



Once Upon a Time in the North: His Dark Materials

By Philip Pullman

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***** *Just announced! THE BOOK OF DUST, the long-awaited new work from Philip Pullman, set in the world of His Dark Materials, will be published as a work in three parts, with the first volume to arrive in October 2017!* *****

In this prequel episode from Philip Pullman's His Dark Materials universe, Lee Scoresby--Texan aeronaut and future friend to Lyra Belacqua--is just 24 years old, and he's recently won his hot-air balloon in a poker game. He finds himself floating North to the windswept Arctic island of Novy Odense, where he and his hare daemon Hester are quickly tangled in a deadly plot involving oil magnate Larsen Manganese, corrupt mayoral candidate Ivan Poliakov, and Lee's longtime nemesis from the Dakota Country: Pierre McConville, a hired killer with at least twenty murders to his name.

It's only after Lee forms an alliance with one of the island's reviled armored bears that he can fight to break up the conspiracy in a gun-twirling classic western shoot out--and battle of wits. This exquisite clothbound volume features the illustrations of John Lawrence, a removable board game—Peril of the Pole—on the inside back cover, and a glimpse for Pullman fans into the first friendship of two of the most beloved characters in the His Dark Materials trilogy: Lee Scoresby and armored bear Iorek Byrnison.

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Once Upon a Time in the North: His Dark Materials By Philip Pullman Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Grade 7 Up—In this prequel to the "His Dark Materials" trilogy (Knopf), Texas aeronaut Lee Scoresby meets armored bear Iorek Byrnison for the first time. In this short, fantastic adventure, young Scoresby finds himself on the Arctic island of Novy Odense, a community set in an alternate past world. The rich mining company Lars Manganese is trying to control the town, Ivan Dimitrovich Poliakov is a corrupt mayoral candidate, and Captain van Breda is prevented from unloading his cargo unjustly. Scoresby takes on the captain's cause, resulting in an Old West-style shootout. Many readers will likely enjoy this book because of its quick pace and action-filled plot, but some Pullman fans may be disappointed when comparing this short text to the trilogy. Characters are less developed, and events sometimes happen a bit too quickly. The ending is neat and tidy, though it does leave the door open for future adventures. The inclusion of documents and black-and-white engraved illustrations add a nice touch, and the board game Peril of the Pole is tucked into the back inside cover as a bonus.—*Jennifer D. Montgomery, Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green*

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From [Booklist](#)

Starred Review As he did in *Lyra's Oxford* (2004), Pullman returns to the world of *His Dark Materials* trilogy in this story of how aeronaut Lee Scoresby meets and befriends bear Iorke Byrnison. Pullman is as fine a writer as there is for young people, and this book is a small gem—literally—it's 112 pages and the size of a paperback. The story begins as Lee's cargo balloon drifts into the Arctic, landing in the icy environs of Novy Odense. The town is about to elect a new mayor, Ivan Poliakov, who wants to rid the place of bears, and Lee (along with daemon rabbit Hester) finds himself embroiled in local controversies. When Lee learns one of Poliakov's allies is a vicious criminal with whom he once had a run-in, he knows he must choose sides. Beautifully crafted and spilling over with action, the novel has the feel of an old western (one can almost see Gary Cooper as Lee). Matching Pullman's carefully calibrated prose is the book's thoughtful design. Everything works together—from the sturdy, blue cloth cover to the back matter, which features a miniature board game. Lawrence's stamp-sized ink engravings set the tale somewhere between fantasy and history. Grades 7-10. --Ilene Cooper

Review

Starred Review, [Booklist](#), May 15, 2008:

"Pullman is as fine a writer as there is for young people, and this book is a small gem."

Users Review

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Lisa Auyeung:

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