever, still more grown up than a lot of 'adult' books out there. This book doesn't shy away, doesn't talk down, and definitely doesn't disappoint.

Sara says

Much like the city of Citagazze, The Subtle Knife is the crossroads between Northern Lights and The Amber Spyglass, and as such I think it's unfair to judge it as a single novel. It introduces the wonderful characters of Will and Mary, and brings the whole concept of multiple worlds into play. We also see small hints of the rebellion that will be raged across the worlds, but more importantly we see the beginnings of Lyra and Will. In Will we see someone who's had responsibility thrust upon them unwillingly, forced to deal with issues far beyond the usual imaginings of a 12 year old boy. In Lyra we see a character who's already seen and done extraordinarily things as a child begin to grow into herself, and learn to follow instead of lead.

Its really the perfect bridging novel that The Amber Spyglass needs to develop characters and storylines ready for that all important final chapter. Like Dust, and the concept of destiny, it allows the reader to see the 'subtle' threads of connection that will allow certain roads to cross, and situations to happen as if it were always meant to be.

Ahmad Sharabiani says

The Subtle Knife (His Dark Materials, #1), Philip Pullman
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Ro says

In this case, the high rating is not for the actual quality of the book (that is very good btw), but for all that it meant to me while I was growing up.

Candace Wynell McHann says

Way back at the end of November/beginning of December of good ol' 2007, I read Phillip Pullman's The Golden Compass. Why? Well, because there was all that talk about how it got made into a movie. I read the book, and found it very thought provoking. As for the movie it's a watered down version of Pullman's work, but not bad for the most part. I mean, I don't think it would go over too well with audiences who haven't read to book to know that Lyra's friend Roger is killed by Lord Asreil and that Mrs. Coulter actually wants to control Lyra and in The Subtle Knife decide that yeah, she has to die.

Just for a quick overview of Phillip Pullman's controversial work and why it's a controversy. There are three books in the series called, His Dark Material: The Golden Compass, The Subtle Knife, and The Amber Spyglass. The title of the series comes from a phrase Milton uses in Paradise Lost, which for those who don't know is a 16th century epic poem about Satan's great Fall from

Heaven and the mischief he does in getting Adam and Eve to commit Original Sin. The books are about a rebellious girl named Lyra Belacqua, who comes from a world like the one we know, but is also very different. I guess you could say it's a warped version of the Victorian period. In Lyra's world, people have "deamons," which are external forms of people's soul in the form of animals (Lyra's daemon is named Pantalaimon). She gets a hold of a golden compass, a device called an alethiometer, which at first she doesn't know how to use, but soon finds that it allows her to see into the past, present, and future. There is also the issue of a substance called Dust, which surrounds all human life. The Church, also called the Magistrum, a very tyrannical and oppressive hand that acts first and questions later, wants to destroy Dust and Lord Asriel (who we think is Lyra's uncle but, da da da!! it's actually her father). Mrs. Coulter, being a very powerful figure in the Church, tries to seduce Lyra in a world of privilege but soon realizes that Mrs. Coulter is trying to control her. Lyra, being a free spirit, doesn't take kindly to this. So she runs away, meeting up with gyptians, where she learns to read the althieometer; gets badass texan named Lee Scoresby (and his daemon Hester) talking armored bear named Iorek Byrnison to work with her; she gets kidnapped by Tarters and sent to Bolvangar discovers the sinister secret of the Church: they cut daemons and children apart in a process known as intercision and finds that Mrs. Coulter (who is da da da!! her mother!) is in charge of the whole operation; plans an escape for all the childern where she mets the witch queen, Serafina Pekkela,

and the queen helps Lyra on her quest to find her father; and her friend Roger is killed by her own father Lord Asriel which results in the creation of a bridge from his world into another. The story ends with a very pissed off Lyra following Lord Asriel into the new world.

So yeah, a lot to take in. I just gave an overview! There are so many carefully thought out details that I have left out. For example: as a child, their daemon's have the ability to change from animal to animal. When the child reaches to adulthood, their daemons settle into one animal. Very cool right?

So, what's the controversy all about?

One: Phillip Pullman is an outspoken atheist.
Two: His Dark Materials are categorized as childrens books.
Three: You find out in The Subtle Knife that the big plan is to kill God.

Yeah.

The Subtle Knife introduces Will, who stumbles across a window to a city called Cittàgazze on another world. There he meets Lyra. I would explain more, but you've already put up with me talking about the first book, so let me sum up for you by what the back of the book says:
"In this stunning sequel to The Golden Compass, the intrepid Lyra finds herself in the simmering, haunted otherworld-cittagazze, where soul-eating Specters stalk the streets and wingsbeats of angels sound against the sky. But she is not without allies: twelve-year-old

Will Parry, feeling for his life after taking another's, has also stumbled into this strange new realm. On a perilous journey from world to world, Lyra and Will uncover a deadly secret: an object of extraordinary and devastating power. And with every step, they move closer to an even greater threat—and the shattering truth of their own destiny."

I know you want to read it now just see what happens. Anyway, it's very amazing and disturbing and fantastic and all those things.

I just finished reading The Subtle Knife today so I have yet to read The Amber Spyglass. When I do, I'll let you know.

But why are these books good and why is Pullman on my Influential Writers list along with Donne, Plath, and Hemingway? Because he wrote a children's book version of Milton's Paradise Lost! Have you ever read it? Holy Crap! I had to read it twice while I was in college. Don't get me wrong. It's awesome. It is awe inspiring. Everyone should read it. But dammit, it's long and can be a little hard to read if you don't have someone there explaining it or Cliff Notes. In Milton's poem, Satan leads an army of rebellious angels in an attempt to overthrow God. The attempt fails, and Satan and his followers are cast out of heaven. Satan, seeking revenge, convinces God's creations, Adam and Eve, to eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge, thus causing their fall from grace. In Pullman's take on Paradise Lost, God is an oppressive, senile old man, and Satan is a dashing heroic figure. But the real hero and centerpiece of Pullman's story is the Eve figure, Lyra

Belacqua, on whom the salvation of the universe depends.

Really? A children's book? Wow!
That's what I said. So I raise my glass of Cranberry-Pomagrante Crystal Lite and vodka to Phillip Pullman for being the writer I want to be: original, brave, and honest.

And to go off an a rant real quick: How can people protest and get all up in arms when they haven't even read/watched what they are getting upset about? Understandably, if you read Pullman's His Dark Materials, and you are against it, awesome. You know what are you talking about. I got really upset when people started attacking the movie without having read the book or even seen the movie. How do I know? Well, because I asked. Are people so afraid to have their ideology put into question? Do they not want to think critically, analyze what they believe in? I love being challenged. Good lord, what else do I have to do intellectually until I light a fire under my ass and get my teaching certificate? It's okay to question what your faith and your beliefs. It allows you to see how strong you are in the decisions you have made.

Sorry about that last rant there...but that had been building up for a while. Not just from Pullman's work, but also from a few other things that I would talk about but this blog is already long enough.

Well, I hope you enjoyed me getting my nerd on. It was a blast!

Ciao, darlings!!

Annalisa says

What I did like about this book is that it starts with Lyra, a girl we have become acquainted with from another world, meeting Will, a boy from our world. Bringing the fantasy into our own reality was surreal and interesting. But only for a minute and then it became a bore. The story was slow and at some points stopped altogether to allow Pullman his theological preachings of anti-church and anti-god. If the story had been metaphorical I would have enjoyed it more, but it became less fiction and more essay.

In this book, Lyra and Will travel between worlds attempting to find his father and continue on with Lyra's mission. There are a lot of minor characters in too many places spreading the story out too thin to move quickly enough to keep one's attention. Eventually the action picks up as the characters merge, setting the scene for the major battle in book 3, but I was too annoyed with his writing by then to shrug it off. I almost didn't read the third book after this.

Cait • A Page with a View says

I love the world(s), but this is where the series starts getting too weird for me. I'm just not huge on the anti-religion theme... like at times it takes away from the actual story with its intensity. I absolutely love when books can mess around with theoretical physics or philosophy, so there were still some aspects I had fun with. But the religion stuff stuck out really

awkwardly for me and was hard to get past.

I'm still a big fan of the witches, Lyra, Will, and the worldbuilding in general, though! The way the knife can cut between worlds is SO COOL - I love how so many of the ideas are explained. However, this book does kind of suffer from second book syndrome at times... there's just a lot of running going on. It feels like a bridge between two books instead of a story in its own right.

I remember I tried to read this when I was 8 and just returned it to the library halfway through because it was boring and not fun. Aaaaand that is exactly what I wanted to do this time as well.

So I guess The Golden Compass is a favorite, but the sequels do way too many bizarre things with religion in such a cynical manner that it's hard for me to have the same level of enthusiasm.
