

The Golden Compass

Book I of His Dark Materials (a summary by Pat Evert)

PART I: OXFORD

The Decanter of Tokay

Lyra darted along and through the door into the Retiring Room, only Scholars and their guests were allowed in here, and never females. Lord Asriel, was her uncle, a man whom she admired and feared greatly. She knew that both Lord Asriel and the Master were members of the Cabinet Council, the Prime Minister's special advisory body. "Lord Asriel!" he said, and a shiver of cold surprise ran down Lyra's back. His dæmon, a snow leopard, stood behind him. Lord Asriel was a tall man with powerful shoulders, a fierce dark face, and eyes that seemed to flash and glitter with savage laughter. It was a

face to be dominated by, or to fight: never a face to patronize or pity. All his movements were large and perfectly balanced, like those of a wild animal, and when he appeared in a room like this, he seemed a wild animal held in a cage too small for it. "That wine is poisoned," she muttered between clenched teeth. "I saw the Master put some powder in it."



The Idea of North

Lord Asriel put a new slide in the lantern frame. As she gazed, her wonder grew, because there in the sky was the unmistakable outline of a city: towers, domes, walls... Buildings and streets, suspended in the air! She nearly gasped with wonder. Was Dr. Grumman investigating this phenomenon too?" "I believe he was." "Lord Asriel, what in God's name have you got there?" "This is the head of Stanislaus Grumman," said Lord Asriel's voice. "Murdered by scalping pattern and trepanning." Soon Lyra fell asleep. "Charles, the Holy Church teaches that there are two worlds: the world of everything we can see and hear and touch, and another world, the spiritual world of heaven and hell. Barnard and Stokes were two—how shall I put it—**renegade theologians who postulated the existence of numerous other worlds like this one, neither heaven nor hell, but material and sinful.** They are there, close by, but invisible and unreachable." "And now Lord Asriel has taken a picture of one of these other worlds," the Librarian said. And we have funded him to go and look for it. I see." "That's the duty of the old," said the Librarian, "to be anxious on behalf of the young. And the duty of the young is to scorn the anxiety of the old."

Lyra's Jordan

It was important to keep the chapel up to date, because Jordan College had no rival, either in Europe or in New France, as a center of experimental theology. The gypitan families, who lived in canal boats, came and went with the spring and autumn fairs, and were always good for a fight. So she had passed her childhood, like a half-wild cat. She would have listened eagerly now to anyone who could tell her about Dust. She was to hear a great deal more about it in the months to come, and eventually she would know more about Dust than anyone in the world. A rumor had been filtering through the streets for some weeks. For no reason that anyone could imagine, **children were beginning to disappear.**

There were a dozen others in the cellar of the warehouse, boys and girls. None of the children in that warm and steamy cellar had reached the age of puberty. Captain Magnusson would take them on board his ship very soon, and then when the tide was right, they'd sail out to sea and set a course for the North. Children from the slums were easy enough to entice away, but eventually people noticed, and the police were stirred into reluctant action. A few children disappeared in Norwich, and then Sheffield, and then Manchester. One thing on which everyone agreed was the name of these invisible kidnappers. "Don't stay out late, or the Gobblers'll get you!"

Lyra was still intent on playing Gobblers, and she inveigled Roger down into the wine cellars. Finally, and almost simultaneously, the children discovered what it was like to be drunk. The catacombs were much larger than the wine cellars, but they too had a limit. This was her world. **She wanted it to stay the same forever and ever, but it was changing around her,** for someone out there was stealing children. "Something about a child up in the Arctic. They probably got mines up there. Uranium mines for atomcraft. I bet that's what it is. And if they sent grownups down the mine, they'd be dead, so they use kids instead because they cost less."

The Alethiometer

When Mrs. Coulter heard about you, she offered at once to help. There is no Mr. Coulter, by the way; she is a widow. Lyra nodded eagerly, and said, "And she's really going to...look after me?" "Would you like that?" "Yes!" "So, Lyra, I'm to have an assistant, am I?" said Mrs. Coulter. "Yes," said Lyra simply. "There's a lot of work I need help with." "I can work!" "And we might have to travel." "I don't mind. I'd go anywhere." "But it might be dangerous. You'll have to learn mathematics, and navigation, and celestial geography." "Will you teach me?" "Yes. Now we're going to leave very early in the morning, by the dawn zeppelin, so you'd better run along and go straight to bed. I'll see you at breakfast. Goodnight!"

"Lyra, I'm going to give you something, and you must promise to keep it private. Will you swear to that?" said the Master. "Yes," Lyra said. He crossed to the desk and took from a drawer a small package wrapped in black velvet. When he unfolded the cloth, Lyra saw something like a large watch or a small clock: a thick disk of gold and crystal. It might have been a compass or something of the sort. "What is it?" she said. "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—" "But what does it do?" **"It tells you the truth.** As for how to read it, you'll have to learn by

yourself. Now go—it's getting lighter—hurry back to your room before anyone sees you." An alethiometer. Painted with extraordinary precision, as if on ivory with the finest and slenderest sable brush. She turned the dial around to look at them all. There was an anchor; an hourglass surmounted by a skull; a chameleon, a bull, a beehive...Thirty-six altogether. There were three little knurled winding wheels, in fact, and each of them turned one of the three shorter hands. The fourth hand was longer and more slender. Lyra couldn't control its movement at all; it swung where it wanted to, like a compass needle, except that it didn't settle. She snuggled down and switched off the light. Before she fell asleep, she tucked the alethiometer under the pillow, just in case.

The Cocktail Party

Mrs. Coulter throws a cocktail party and Lyra hears rumors of her being involved in the kidnapping of children and her daemon searching her items, so Lyra ran away.

The Throwing Nets

On the wharf two men running at Lyra, one from each side, the nearer holding a throwing net. She heard a hiss in the air, and past her cheek something lashed and sharply stung, and loathsome tarred strings whipped across her face, her arms, her hands, and tangled and held her, and she fell, snarling and tearing and struggling in vain. The other man was lying in a puddle, with an arrow through his neck. The whole world grew still as the man tying the net saw it too. He fell choking and gasping right across Lyra, who cried out in horror! Three dark men, one armed with a bow, the others with knives; and as she turned, the bowman caught his breath. "Tony Costa," he said. "Remember? You used to play with my little brother Billy off the boats in Jericho, afore the Gobblers got him." Ma Costa folded her great arms around Lyra and pressed her to her breast. "I dunno what you're a doing here, but you look wore out." "Last night at this cocktail party I found out what they were really doing. Mrs. Coulter was one of the Gobblers herself, and she was going to use me to help her catch more kids." "We know what they do. Them kids is taken up north, far out the way, and they do experiments on 'em. The gyptian people, we been hit worse than most by these Gobblers, and we're a coming together to decide what to do about it." "If you're going to rescue Billy, I want to come too and rescue Roger."

John Faa

John Faa, the lord of the western gyptians, addressed the crowd, "Now there's been talk about a child and a reward. Here's the truth to stop all gossip. The child's name is Lyra Belacqua, and she's being sought by the landloper police. There is a reward of one thousand sovereigns for giving her up to them. She's a landloper child, and she's in our care, and there she's going to stay. Anyone tempted by those thousand sovereigns had better find a place neither on land nor on water. We en't giving her up. I'm proposing that we send a band of fighters up north to rescue them kids and bring 'em back alive. I'm proposing that we put our gold into this, and all the craft and courage we can muster." "She was called Mrs. Coulter., said Lyra. "But I found out she was one of the Gobblers. They were called the General Oblation Board, and she was in charge of it. I knew some kids what had been took. My friend Roger the kitchen boy

from Jordan College, and Billy Costa, and a girl out the covered market in Oxford. And another thing... My uncle, right, Lord Asriel. And now the Gobblers've got him locked up somewhere." "The Aurora," said Farder Coram. "Is that right, Lyra?" "Yeah, that's it. And in the lights of the Roarer there was like a city. All towers and churches and domes and that. It was a bit like Oxford, that's what I thought, anyway. And Uncle Asriel, he was more interested in that." "I were saying, Lyra, as we knew about you from a baby. You oughter know what we know. Did they ever tell you who your parents were? So this is the truth about yourself, Lyra. Your father is Lord Asriel. Your mother was already married. She'd married a politician. And when the baby was born—that's you, girl—it was clear from the look of you that you didn't favor her husband, but your true father. So you was took to Oxfordshire. Lord Asriel challenged him, and they fought there, and Lord Asriel killed him, Edward Coulter. Mrs. Coulter is your mother." Lyra felt in the pocket of the wolfskin coat and took out the velvet package. She laid it on the table. Farder Coram spoke first, "I never thought I'd ever set eyes on one of them again. That's a symbol reader. Did he tell you anything about it, child?" "It's an alethiometer." "It's a truth measure. All these pictures round the rim," said Farder Coram, holding it delicately toward John Faa's blunt strong gaze, "they're symbols, and each one stands for a whole series of things. You got three hands you can control," Farder Coram explained, "and you use them to ask a question. By pointing to three symbols you can ask any question you can imagine, because you've got so many levels of each one. Once you got your question framed, the other needle swings round and points to more symbols that give you the answer. You got to be able to hold 'em in your mind without fretting at it or pushing for an answer, and just watch while the needle wanders. When it's gone round its full range, you'll know what the answer is. If Lord Asriel's held captive now, it might help set him free."

Frustration

Lyra took out the alethiometer and pored over it. Sometimes it would pause at three, sometimes two, sometimes five or more, and although she understood nothing of it, she gained a deep calm enjoyment from it, unlike anything she'd known. Once or twice the two of them shared a glimpse of meaning that felt as if a shaft of sunlight had struck through clouds to light up a majestic line of great hills in the distance—something far beyond, and never suspected. And Lyra thrilled at those times with the same deep thrill she'd felt all her life on hearing the word *North*. And then came the evening of the second roping. "Well," John Faa said, "you done what I asked. And better than I hoped. I'm a going to call on the heads of the six families now to come up here and give over their gold and recount their promises. "Nicholas Rokeby, you come first." A stout black-bearded man climbed onto the platform and laid a heavy leather bag on the table. "That's our gold," he said. "And we offer thirty-eight men." When the six family heads had all come up, Farder Coram showed his piece of paper to John Faa, who stood up to address the audience again. "Friends, that's a muster of one hundred and seventy men. I thank you proudly. As for the gold, I make no doubt from the weight of it that you've all dug deep in your coffers, and my warm thanks go out for that as well. We're a going to charter a ship and sail north, and find them kids and set 'em free. From what we know, there might be some fighting to do. But we en't going to

come back without our kids. Our work here is first rescue, then punishment. It en't gratification for upset feelings. **Our feelings don't matter.** If we rescue the kids but we can't punish the Gobblers, we've done the main task. But if we aim to punish the Gobblers first and by doing so lose the chance of rescuing the kids, we've failed. And the time will come under judgment. Not under passion." "I want to come north," Lyra said so they could all hear it. "I want to come and help rescue the kids. That's what I set out to do when I run away from Mrs. Coulter. You'd be sorry if you got up there and then found you needed me and found you'd left me behind. So you oughter take me, Lord Faa, excuse me for interrupting your talk." John Faa said, "Lyra, there en't no question of taking you into danger, so don't delude yourself, child. If you want to see the North, you'll have to wait till all this trouble's over. *"We will go,"* she said to Pantalaimon. "Let 'em try to stop us. *We will!*"

The Spies

Lyra knew one thing: she was not pleased or proud to be able to read the alethiometer —she was afraid. Whatever power was making that needle swing and stop, it knew things like an intelligent being. "Lyra, child, Farder Coram has told me about your reading of that instrument. And I'm sorry to say that poor Jacob has just died. I think we're going to have to take you with us after all, against my inclinations." She read it every day, sometimes with Farder Coram and sometimes on her own, and she found that she could sink more and more readily into the calm state in which the symbol meanings clarified themselves. "It's almost like talking to someone, only you can't quite hear them, and **you feel kind of stupid because they're cleverer than you, only they don't get cross or anything.... As if they knew everything, almost!** Pantalaimon, now as seagull, soared up out of a dive with wide wings white against the gray, something black hurtled at him and struck. He fell sideways in a flutter of shock and pain, and Lyra cried out, feeling it sharply. Another little black thing joined the first; they moved not like birds but like flying beetles, heavy and direct, and with a droning sound. "Thank God you got here," he said quietly, letting them through. "We just heard as Jack Verhoeven's been shot and his boat sunk, and no one'd heard where you was. John Faa's on board already and jumping to go." "Good evening, friends," he said. "Poor Jack Verhoeven's dead, perhaps you've heard. And his boys captured." They told of their encounter with the flying spirits. "I've heard of them clockwork devils, but never seen one," John Faa said. Lyra ran up excitedly to lean over the rail and watch England vanish behind. And so began her journey to the North.

PART II: BOLANGAR

The Consul of the Bear

John Faa and the other leaders had decided that they would make for Trollesund, the main port of Lapland. The witches had a consulate in the town, and John Faa knew that without their help, or at least their friendly neutrality, it would be impossible to rescue the captive children. "I know the people you are seeking, the child cutters," the bear said. "They left town the day before yesterday to go north with more children. No one will tell you about them; they pretend not to see, because the child cutters bring money and business. The men here took my armor away, and without that, I can hunt seals but I can't go to war; and I am an armored bear. If you want my service, the price is this: get me back my armor. Do that, and I shall serve you in your campaign, either until I am dead or until you have a victory. The price is my armor. I want it back, and then I shall never need spirits again."

Armor

Lyra went to her cabin to consult the alethiometer. Within five minutes she knew exactly where the bear's armor was, and why it would be difficult to get it back. Pantalaimon whispered: "The Aurora!" Her wonder was so strong that she had to clutch the rail to keep from falling. The sight filled the northern sky; the immensity of it was scarcely conceivable. **As if from Heaven itself, great curtains of delicate light hung and trembled.** Pale green and rose-pink, and as transparent as the most fragile fabric, and at the bottom edge a profound and fiery crimson like the fires of Hell, they swung and shimmered loosely with more grace than the most skillful dancer. It wasn't long before she found herself entering the same kind of trance as when she consulted the alethiometer. Perhaps, she thought calmly, whatever moves the alethiometer's needle is making the Aurora glow too. And as she gazed, **the image of a city seemed to form itself behind the veils and streams of translucent color:** towers and domes, honey-colored temples and colonnades, broad boulevards and sunlit parkland. Looking at it gave her a sense of vertigo, as if she were looking not up but down, and across a gulf so wide that nothing could ever pass over it. It was a whole universe away. In the Aurora's light she saw a great bird, a beautiful gray goose whose head was crowned with a flash of pure white. And yet it wasn't a bird: it was a dæmon, though there was no one in sight but Lyra herself. The bird said: "Where is Farder Coram?" And suddenly Lyra realized who it must be. This was the dæmon of Serafina Pekkala, the clan queen, Farder Coram's witch friend. Farder Coram came up, wrapped in his cold-weather gear, closely followed by John Faa. Both old men bowed respectfully. "Four days northeast of here, at a place called Bolvangar. Our clan made no agreement with them, and because of our longstanding obligation to you, Farder Coram, I have come to show you how to find these Dust hunters. They have put up buildings of metal and concrete, there is an air of hatred and fear over the place and for miles around. Animals keep away too. Hence the name **Bolvangar: the fields of evil.**" "Why do the witches talk about me?" Lyra said. "Because of your father, and his knowledge of the other worlds," the dæmon replied. "Yes," he said. "Witches have known of the other worlds for thousands of years. You can see them sometimes in the Northern Lights."

They aren't part of this universe at all; even the furthest stars are part of this universe, but **the lights show us a different universe entirely**. Not further away, but interpenetrating with this one. Here, on this deck, millions of other universes exist, unaware of one another....” We are as close as a heartbeat, but we can never touch or see or hear these other worlds except in the Northern Lights. The Dust hunters are as frightened of it as if it were deadly poison. That is why they imprisoned Lord Asriel. “They think he intends to use Dust in some way in order to make a bridge between this world and the world beyond the Aurora.” Lyra listened awhile, and then lay back in the deck chair with Pantalaimon and thought of the grand vision the goose dæmon had brought with him. **A bridge between two worlds...** This was far more splendid than anything she could have hoped for! And only her great father could have conceived it. As soon as they had rescued the children, she would go to Svalbard with the bear and take Lord Asriel the alethiometer, and use it to help set him free; and **they'd build the bridge together, and be the first across....**

“I know where it is, though,” Lyra said, “and if I told you, maybe you could get it by yourself, I don't know. So if I tell you, will you come with us and help rescue the kids from Bolvangar?” “Yes.” “My armor is made of sky iron, made for me. **A bear's armor is his soul, just as your dæmon is your soul.**” “Listen, you got to promise not to take vengeance. They done wrong taking it, but you just got to put up with that.” “All right. No vengeance afterwards. But no holding back as I take it, either. If they fight, they die.” “It's hidden in the cellar of the priest's house,” she told him. “He thinks there's a spirit in it, and he's been a trying to conjure it out. But that's where it is.” The cellar window tore open completely, and out climbed lorek Byrnison, the bear in armor. Without it, he was formidable. With it, he was terrifying. It was rust-red, and crudely riveted together: great sheets and plates of dented discolored metal that scraped and screeched as they rode over one another. The helmet was pointed like his muzzle, with slits for eyes, and it left the lower part of his jaw bare for tearing and biting. The sentry fired several shots, and the policemen leveled their weapons too, but lorek Byrnison merely shook the bullets off like raindrops, and lunged forward in a screech and clang of metal before the sentry could escape, and knocked him to the ground. His dæmon, a husky dog, darted at the bear's throat, but lorek Byrnison took no more notice of him than he would of a fly, and dragging the sentry to him with one vast paw, he bent and enclosed his head in his jaws. “Listen!” said Lyra. “You owe me a debt, right. Well, now you can repay it. Do as I ask. Don't fight these men. Just turn around and walk away with me. We want you, lorek, you can't stay here. Just come down to the harbor with me and don't even look back.” When they reached the harbor, lorek Byrnison dipped his head and unfastened the helmet with a claw. lorek Byrnison shrugged off the rest of his armor and left it in a heap on the quayside. Without a word to anyone he padded to the water and slipped into it without a ripple, and vanished. lorek Byrnison emerged from the water, dragging something dark with him. It was a dead seal. Lyra watched fascinated as he laid the skin out flat and tore off strips of blubber, which he then rubbed all over his armor, packing it carefully into the places where the plates moved over one another. He had finished oiling the armor. It was astonishing to see how lightly he dealt with it: the sheets of metal were almost an inch thick in places, and yet he

swung them round and into place as if they were silk robes. So in less than half an hour, the expedition was on its way northward. Lyra saw through half-closed eyes, and felt a sleepy thrill of perfect happiness, to be speeding north under the Aurora. But something was following the train of sledges.

The Lost Boy

“There’s a company of Tartars guarding the station, and they got wires all round it. There’s sixty men with rifles, and they got a couple of larger guns, sort of cannons. They got fire throwers too. And... Their dæmons are all wolves.” Lyra would go separately with the bear and meet up with the rest later. It took some time before she was used to the movement, and then she felt a wild exhilaration. She was riding a bear! And the Aurora was swaying above them in golden arcs and loops, and all around was the bitter arctic cold and the immense silence of the North. The Aurora had faded to a pallid trembling glimmer, but the stars were as bright as diamonds, and across the great dark diamond-scattered vault, hundreds upon hundreds of tiny black shapes were flying out of the east and south toward the north. “Are they birds?” she said. “They are witches,” said the bear. “Witches! What are they doing?” “Flying to war, maybe. I have never seen so many at one time.” She lifted the lantern high and took a step into the shed, and then she saw what it was that the Oblation Board was doing, and what was the nature of the sacrifice the children were having to make. The little boy was huddled against the wood drying rack where hung row upon row of gutted fish. He had no dæmon at all. The Gobblers had cut it away. That was *intercision*, and this was a severed child.

Fencing

Her first impulse was to turn and run, or to be sick. A human being with no dæmon was like someone without a face, or with their ribs laid open and their heart torn out: something unnatural and uncanny that belonged to the world of night-ghosts, not the waking world of sense. She had to go out of the shed and sit down by herself in the snow, except that of course she wasn’t by herself, she was never by herself, because Pantalaimon was always there. Oh, to be cut from him as this little boy had been parted from his Ratter! The worst thing in the world! She found herself sobbing, and Pantalaimon was whimpering too, and in both of them there was a passionate pity and sorrow for the half-boy. “Tony, come out. We’re going to take you somewhere safe.” The villagers’ faces were open with horror and a kind of fearful relief at seeing that hideously mutilated creature taken away by a girl and a great white bear. “Gracious God, what is this?” John said. “Lyra, child, what have you found?” “He’s called Tony,” she mumbled through frozen lips. “And they cut his dæmon away. That’s what the Gobblers do.” The men held back, fearful; but the bear spoke, to Lyra’s weary amazement, chiding them. “Shame on you! Think what this child has done! You might not have more courage, but you should be ashamed to show less.” “Lyra, I’m afraid to tell you this after what you done, but that little boy died an hour ago. And that was the first time he looked peaceful.” Faa talked to Lee Scoresby about the way they might best use the balloon. “I don’t know anything about Svalbard, except it’s in the farthest North....Is it all covered in ice? Can you get there over the frozen sea?” “Not from this

coast. The sea is sometimes frozen south of it, sometimes not. You would need a boat.” “Or a balloon, maybe.” “Or a balloon, yes, but then you would need the right wind.” “If your father is a prisoner of the Svalbard bears,” said Iorek Byrnison, “he will not escape. There is no wood there to make a boat. On the other hand, if he is a nobleman, he will be treated fairly. You have seen my armor; now look at my weapons.” Each black pad was covered in horny skin an inch or more thick, and each of the claws was as long as Lyra’s hand at least, and as sharp as a knife. **We can see in a way humans have forgotten. But you know about this; you can understand the symbol reader.** It is the same,” he said. “Adults can’t read it, as I understand. As I am to human fighters, so you are to adults with the symbol reader.” The leaders had agreed with Lee Scoresby that when they reached the next stopping place, they would inflate his balloon and he would spy from the air. “Mr. Scoresby, how would you fly to Svalbard?” asked Lyra. “You’d need a dirigible with a gas engine, something like a zeppelin, or else a good south wind. But hell, I wouldn’t dare. Have you ever seen it? The bleakest barest most inhospitable godforsaken dead end of nowhere. There were wide currents full of meaning flowing fast around her; the Gobblers and their cruelty, their fear of Dust, the city in the Aurora, her father in Svalbard, her mother.... And where was she? The alethiometer, the witches flying northward. And poor little Tony Makarios; and the clockwork spy-fly; and Iorek Byrnison’s uncanny fencing...

Bolvangar Lights

With no warning at all, a volley of arrows flew out of the dark. Three gyptian men went down at once, and died so silently that no one heard a thing. “They’ll take us to the Gobblers,” Lyra whispered. The word *severed* came to their mind. A dozen heavy coins were paid into the hunter’s hand. They were taken to another man wearing a white coat, and a woman in a nurse’s uniform.

“Wake up! Wake up!” “They’re Gobblers,” said the plump girl. “You know Gobblers. We was all scared of ’em till we was caught....” “It’s all right here,” said Bella. “There’s not much to do, except they give us tests and make us do exercises and then they measure us and take our temperature and stuff. Except when Mrs. Coulter comes,” said Annie. “Who’s Mrs. Coulter?” “She’s the one who trapped us, most of us, anyway,” said Martha. “They *kill* us?” said Lyra, shuddering. “Must do. ’Cause no one comes back.”

The Dæmon Cages

The gyptians would be along soon to rescue her, and if they couldn’t manage it, nothing would stop Iorek Byrnison from getting her out. She went with the others to the canteen for breakfast. And there was Roger. At lunchtime, when the children were lining up once again in the canteen, Lyra felt Pantalaimon give a chirrup of recognition, and turned to find Billy Costa standing just behind her. “Roger told me you was here,” he muttered. “Your brother’s coming, and John Faa and a whole band of gyptians,” she said. “They’re going to take you home.” He nearly cried aloud with joy, but subdued the cry into a cough. “And you got to call me Lizzie,” Lyra said, “never Lyra. And you got to tell me everything you know, right.” During a fire drill they found a strange building. As soon as her eyes had adjusted to the light, Lyra saw why. In a series of glass cases on

shelves around the walls were all the dæmons of the severed children: ghostlike forms of cats, or birds, or rats, or other creatures, each bewildered and frightened and as pale as smoke. The witch's dæmon gave a cry of anger. "Where are the children of these dæmons?" said the goose dæmon, shaking with rage. Lyra explained fearfully about her encounter with little Tony Makarios, and looked over her shoulder at the poor caged dæmons, who were clustering forward pressing their pale faces to the glass. Lyra could hear faint cries of pain and misery. In the dim light from a low-powered anbaric bulb she could see a name on a card at the front of each case, and yes, there was an empty one with Tony Makarios on it. There were four or five other empty ones with names on them, too. The goose dæmon said, "Wait. We must make these people think someone forgot to lock the place and shut the cages," he explained. "If they see broken glass and footprints in the snow, how long do you think your disguise will last? And it must hold out till the gyptians come. Now do exactly as I say: take a handful of snow, and when I tell you, blow a little of it against each cage in turn." She ran outside. Roger and Billy were still on guard. The goose made a clicking sound in his throat, and the catch at the front of the cage came open. Lyra worked quickly, and within a few minutes every dæmon was free. "Now, quick," said the goose. "Lyra, you must run back and mingle with the other children. Be brave, child. The gyptians are coming as fast as they can. I must help these poor dæmons to find their people...." He came closer and said quietly, "But they'll never be one again. They're sundered forever. This is the most wicked thing I have ever seen...." Lyra and the other two slipped out from the corner and mingled with them, but before they did, Lyra said: "Pass the word around among all the kids—they got to be ready to escape. They got to know where the outdoor clothes are and be ready to get them and run out as soon as we give the signal. And they got to keep this a deadly secret, understand?" Billy nodded, and Roger said, "What's the signal?" "The fire bell," said Lyra. "When the time comes, I'll set it off." There came another distraction, though, and from Lyra's point of view, it was the worst possible. She heard the sound as everyone else did. Heads began to turn and scan the dark sky for the zeppelin, whose gas engine was throbbing clearly in the still air. Looking out with curiosity was the beautiful dark-haired head of Mrs. Coulter, with her golden dæmon in her lap.

The Silver Guillotine

Lyra now realized, if she hadn't done so before, that all the fear in her nature was drawn to Mrs. Coulter as a compass needle is drawn to the Pole. Lyra removed a ceiling panel and climbed into the ductwork of the building. "Perhaps you haven't heard," said Mrs. Coulter. "**Lord Asriel is under suspended sentence of death.** But your new instrument, Doctor. How does it work?" So we've developed a kind of guillotine, I suppose you could say. The blade is made of manganese and titanium alloy, and the child is placed in a compartment—like a small cabin—of alloy mesh, with the dæmon in a similar compartment connecting with it. While there is a connection, of course, the link remains. Then the blade is brought down between them, severing the link at once. They are then separate entities." Mrs. Coulter left the meeting and Lyra made a noise. The ceiling panel beside her was thrust up suddenly, and she was looking into the startled face of a man. They fell still. They were captured. "The new

child. The one the Samoyed hunters..." "Yes." "You don't suppose she...the dæmons..." "She can't go back with the other children." "Impossible!" "Now. Do it now," he said. "Otherwise she'll talk. The shock will prevent that, at least. She won't remember who she is, what she saw, what she heard...." The fear she felt was almost a physical pain; it was a physical pain, as they pulled her and Pantalaimon over toward a large cage of pale silver mesh, above which a great pale silver blade hung poised to separate them forever and ever. But Pantalaimon, in answer, had twisted free of those hateful hands—he was a lion, an eagle; he tore at them with vicious talons, great wings beat wildly, and then he was a wolf, a bear, a polecat—darting, snarling, slashing, a succession of transformations too quick to register. The man holding her gasped and let go for a moment—and she was free, and Pantalaimon sprang toward her like a spark of lightning, and she clutched him to her fierce breast. But they fell on her again, three big brutal men, and she was only a child, shocked and terrified. The great pale silver blade was rising slowly, catching the brilliant light. "What is going on here?" A light, musical voice: her voice. She recognized Lyra. Her face, so beautiful and composed, grew in a moment haggard and horror-struck. "Lyra—" Mrs. Coulter whispered. "My dear, dear child," said that sweet voice. "However did you come to be here?"

The Witches

"You know he's been sent away to exile, because he's got something dangerous and wicked in mind. He needs the alethiometer to finish his plan, but believe me, dear, the last thing anyone should do is let him have it. What's this?" said Mrs. Coulter, as if amused. "What a funny old tin! Did you put it in here to keep it safe, dear? All this moss... You have been careful, haven't you? Another tin, inside the first one! And soldered! Who did this, dear?" Then in a dazzling moment the black form of the spy-fly hurtled out of the tin and crashed hard into the monkey's face. He screamed and flung himself backward; and of course it was hurting Mrs. Coulter too. Lyra didn't hesitate. Pantalaimon sprang for the door and she was after him at once, and she tore it open and raced away faster than she had ever run in her life. "Fire alarm!" Pantalaimon shrieked, as he flew ahead of her. She saw a button on the next corner, and smashed the glass with her desperate fist. The oldest were making for the storerooms where the clothing was kept, and herding the younger ones with them. Lyra felt for the alethiometer. It was still there. Then came another explosion, louder than the first and closer. She could see flames licking at the edges of a great hole in the side of the building. The howl of the Tartar guards' wolf dæmons. She scooped a handful of snow and hurled it at the nearest soldier. "Get 'em in the eyes!" she yelled, and threw another. Lyra stopped and turned to see a man lying on the snow, with a gray-feathered arrow in his back. And then an arrow came flying straight down from the sky, and struck another man behind the head. He fell at once. A shout from the officer, and everyone looked up at the dark sky. "Witches!" said Pantalaimon. Then all the Tartars turned their rifles up and blazed into the dark, firing at nothing, at shadows, at clouds, and more and more arrows rained down on them. They were turning back in confusion, terrified by the monstrous shape hurtling toward them from the dark beyond the avenue of lights. "Iorek Byrnison!" cried Lyra, her chest nearly bursting with joy. They

dropped to one knee in groups of four and fired their rifles as if they were on the practice range, not budging an inch as lorek's mighty bulk hurtled toward them. A moment later they were dead. Lyra urged the children on and out into the darkness beyond the lights. "Lee Scoresby's balloon!" Lyra cried, and clapped her mittened hands with delight. "Come on, keep moving, else you'll freeze," she said. "If we don't find the gyptians soon, they en't going to last," she whispered to Pantalaimon. Somewhere, just beyond where she could reach, there was a glory and a thrill which she didn't understand at all. But it gave her a surge of strength, and she hauled one girl up out of a snowdrift, and shoved at a boy who was dawdling, and called to them all: "Keep going! Follow the bear's tracks! He come up with the gyptians. Lyra encouraged, bullied, hit, half-carried, swore at, pushed, dragged, lifted tenderly, wherever it was needed, and Pantalaimon (by the state of each child's dæmon) told her what was needed in each case. Roger was following her example, and Billy Costa was leading the way, being sharper-eyed than most. Before she knew for certain whether she'd fallen asleep, Lyra was wandering among familiar figures, and men in furs were holding her up: John Faa's mighty arm lifted her clear of the ground, and Farder Coram was laughing with pleasure; and as far through the blizzard as she could see, gyptians were lifting children into sledges. The golden monkey was wrestling, biting, scratching at Pantalaimon. Mrs. Coulter, meanwhile, her face in its furs a frozen glare of intense feeling, was dragging Lyra to the back of a motorized sledge, and Lyra struggled as hard as her dæmon. The snow swirled open, and there they were, a squad of them, armed with rifles, and the wolf dæmons snarled beside them. And who was that? Yes, Roger, battering at Mrs. Coulter with fists and feet, hurtling his head against hers, only to be struck down by a Tartar who swiped at him like someone brushing away a fly. Into the cleared area leaped lorek Byrnison, with a clang and screech of iron on iron. A moment later and those great jaws snapped left, right, a paw ripped open a mailed chest, white teeth, black iron. Then Lyra saw in the air beside her a witch, one of those elegant ragged black shadows from the high air. They tumbled into the snow beside the basket of Lee Scoresby's balloon. "Skip inside," called the Texan, "and bring your friend, by all means. "C'mon, lorek! On board, old feller!" yelled Lee Scoresby, and over the side came the bear in a hideous creak of wicker and bending wood. At once the aeronaut lowered his arm in a signal, and the witches let go of the rope. Directly above them the balloon swelled out in a huge curve. Above and ahead of them the Aurora was blazing, with more brilliance and grandeur than she had ever seen. They flew swiftly, without any effort, up and toward the balloon. And one of them, flew directly alongside the basket, and Lyra saw her clearly for the first time. "Lyra?" "Yes! And are you Serafina Pekkala?" "I am." Lyra could see why Farder Coram loved her, and why it was breaking his heart. "Have you got the symbol reader?" said the witch. "Yes. I got it in my pocket, safe." "The gyptians have laid waste to Bolvangar," said Serafina. They are going to destroy it completely." "And the kids?" "They got all the kids safely? Every one. They are all safe." "Mr. Scoresby," she said. "The rope, if you please." "Ma'am, I'm very grateful. We're still rising. I guess we'll go on up awhile yet. How many of you will it take to pull us north?" "We are strong" was all she said. The witch settled her branch into a steady speed beside the basket as they moved north toward Svalbard.

PART III - SVALBARD

Fog and Ice

"This little girl's pretty important, huh?" he said after several minutes. "More than she will know," Serafina Pekkala said. "When we land lorek Byrnison on Svalbard, that will count as an act of war. All I can say is that **all of us, humans, witches, bears, are engaged in a war already**, although not all of us know it. Whether you find danger on Svalbard or whether you fly off unharmed, **you are a recruit, under arms, a soldier.**" According to the altimeter, they were nearly ten thousand feet up. The temperature was minus 20 degrees. "If we can, we'll set you down in the interior, away from Iofur Raknison's palace. Asriel won't want to go back to Oxford, Lyra. It seems that there is something to be done in another world, and Lord Asriel is the only one who can bridge the gulf between that world and this. But he needs something to help him. I know he loves you. When Farder rescued me, he was young and strong and full of pride and beauty. I loved him at once. **But you cannot change what you are, only what you do.** I am a witch. He is a human. I stayed with him for long enough to bear him a child...." "He never said! Was it a girl? A witch?" "No. A boy, and he died in the great epidemic of forty years ago. lorek is highborn. He is a prince. In fact, if he had not committed a great crime, he would be the king of the bears by now. Iofur Raknison became king when lorek Byrnison was exiled." "What's Dust? 'Cause it seems to me that all this trouble's about Dust." "I don't know," Serafina told her. "All I can tell you is that where there are priests, there is fear of Dust." And so the four travelers sailed on, sleeping in the ice-encrusted balloon, toward the rocks and glaciers, the fire mines and the ice forts of Svalbard. It was swinging wildly as strong winds buffeted the gas bag, and the witches pulling the rope were barely managing to hold it. If they let go, the balloon would be swept off course at once, toward Nova Zembla at nearly a hundred miles an hour. This was like the thickest fog Lyra had ever known. A creature half the size of a man, with leathery wings and hooked claws, was crawling over the side of the basket toward Lee Scoresby. It had a flat head, with bulging eyes and a wide frog mouth, and from it came wafts of abominable stink. "The cliff-ghosts are attacking. We'll bring the balloon to the ground, and then we must defend ourselves." Another jerk, so sudden that it threw them all to the floor again, and the basket began to sink with frightening speed, spinning all the while. Then came the biggest jolt of all, and Lyra found herself hurled out altogether. It was snow; she had landed in a snowdrift, in a gap between two ice-covered rocks. Freezing fog covered everything. She made her way painfully, slipping and sliding on the rough rocks, away from the waves and up the beach a little, and found nothing but rock and snow, and no sign of the balloon or any of the occupants. The bears didn't move until the first one said, "Your name?" "Lyra." "Where have you come from?" "The sky." "In a balloon?" "Yes." "Come with us. You are a prisoner."

Captivity

She turned the hands and thought the question: "Where is lorek?" The answer came at once: "A day's journey away, carried there by the balloon after your crash; but hurrying this way. He intends to break into the palace and rescue you, in the face of all the

difficulties.” She put the alethiometer away, even more anxious than before. A gray-bearded man was chained to the wall. “What’s your name?” she said. “Jotham Santelia,” he replied. “I am the Regius Professor of Cosmology at the University of Gloucester. Who are you?” “Lyra Belacqua. What have they locked you up for?” “Malice and jealousy...Where do you come from? Eh?” “From Jordan College,” she said. “What? Oxford?” “Yes.” “Keeping Lord Asriel prisoner is a special charge laid on Iofur by the Oblation Board,” the old man whispered back. “Mrs. Coulter herself came here to see Iofur and offered him all kinds of rewards to keep Lord Asriel out of the way. Anything for Mrs. Coulter, anything. He’s going to name his capital city after her, did you know that?” Iofur Raknison wanted nothing more than to be a human being, with a *dæmon* of his own. And as she thought that, a plan came to her: a way of making Iofur Raknison do what he would normally never have done; a way of restoring lorek Byrnison to his rightful throne; a way, finally, of getting to the place where they had put Lord Asriel, and taking him the alethiometer.

As soon as the bear guard bent his head to lift the haunch of seal meat and throw it in, she was at his side, saying: “Take me to Iofur Raknison. You’ll be in trouble if you don’t. It’s very urgent.” Sitting on the throne was the biggest bear she had ever seen. Iofur Raknison was even taller and bulkier than lorek, and his face was with a kind of humanness in it which she had never seen in lorek’s. But she moved a little closer, because she had to, and then she saw that Iofur was holding something on his knee. It was a big stuffed doll, a manikin with a vacant stupid human face. It was dressed as Mrs. Coulter would dress, and it had a sort of rough resemblance to her. “I’ve got something very important and secret to tell you, and I think I ought to tell you in private, really. Something about lorek Byrnison?” There was no doubt that he was powerfully interested. Suddenly he lumbered forward off the throne. They all bowed their heads and backed out toward the door. “I *am* a *dæmon*, Your Majesty,” she said. He stopped still. “Whose?” he said. “lorek Byrnison’s,” was her answer. “lorek Byrnison was the first bear to get a *dæmon*, but it should have been you. I would much rather be your *dæmon* than his, that’s why I came. You’ve heard of Bolvangar, because Mrs. Coulter must have told you about it. But they’re doing all kinds of other things too, like making artificial *dæmons*. And experimenting on animals. When lorek Byrnison heard about it, he offered himself for an experiment to see if they could make a *dæmon* for him, and they did. It was me. My name is Lyra. so when a bear has a *dæmon*, it’ll be human. He wants me. He’s coming to get me back. But I don’t want to be his *dæmon*. Iofur Raknison, I want to be yours. Because once they saw how powerful a bear was with a *dæmon*, the people at Bolvangar decided not to do that experiment ever again. We could do anything, Iofur Raknison, you and me together! She promised you that she’d get the Magisterium in Geneva to agree that you could be baptized as a Christian, even though you hadn’t got a *dæmon* then. But in any case when you’ve got me as your *dæmon*, you *could* be baptized if you wanted to, because no one could argue then. You’re going to fight lorek for me, he’ll have to be allowed to come to the palace.” “Yes...” “Tell them... that to make your kingdom completely secure, you’ve called lorek Byrnison here yourself to fight him, and the winner will rule over the bears forever.” The great bear was helpless. Lyra found her power over him almost intoxicating.

Mortal Combat

As soon as Iofur announced that Iorek Byrnison was on his way, each separate six-inch hook was sharpened and filed to a deadly point. Lyra watched with a growing sickness in the pit of her stomach, for Iorek Byrnison wouldn't be having this attention; he had been marching over the ice for nearly twenty-four hours already without rest or food; he might have been injured in the crash. Lyra realized that she had betrayed Iorek Byrnison, for Iorek had nothing like it. His armor protected only his back and sides. She looked at Iofur Raknison, so sleek and powerful, and felt a deep sickness in her, like guilt and fear combined.

"Belacqua? No. You are Lyra Silvertongue," Iorek said. "To fight him is all I want. Come, little dæmon." She looked at Iorek Byrnison in his battered armor, lean and ferocious, and felt as if her heart would burst with pride. Every bear's eyes were fixed on them. There were two kinds of beardom opposed here, two futures, two destinies. Iofur had begun to take them in one direction, and Iorek would take them in another, and **in the same moment, one future would close forever as the other began to unfold.** The crash as they met resounded in the still air and echoed back from the palace wall. Then like an avalanche he hurled himself down on Iorek, who was still trying to rise. Iorek was worse off. He was bleeding freely from a wound at his neck, and panting heavily. Iorek was slashing with mighty claws at Iofur's face, with Iofur hitting back just as savagely. Iofur's armor was in a pitiful state and his helmet gone altogether. But against that, Iofur was bigger and stronger than Iorek, and Iorek was weary and hungry, and had lost more blood. Iofur had noticed. He began to taunt Iorek. You could not trick a bear, but, as Lyra had shown him, Iofur did not want to be a bear, he wanted to be a man; and Iorek was tricking him. Iorek Byrnison with a ferocious left hand at the exposed jaw of Iofur Raknison. It was a horrifying blow. It tore the lower part of his jaw clean off, so that it flew through the air scattering blood drops in the snow many yards away. Iofur's red tongue lolled down, dripping over his open throat. The bear-king was suddenly voiceless, biteless, helpless. Iorek needed nothing more. He lunged, and then his teeth were in Iofur's throat. Into the rib cage Iorek reached, and he plucked out Iofur's heart, red and steaming, and ate it there in front of Iofur's subjects. Every single badge and sash and coronet was thrown off at once and trampled contemptuously underfoot, to be forgotten in a moment. They were Iorek's bears now, and true bears. Iorek gave swift orders, and some bears hurried into the palace to release the prisoners. When Lyra had finished, her mittens were sodden with Iorek's blood, but his wounds were stanching. And by that time the prisoners—a dozen or so men, shivering and blinking and huddling together—had come out.

Something nudged her foot, and a strange bear voice said, "Lyra Silvertongue, the king wants you." Many bears were assembled. And among them was a small figure who ran toward her, "Roger!" she said. "Iorek Byrnison is speaking with his counselors," said the young bear. "He wants to see you when you have eaten. Follow me." "Lyra Silvertongue," he said. "Come and hear what I am being told." They all treated her with immense courtesy, as if she were a queen. She felt proud beyond measure to sit beside her friend Iorek Byrnison under the Aurora as it flickered gracefully in the polar sky, and join the conversation of the bears. It turned out that Iofur Raknison's

dominance over them had been like a spell. Some of them put it down to the influence of Mrs. Coulter. “She wanted to set up another station here like Bolvangar, only worse, and Iofur was going to allow her to do it. Little by little she was going to increase her power over Iofur Raknison, and his over us, until we were her creatures running back and forth at her bidding.” “What of Mrs. Coulter?” Lyra sank again into the alethiometric trance. “She’s heard about us flying this way, and she’s got a transport zeppelin that’s armed with machine guns—and they’re a flying to Svalbard right now. She don’t know yet about Iofur Raknison being beaten. Some witches will tell her, and they’ll learn it from the cliff-ghasts. So I reckon there are spies in the air all around, Iofur. She was going to take over power from him, with a regiment of Tartars that’s a coming by sea, and they’ll be here in a couple of days. And as soon as she can, she’s going to where Lord Asriel is kept prisoner, and she’s intending to have him killed. She knows what he’s going to do, and she fears it, and she wants to do it herself and gain control before he does.... It must be the city in the sky, it must be! She’s trying to get to it first! She wants something I’ve got, because Lord Asriel wants it too. They need it for this...for this experiment, whatever it is...”

Lord Asriel’s Welcome

The interior of Svalbard was mountainous, with jumbled peaks and sharp ridges deeply cut by ravines and steep-sided valleys, and the cold was intense. The air here was more penetratingly chill than any she had experienced before. By land, sea, and air, Lord Asriel assembled his materials, and within six months of his committal, he had all the equipment he wanted, waiting for the one thing he needed to complete the task. This was Lyra’s first glimpse of her father’s prison. The crag stood black and gaunt, but at its summit was a spacious building from which light spilled lavishly in all directions. Glass was expensive, and large sheets of it were prodigal of heat in these fierce latitudes; so to see them here was evidence of wealth and influence far greater than Iofur Raknison’s vulgar palace. “So there’s one thing I want to know, and I reckon I’ve got the right to know it, like I had the right to know who I really was. And if you didn’t tell me that, you’ve got to tell me this, in recompense. So: what’s Dust? And why’s everyone so afraid of it?” “Some years ago a Muscovite called Boris Mikhailovitch Rusakov discovered a new kind of elementary particle. The hardest thing for Rusakov to understand was why the new particle seemed to cluster where human beings were, as if it were attracted to us. During the years of puberty children begin to attract Dust more strongly, and it settles on them as it settles on adults. After an exorcism, and the Inquisition finally they had to accept the fact that Rusakov wasn’t lying or deceiving them: Dust really existed. The Magisterium decided that Dust was the physical evidence for original sin. Anyway, it’s what the Church has taught for thousands of years. And when Rusakov discovered Dust, at last there was a physical proof that something happened when **innocence changed into experience**. He opened the Bible and read, *“till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return....”* The whole verse is a kind of pun on the words ‘ground’ and ‘dust,’ and it really means that God’s admitting his own nature to be partly sinful. No one agrees. No one can, because the text is corrupt. But it was too good a word to waste, and that’s why the particles became known as Dust. Your

mother's always been ambitious for power. She had to turn to the Church. Naturally she couldn't take the route a man could have taken—priesthood and so on—it had to be unorthodox; she had to set up her own order, her own channels of influence. “But they were *cutting*—” Lyra couldn't bring herself to say it. “Something like it had happened before. Do you know what the word *castration* means? It means removing the sexual organs of a boy so that he never develops the characteristics of a man. A castrato keeps his high treble voice all his life, which is why the Church allowed it: so useful in Church music. Some castrati became great singers, wonderful artists. Many just became fat spoiled half-men. That's why they had to hide away in the far North, in darkness and obscurity. But because it was an obscure and unofficial kind of operation, she was someone the Magisterium could deny if they needed to. She guessed that the two things that happen at adolescence might be connected: the change in one's *dæmon* and the fact that Dust began to settle. Anyway, the General Oblation Board grew out of ideas like that, and out of the Church's obsession with original sin.” They were too cruel. No matter how important it was to find out about original sin, it was too cruel to do what they'd done to Tony Makarios and all the others. Nothing justified that. “I want to go to the source of Dust itself.” “The source? Where's it come from, then?” “From the other universe we can see through the Aurora.” “One of uncountable billions of parallel worlds. The witches have known about them for centuries. That world, and every other universe, came about as a result of possibility. You've seen that city yourself. If light can cross the barrier between the universes, if Dust can, if we can see that city, then we can build a bridge and cross. It needs a phenomenal burst of energy. *That's* original sin. And I'm going to destroy it. Death is going to die.”

Betrayal

“Lord Asriel, miss. He's been almost in a delirium since you went to bed. I've never seen him so wild. He packed a lot of instruments and batteries in a sledge and he harnessed up the dogs and left. But he's got the boy, miss!” He needed a child to finish his experiment, miss!” It wasn't the alethiometer at all. What he wanted was a child. *She had brought him Roger.* The tracks of the sledge led straight out from the courtyard and over the plain, and lorek leaped forward to follow them. Witches were shooting their arrows at them. She saw many others coming to join them. The zeppelin, with Mrs. Coulter and her troops on board, was catching up. Lyra watched as the bears swiftly unloaded their fire hurler. Two of them hauled the long arm of the fire thrower down, another scooped shovelfuls of fire into the bowl, and at an order they released it, to hurl the flaming sulfur high into the dark sky. This time the sulfur hurtled against the envelope of the zeppelin's gas bag. The rigid frame held a skin of oiled silk in place to contain the hydrogen, and although this was tough enough to withstand minor scratches, a hundredweight of blazing rock was too much for it. The silk ripped straight through, and sulfur and hydrogen leaped to meet each other in a catastrophe of flame. Within a minute of the zeppelin's hitting the ground it was a mass of twisted metal, a pall of smoke, and a few scraps of fluttering fire. Next - a bridge. This bridge might support the weight of a child: it would certainly not stand under the weight of an armored bear. “If I come back, I'll come and see you to thank you properly, King lorek

Byrnison.” She laid a hand on his head. He let it lie there and nodded gently. “Goodbye, Lyra Silvertongue,” he said. She landed belly-down in the snow as the entire length of the bridge fell into the crevasse with a soft whoosh behind her. **There was no way back. She was on her own.**

The Bridge to the Stars

“Oh, Pan, dear, I can’t go on! I’m so frightened—and so tired—all this way, and I’m scared to death! I wish it was someone else instead of me, I do honestly!” Lyra came to a sense of herself again. A final deep shaky breath, and she was ready to go on. Her own parents, together! And embracing so passionately: an undreamed-of thing. Her eyes were wide. Roger’s body lay in her arms, still, quiet, at rest. She heard her parents talking: “Come with me!” he said, urgent, powerful. “Come and work with me!” “We couldn’t work together, you and I.” “No,” she said. “No.” Lord Asriel reached down and curled his strong fingers into the snow leopard’s fur. Then he turned his back and walked away without another word. The golden monkey leaped into Mrs. Coulter’s arms, making little sounds of distress. Lyra watched her coldly, and then looked up toward the sky. Such a vault of wonders she had never seen. The city hanging there so empty and silent looked new-made, waiting to be occupied; or asleep, waiting to be woken. Pantalaimon whispered into her ear, “**If *they* all think Dust is bad, it must be good.**” **She said breathlessly, “Yeah! What if it’s really *good*...”** With the majesty and vastness of the universe; and of how little they knew, in comparison with the profound mysteries above them. “And we’ve got the alethiometer,” she said. “Yeah. I reckon we’ve got to do it, Pan. We’ll go up there and we’ll search for Dust, and when we’ve found it we’ll know what to do.” Ahead of them lay doubt, and danger, and fathomless mysteries. But they weren’t alone. **So Lyra and her dæmon turned away from the world they were born in, and looked toward the sun, and walked into the sky.**