



PRESS RELEASE  
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## The Men Behind the Materials

Daniel Craig and Nicole Kidman may have been the talk of the town at the premiere of *The Golden Compass* but who are the people that really influenced Philip Pullman's dark and controversial trilogy? From Milton to the *Magnificent Seven*, *The Rough Guide to Philip Pullman's His Dark Materials* has it all.

**Leonardo de Vinci** – Lady with an Ermine - a neglected masterpiece by Leonardo de Vinci was Pullman's inspiration for Lyra and Pantalaimon. See the painting on page 41.

**The Magnificent Seven** – Pullman has said that Lee, the character played by Robert Vaughn in 1960's adaptation, inspired Balthamos. A faint heart among heroes, they both redeem themselves dramatically at the end of the story. See page 98.

**John Calvin** - The Protestant religious leader is only mentioned twice in *His Dark Materials* but his influence runs much deeper and Calvin represents almost everything that Pullman despises about religion. Find out more on page 170.

**J.R.R. Tolkien** – It is hard to imagine *His Dark Materials* without the precedent set by Tolkien. The two trilogies are of similar length, introduce fictional species, draw heavily from myth and are driven by a titanic struggle between good and evil. Discover more similarities on pages 17 and 38.

**Milton** - Pullman first crystallised his idea for the trilogy over lunch with his agent while discussing their shared love of *Paradise Lost*. See page 121.

**William Blake** – Blake has clearly affected Pullman's attitude to authority. *Paradise Lost* and the Bible may have provided the structure of the trilogy but Blake provided the approach. Get the low down on page 124.

**Homer** – In twelve years of teaching, Pullman reckoned he must have told the stories of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* 36 times. However, it's not just the skill of story writing that Pullman refined, there are scenes – notably Lyra and Will's visit to the world of the dead – where Pullman's debt to Homer is too striking to ignore. Learn more about the mystical Grecian poet on page 129.

**MacDonald Harris** – Philip Pullman would most like the world to rediscover an American novelist called MacDonald Harris (1921-3), one of his favorite authors. Read more about this forgotten genius on page 264.

**C.S Lewis** – Pullman's loathing for C.S Lewis's *Narnia* series - 'one of the most ugly and poisonous things I've ever read' – is in a league of its own, though he and Lewis have much in common. Both taught at Oxford, lost parents in childhood, and wrote novels in which children enter a cosmic, essentially Christian struggle across magical worlds to ultimately save the day. Discover more about the *Narnia* controversy on page 128.

**With all the back story behind the filming and cast of *The Golden Compass* as well as everything you need to know on the locations, the story, the inspirations and the controversies. *The Rough Guide to Philip Pullman's His Dark Materials* has all you need discover the beguiling worlds of this classic trilogy.**

### Notes for Editors:

**OUT NOW** - *The Rough Guide to Philip Pullman's His Dark Materials*

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