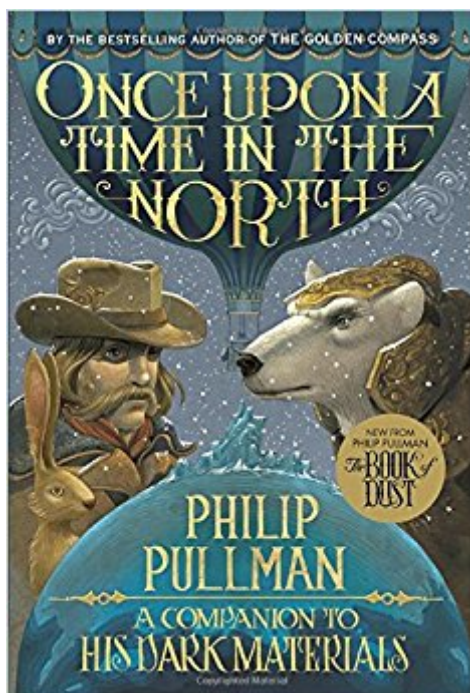


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# Once Upon A Time In The North: His Dark Materials



## Synopsis

\*\*\*\*\* ã ã Just announced! ã ã THE BOOK OF DUST, ã ã 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 ãçâ ãâ •Peril of the Pole ãçâ ãâ • 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 lorek Byrnison.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 0940 (What's this?)

Series: His Dark Materials

Paperback: 144 pages

Publisher: Yearling; Dgs edition (September 5, 2017)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0399555447

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Product Dimensions: 5.2 x 0.3 x 7.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 2.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars 68 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #56,127 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #19 in ã ã Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > United States > Westerns #1635 in ã ã Books > Children's Books > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Fantasy & Magic #2206 in ã ã Books > Children's Books > Action & Adventure

Age Range: 10 and up

Grade Level: 5 and up

## Customer Reviews

Grade 7 Up — In this prequel to the "His Dark Materials" trilogy (Knopf), Texas aeronaut Lee Scoresby meets armored bear lorek 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 Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

*\*Starred Review\** As he did in *Lyra*, Oxford (2004), Pullman returns to the world of His Dark Materials trilogy in this story of how aeronaut Lee Scoresby meets and befriends bear lorke 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 --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

A crooked politician and an equally corrupt businessman, a pending election with universal implications, one ice-cold killer and the initial meeting of two friends; Philip Pullman masterfully takes all these elements and weaves an interesting prequel to the classic, His Dark Materials, trilogy. The initial meeting of Texas aeronaut Lee Scoresby - the winner of a hot-air balloon in a recent poker game - and his hare daemon, Hester, with the armored bear, Iorek Byrnison, is explored in this action-packed adventure. The layout of the hardbound novella is certainly a throwback to the past, with the story told in text, drawings and other resources. Included is a fold-out board game, Peril of the Pole, which proves that imagination still goes a long way in having fun. This YA fantasy series continues to take twists and turns through an epic landscape.

"Once upon a time in the North" is the story of young Texan Lee Scoresby, who becomes enmeshed in a political and financial conspiracy to control the Arctic island-city, Novy Ordense. Scoresby becomes the ally of Captain van Breda whose cargo is being illegally held by the minions of an evil mining company seeking to get their candidate elected mayor in an upcoming election. This will make it easier for the company to control the natural resources of Novy Ordense, including newly discovered oil. This is a short story (96 pages) that is completely stand-alone, or that could have fit just as nicely as a rather long flashback in one of the "Dark Materials" books describing an adventure of young (24 years old) Lee Scoresby and how he first met and befriended Iorek Byrnison, future King of the Bears, some 35 years before the events that take place in the "Dark Materials" trilogy. These are the only two characters from the "Dark Materials" to appear, and although "Once Upon A Time" takes place in the same alternate universe and with the same flavor, there is little of the fantasy and SF aspects that suffuse the former books (excepting daemons and talking bears, of course!). "Once upon a Time" is a rather straight-ahead, old fashioned adventure story with a western flavor (guns, hired bad guy, pretty girls, nice girls, a bar, a couple of fights and the hero prevailing at the end), but is nonetheless very enjoyable, especially if you happen to have read the original trilogy. The book was written for a young adult audience in a skillful enough way so as to be enjoyable by young adults of all ages. It is also very handsomely packaged in a very small Navy blue hardcover and comes with a board game in an envelope glued to the inside back cover (that I have not opened). All in all, the entire package seems a good deal especially priced at \$10.

I had forgotten that I ordered this book, and was surprised and delighted when it arrived today, albeit in a package from Goodwill. Having read the first three volumes of His Dark Materials with great pleasure, I was happy to learn more about their history in this entertaining prequel. Here the

author tells us of the history of the great bear, Iorek Byrnison, and the aeronaut, Lee Scoresby. In this case they are fighting for the little guy, like super-heroes. Despite the gun-play, there is some delicious ironic humor to lighten things up. I do not hesitate to recommend this book partly because it moves along nicely and because it is beautifully written. I meant to mention the small art work on many pages and on the game--inside the back cover--John Lawrence's handsome engravings. There are also two letters written by Lyra later surnamed Silvertongue, the heroine of the first volumes, as she proceeds through the final phase of graduate school. It sounds as though she will use her experiences as the basis for a dissertation in Economic History.

I generally don't read the product dimensions for books (barring textbooks) so I was surprised at how compact "Once Upon a Time in the North" is. The cover illustration by John Lawrence is excellent and very striking against the dark blue background. As the book was manufactured in Malaysia, I feel a little home pride. :) A boardgame "Peril of the Pole" is included, nicely illustrated by Lawrence as well. The players (aeronauts) compete to be the final player left on the board (in the air) while navigating the dangers of the North. "Once Upon a Time in the North" can be a stand-alone since it is primarily a prequel to His Dark Materials trilogy. Three "documents" at the end of the book relate to Lyra, but this is the only indication of characters from HDM. The pictures and "documents" flesh out the story of how Lee Scoresby and Iorek Byrnison meet. A 96-page story, the events are very quick-paced. Scoresby crashlanded in Novy Odense where the oil causes some political intrigue. Ivan Dimitrvoich Poliakov, a candidate for Mayor, builds his campaign on anti-bear sentiments, but profit is behind it. A sinister figure from Lee's past emerges which complicates matters. This story sets a loose background for some of the bears' "fall from grace" that held a part in "The Golden Compass." The audience seems to be more geared towards teen readers and older as there are references made to sex - it is not consummated, but the yearning for it is baldly there. The climax of the story is also violent, which may not be surprising after His Dark Materials trilogy, but as this is shorter, it may seem more violent. There are several scenes lightly touching upon the close bond between a human and his/her daemon, but doesn't rehash the scientific explanation of it, of course. If read before the trilogy, readers may not grip exactly how close the bond is (since the trilogy emphasizes it) but gives warning as to possible ways it could be used in the future. "Once Upon a Time in the North" is a strong read for Philip Pullman, His Dark Materials universe and general fantasy-action fans of the non-elf/dwarf/orc type.

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