

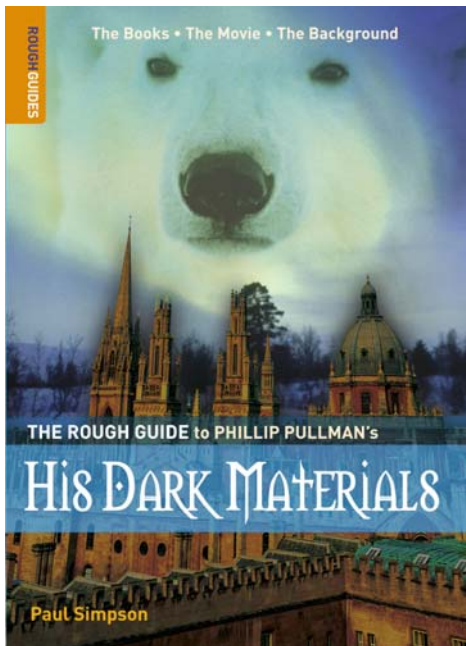
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The Rough Guide to Philip Pullman's
HIS DARK MATERIALS
Cut through the darkness and step into another universe...



Having sold tens of millions of copies worldwide, Philip Pullman's **His Dark Materials** trilogy is among the most popular fantasy series ever written. With the end of **Harry Potter's reign** in the realm of multi-volume children/adult cross-over tales that foreground magic, the trilogy is poised for a meteoric US reception. **The Rough Guide to His Dark Materials** will be indispensable for enriching enjoyment of both the trilogy, and the forthcoming movie (opening Dec. 07).



The Rough Guide to His Dark Materials author Paul Simpson describes Pullman's series as, "a trilogy of novels that wants to be read...They have a compelling central narrative, derived from one of the greatest stories the human race has ever told itself: the journey from innocence to experience." One of the most wonderful—and complicated—aspects of the trilogy is how this greatest of tales can be retold in a way that transcends its Judeo-Christian roots. It is this innately human complexity, and the dizzying scope and range of influences that pervade all 3 books, that makes **The Rough Guide to His Dark Materials** such an appealing and necessary companion.

From trilogy author Pullman's oft-incendiary views on **organized religion** to his inspirations from everything from **string theory** and **dark matter** to **John Milton** and **William Blake**, no touched-upon topic goes unexplored in this latest Rough Guide pop culture reference work.

The trilogy's British devotees far outnumber those in the US. This will not be the case for long, though, once the national release of the movie version of the first book, *The Golden Compass*, starring **Nicole Kidman** and **Daniel Craig**, hits theaters in December. The book covers the story behind **the film adaptation**—which boasts a screenplay by famed playwright **Tom Stoppard**—**the casting**—including an unknown British non-actor playing lead character Lyra—and **the filming**, done mostly in England and Norway.

For readers young and old hungry for more after turning the last page of *The Amber Spyglass* (the final book), or for those whose curiosity about the science, politics and controversies of the series is whet by the movie release, this book will be a godsend, be they atheist, agnostic or organized religion adherents.

The Rough Guide to His Dark Materials

BY PAUL SIMPSON
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“I PAY MY
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COMPLIMENT OF
ASSUMING THAT
THEY ARE
INTELLECTUALLY
ADVENTUROUS.”
- PHILIP PULLMAN

CHILD OF DESTINY: **Dakota Blue Richards** felt she could play Lyra when she read the novels

From page 81 of *The Rough Guide to His Dark Materials*:

CASTING LYRA

After open auditions that attracted 10,000 English schoolgirls, twelve-year-old Dakota Blue Richards was cast as Lyra. Pullman, who had watched a DVD of the audition, championed her, saying her bone structure and the way she carried herself just seemed to suit his vision of Lyra. The decision to hold an open casting call was unusual for a movie of this magnitude—it’s more often used as a cheap publicity ploy—but Forte felt it paid off, saying “Dakota is an uncommonly good actress and personifies a lot of the characteristics of Lyra.”

Richards already knew the books. “My mother read them to me when I was about nine, and I saw the plays at the National Theatre,” she told reporters at Cannes. “I thought if I could play any role I would be Lyra. I have treated the experiences as if I am in two different worlds: the normal life of being who I was before, and all this. I try not to let the film affect going to school, and being me.”