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Never-seen-before manuscript by Philip Pullman revealed on 25th anniversary of *Northern Lights*

#HisDarkMaterials25

“When I wrote *Serpentine*, I had no idea that I was going on to write another trilogy, showing Lyra as an adult, but she and her world wouldn’t leave me alone.” – Philip Pullman

- *Serpentine*, a new book featuring a teenage Lyra Silvertongue, will be published in October 2020
- Academy Award-winning actress Olivia Colman to narrate audiobook edition
- BBC One and HBO’s *His Dark Materials* Season Two confirmed for this autumn, based on *The Subtle Knife*

Penguin Random House have today, Thursday 9th July 2020, announced that they will be publishing a previously unseen manuscript by Philip Pullman this autumn. *Serpentine* – a novella set after the events of *His Dark Materials* but before those of *The Secret Commonwealth* – was written in 2004, but has remained under wraps until now.

The announcement coincides with the 25th anniversary of *Northern Lights*, the first volume of Pullman’s ground-breaking, internationally bestselling *His Dark Materials* trilogy, which was published in 1995.

The standalone short story was written for a charity auction at the request of the National Theatre’s then-director, Nicholas Hytner, during the award-winning stage production of *His Dark Materials*. The hand-written manuscript and printed typescript were auctioned and bought by Glenn and Phyllida Earle for a substantial sum, with all proceeds going to charity. The book is being published 16 years on, following the publication of *The Secret Commonwealth: The Book of Dust Volume Two* last autumn, where readers were introduced to an adult Lyra.

Philip Pullman says: “Why are we publishing this story now? Because with the development of *The Book of Dust*, especially after the events described in *The Secret Commonwealth*, we

can see a change in the way Lyra understands herself, and her relationship with Pantalaimon, which is prefigured in this little Arctic episode. When I wrote *Serpentine*, I had no idea that I was going on to write another trilogy, showing Lyra as an adult, but she and her world wouldn't leave me alone. When it comes to human affairs, a billion invisible filaments connect us to our own pasts, as well as to the most remote things we can imagine; and I hope that, above all, these books are about being alive and being human."

In *Serpentine*, a teenage Lyra returns to the town of Trollesund, the setting of her first encounter with Iorek Byrneson and Lee Scoresby in *Northern Lights*. Lyra and Pan are older and a little wiser, and in search of an answer to a shocking, secret condition - their ability to separate - from the witch-consul, Dr Lanselius. What unfolds is a tender, revelatory scene that foreshadows Lyra's future struggles as a young woman, and provides insight into Pullman's own early exploration of a previously unthinkable plot development that would emerge in his *The Book of Dust* sequence: the idea that a human's bond with their daemon can be irreparably broken.

Serpentine will be published by Penguin Random House Children's on 15th October 2020 in hardback and ebook edition, with illustrations by Tom Duxbury, alongside an audiobook edition narrated by Academy Award-winning actress Olivia Colman (*The Crown*, *The Favourite*, *Fleabag*).

Northern Lights introduced readers to the parallel world of Lyra Belacqua, the truth-telling alethiometer, the concept of Dust and the idea of dæmons, the animal embodiment of a human's inner-life and thought. Acclaimed as a modern masterpiece from the beginning, *Northern Lights* went on to win numerous awards, including the Carnegie of Carnegies, has sold over 2 million copies through BookScan's Total Consumer Market and has been translated into 45 languages. The book established Pullman as one of the greatest storytellers of our time.

25 years on, Lyra's story continues to grip the nation. 18 million copies of the *His Dark Materials* trilogy have sold in over 44 languages, and the BBC/HBO television adaptation of *His Dark Materials*, with its all-star cast including Dafne Keen, Ruth Wilson, James McAvoy and Lin-Manuel Miranda, was the biggest new British show in over five years on any channel, with initial viewing figures of 7.2 million.

2020 sees an exciting programme of Pullman activity, with the confirmation of Season Two of the *His Dark Materials* series launching later this year, as well as the publication of three new editions of Pullman titles: *The Secret Commonwealth: The Book of Dust Volume Two* paperback from David Fickling Books in association with Penguin Random House (17th September), *Dæmon Voices* paperback from David Fickling Books (1st October) and a fully-

illustrated hardback gift edition, *Northern Lights: The Illustrated Edition* (5th November), from Scholastic.

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Notes to Editors

- Philip Pullman is not available for interview. A media pack containing relevant assets can be found [here](#).
- *Serpentine* will be published by Penguin Random House Children's on 15th October 2020 in small format hardback and ebook, illustrated by Tom Duxbury, priced £7.99. It will be available as an audiobook edition, narrated by Olivia Colman, in download and CD formats priced £9 and £8.99 respectively.
- Other autumn publishing includes:
 - ***The Secret Commonwealth: The Book of Dust Volume Two* (17th September 2020)**
Published in paperback by David Fickling Books in association with Penguin Random House, priced £8.99
First published to high critical acclaim in 2019, *The Secret Commonwealth* - the second volume of *The Book of Dust* sequence - takes place 20 years after the events of *La Belle Sauvage: The Book of Dust Volume One*. Lyra Silvertongue is now a student at St Sophia's College, Oxford, with her daemon Pantalaimon. They are not getting on. When an act of terrible violence breaks the peace of the Oxford night, Lyra and Pan's relationship reaches a crisis and they are drawn, far from home, into the dangerous factions of a world they had no idea existed.
 - ***Dæmon Voices* (1st October 2020)**
Published in paperback by David Fickling Books, priced £10.99
Warm, entertaining, and above all thought-provoking, *Dæmon Voices* is a remarkable insight into the mind of one of our greatest writers. In over 30 essays, written over 20 years, Philip Pullman reveals the narratives that have shaped his vision, his experience of writing, and the keys to mastering the art of storytelling.
 - ***Northern Lights: The Illustrated Edition* (5th November 2020)**
Published in hardback by Scholastic, priced £30
First published in 1995, and acclaimed as a modern masterpiece, *Northern Lights* won the UK's top awards for children's literature and was voted the greatest Carnegie Medal winner in 70 years. Now, for its 25th anniversary, Scholastic will publish the first-ever fully-illustrated hardback gift edition,

featuring a foiled dust-jacket and full-colour artwork by Chris Wormell throughout.

- **Sir Philip Pullman** was born in Norwich, UK, in 1946 and educated in England, Zimbabwe, Australia and Wales. He read English at Exeter College, Oxford.

After graduating, Pullman went into teaching, at various Oxford Middle Schools before moving to Westminster College in 1986 for eight years. He retains a passionate interest in education.

His first children's book, *Count Karlstein*, was published in 1982 (later republished in 2002). It was followed by *The Ruby in the Smoke* (1986), the first in a quartet of books featuring the young Victorian adventurer, Sally Lockhart. He also published a number of shorter stories, which he calls fairy tales, including *The Firework-Maker's Daughter*, *Clockwork*, *I Was a Rat!* and *The Scarecrow and His Servant*. To date, he has published 33 books, read by children and adults alike.

His most famous work is the *His Dark Materials* trilogy: *Northern Lights* (1995, published as *The Golden Compass* in the USA); *The Subtle Knife* (1997) and *The Amber Spyglass* (2000). These books have been honoured by several prizes, including the Carnegie Medal, the Guardian Children's Book Award, and (for *The Amber Spyglass*) the Whitbread Book of the Year Award – the first time in the history of that prize that it was given to a children's book. Pullman has received numerous other awards, including: the 2002 Eleanor Farjeon Award for children's literature, and the 2005 Astrid Lindgren Award, jointly with the Japanese illustrator Ryoji Arai. The first volume of *The Book of Dust – La Belle Sauvage* – was published in October 2017 to great acclaim, winning the Waterstones Book of the Year in December 2017, securing Pullman 'Author of the Year' at both the British Book Awards 2018 and the Specsavers National Book Awards 2018, and the audiobook – narrated by Michael Sheen – 'Audiobook of the Year' at the British Book Awards 2018. Pullman was knighted for services to literature in the New Year's Honours 2019.

Sir Philip Pullman lives in Oxford. Further information can be found at www.philip-pullman.com.

- **Olivia Colman** won the Leading Actress award at the 2019 Academy Awards for her performance as Queen Anne in critically acclaimed *The Favourite*, opposite Emma Stone and Rachel Weisz. The same year she also won the Golden Globe for the category of Best Performance by an Actress in a Motion Picture (Musical or Comedy); the BAFTA award in the category of Best Leading Actress; British Independent Film Award in the category of Best Actress, the Critics Choice award in the category Best Actress in a Comedy, and the Volpi Cup for Best Actress at the 2018 Venice Film Festival.

She is currently playing the leading role of Queen Elizabeth II in Season 3 of the critically acclaimed Original Netflix series *The Crown* opposite Tobias Menzies and Helena Bonham Carter, and will continue the role into Season 4. She will next be seen in a leading role opposite Anthony Hopkins in *The Father*, a feature film adaptation of Florian Zeller's hit stage play – due for release shortly.

On television, Olivia can most recently be seen in the BBC/Amazon's award winning *Fleabag* in her role as 'Godmother' for which she previously received a Television BAFTA nomination in the category of Best Female Performance in a Comedy Programme in 2017, and an Emmy nomination in 2019 for Best Supporting Actress for her work in the final series.

On stage, Olivia's credits include *Long Day's Journey into Night* (Lyric Theatre), *England People Very Nice* (National Theatre), *Hayfever* (Noel Coward Theatre) and most recently Lucy Kirkwood's *Mosquitoes* at the National Theatre, directed by Rufus Norris, for which she won Best Actress in the 2018 Whatsonstage Awards.

Olivia has been awarded the title of Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire for her services to drama, and a BFI Fellowship.