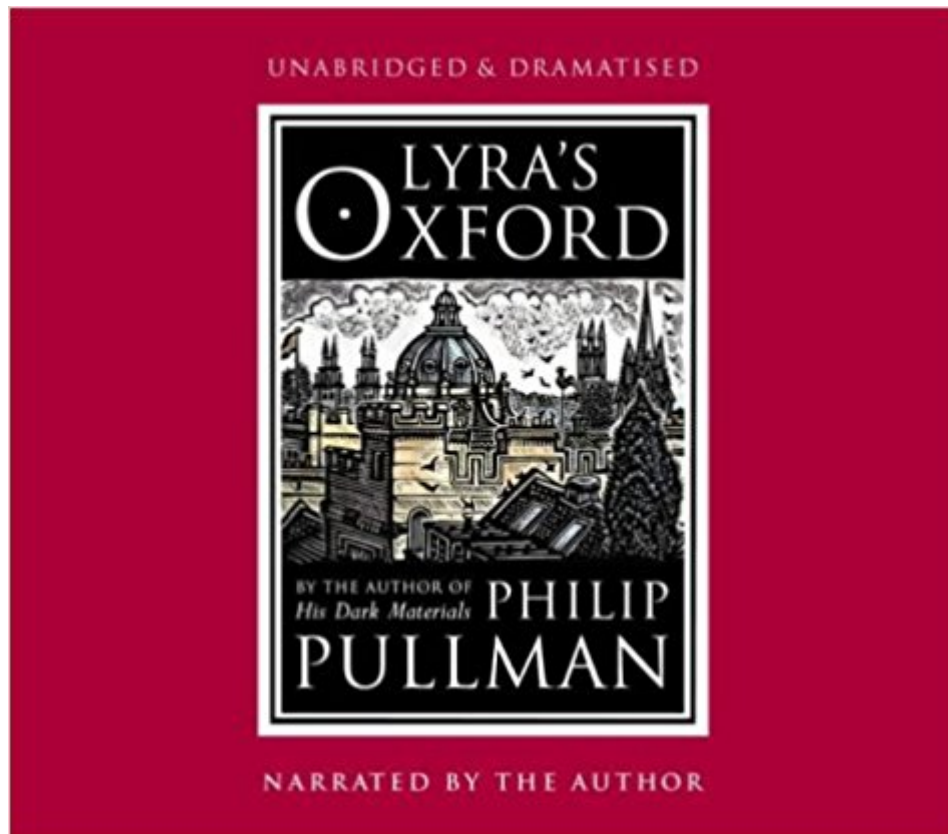


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Lyra's Oxford (His Dark Materials)



Synopsis

This is a wonderful new episode from the world of Philip Pullman's bestselling trilogy, His Dark Materials. In Lyra's Oxford the reader will share the huge excitement of discovering a small bundle of material that has somehow slipped between Lyra's universe and our own. This is a dramatised audio with production by Garrick Hagon and narrated by Philip Pullman with a full cast.

Book Information

Series: His Dark Materials (Book 4)

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Average Customer Review: 3.6 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (157 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #6,301,538 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #20 inÂ Books > Books on CD >

Authors, A-Z > (P) > Pullman, Philip #2103 inÂ Books > Books on CD > Children's Fiction >

Fantasy #4920 inÂ Books > Teens > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Fantasy > Sword & Sorcery

Customer Reviews

This short story (only 64 pages) shows Lyra a couple of years older than at the end of the His Dark Materials trilogy, and a couple of years more mature. Her daemon has (as it did in "Amber Spyglass) settled on a form, she's at an Oxford school for girls, and Will seems more a source of inspiration than sadness. The story begins (I won't give away very much) when a witch's daemon arrives and demands help finding a person unknown to Lyra . . . Well written, and well done within its boundaries. The "artifacts" (a map, a postcard from Mary Malone (showing, incidently, Oxford sites some of which are significant in Pullman's works), a cruise brochure) are interesting, and contain some inside jokes, such as adverts for books written by characters we met or heard of in the trilogy. The map is of course most useful in tracing Lyra's footsteps across Oxford in this short story. I am a little preturbed (and withhold a fifth star) about the fact that such a short story bears a rather high price. At about fifteen cents a page, it is only worth it because of the quality of Pullman's works. And if the other artifacts (there's an annotation on the cruise brochure which might be significant) play a part in "The Dust" (the forthcoming, longer book), I really, really hope that the artifacts are

republished with that book. Recommended. But you might want to think about sitting down in Barnes and Noble or Chapters and spending an hour reading this one, rather than buying it.

Considering how good Philip Pullman's "His Dark Materials" trilogy was, and considering how much I loved those books, I had high expectations for anything that would be published as part of that universe. I was excited to find out that Pullman was publishing a little story featuring Lyra. The book weighed in at about 60 pages, so I knew it wasn't going to be epic, but the expectations were there. I was disappointed. The story is that Lyra is back at Oxford several years after the events of His Dark Materials. She, and her daemon, see a daemon bird flying in being chased by a huge flock of birds. She rescues the daemon who tells Lyra that she needs to help the daemon find a professor, one who can help the daemon's witch. It is a very short story, and while there is a wee sense of adventure, this slim volume has none of the charm and wonder of His Dark Materials. Other than our familiarity with Lyra, we are given no reason to care about anything that happens. This book feels like a teaser. In the introduction, Pullman writes that the extras (there is a map, a post card and sundry extra information besides the story) may be from a different world, may be from stories already told, and may even be for a story yet to be told. He is teasing us with a larger story, a grander tale than Lyra's Oxford. It raises my expectations that Pullman will deliver a story large in scope, reminiscent of His Dark Materials. But, even that hint of something to come only deepens my disappointment with this book. Simply put, there is nothing there. As a story, it is weak. As an continuation of His Dark Materials, it does not live up to the past greatness. All this book does is serve to remind me how good the main series is, and how much I would love to see a new series. Skip this book.

Three kinds of people will enjoy this book. First, those who after the three-course feast of HDM are anxious for any crumbs (or should one say coffee & liqueurs) that Pullman has to offer. They will find a precious glimpse of Lyra and Pan at 14, and feel encouraged that their story is far from over. Second, the book will delight anyone who knows, loves, or has visited Oxford. With its absence of cars and urban sprawl, Lyra's city has much to recommend it over ours. It is what the imaginative may still sense on a Sunday morning in the Botanic Garden. Third, the book will charm the bibliophile and connoisseur of literary curiosities. Beside the story, there are wonderful pages from a Baedeker's Guide, and advertisements in the quaint style of Lyra's world. The wood engravings by John Lawrence are in the best early 20th-century tradition. He and Pullman must have had fun putting this together.

I have read Philip Pullman's HDM trilogy, and they are the most gorgeous books I have ever come across. Lyra's Oxford I love too, but for a whole different reason. It's not so much the story I cherish, but the actual book. I brought it to school with me for the first day of high school, clutching it protectively to me. It was like having every single page of HDM with me. And that was the most enormous comfort I could ever ask for. Even though I'm not superstitious in the least, I must say, it's grown to be my talisman. I refuse to sleep without it in my room.

As much as I knew from my obsessive searching on the internet that this would be a short story, I was initially disappointed in the actual size and length of Lyra's Oxford. First, the story: I enjoyed this short story about one incident in Lyra's life. I have been curious to see how Lyra adjusts to life after the BIG EVENT at the end of the first trilogy. It was nice to have a little story instead of an entire novel in which to do this. My burning question was how Lyra adjusted to the loss of her relationship with Will and it was answered quietly and succinctly in just a few sentences. Will is only mentioned a few times in this short story, which is perhaps as it should be. How would Lyra get any work done or really live at all if he was more often foremost in her thoughts? I know from some of the things I've read elsewhere that the materials in this piece of work are supposed to connect to others to be published later on. I am eager to see how they do connect. We now have artifacts such as a map of Oxford and a postcard from Mary Malone to add to this new installment in Lyra's life, in a way that reminded me a bit of Nick Bantock's Griffin and Sabine series. If you are going to put out short little books with interconnected clues, however, they need to have publishing dates close together. I gave up on the Griffin and Sabine books when too much time between them made me lose momentum. I doubt this would happen with Pullman's work as I am more dedicated as a fan to this material, but I could see too little published too far apart turning off potential new fans.

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