



The Golden Compass by Philip Pullman

Subjects: Missing persons—Fiction; Kidnapping—Fiction; Fantasy

Awards: Ten Best Books for Young Adults, Horn Book Fanfare

Book Lists: Gifted, Middle School, Reluctant Readers

Props: Moth, leopard



(Have moth on your shoulder) This is Pan, a daemon. Right now he is in the form of a moth, but he can change forms as the need arises. Pan is not a pet but more of a companion to Lyra. Lyra and her daemon Pan, live in a world vastly different from ours. There are witches, cities in the sky, armor-clad bears, hideous beasts, and more. Lyra is an orphan who was left by her uncle to be raised by the scholars of Jordan College... or so she was told. Although the scholars have loved her and have tried to teach her well, Lyra has been a handful. It seems she was always getting into trouble.

One evening she wanted to sneak into the retiring room of Jordan College. This room was for scholars only, and no children were permitted to enter. However, with the help of Pan in the form of a moth, Lyra sneaked into the room unnoticed. But before she could leave, Pan heard something. Lyra and Pan ducked into a wardrobe. *(Appear to be peeking out of wardrobe)* The Master of the college entered the retiring room with his Raven daemon. As Lyra and Pan watched, he took a vial of poison from his robe and poured it into the decanter of wine that was laid out for their important visitor, Lord Asriel. Lyra couldn't believe her eyes. The Master was a kind and gentle person and he was attempting to murder Lord Asriel! Lyra would not let that happen. After the master left, Lyra waited. Soon Lord Asriel and his daemon, *(Bring out leopard)* a leopard, arrived. He went

to the table and started to pour himself a glass of wine. Lyra jumped out of the wardrobe, stumbled, smashed the wineglass to the floor, and faced her startled and annoyed uncle.

Lyra learned from her uncle that there were deadly forces working against him because he was on his way to investigate "dust" coming from another world, a parallel universe. Lord Asriel was obsessed with his search to find a source of energy that he could use to enter this other world and destroy the dust. Lyra was fascinated and pleaded with her uncle to let her help him. He refused, wanting her to stay safe at Jordan College. But she wasn't safe there. *(Put down leopard)*

The fates were at work and Lyra was not going to be left behind for long. But first she must find her friend Roger, who had mysteriously disappeared along with many other children. There were rumors that a beautiful lady with a golden monkey daemon had taken the children. There were other rumors of Gobblers who stole children, tortured them, and ate them. Lyra vowed to find and save her friend. So with a strange, truth-telling gift from the Master *(an alethiometer or golden compass)*, she set out on a journey that would lead her to the frozen North, to Lord Asriel, and to her destiny. *(Hold up book)* *The Golden Compass* by Philip Pullman.

