



Once Upon a Time in the North

Philip Pullman , John Lawrence (Illustrations)

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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.

Once Upon a Time in the North Details

Date : Published September 5th 2017 by Yearling Books (first published 2008)

ISBN : 9780399555442

Author : Philip Pullman , John Lawrence (Illustrations)

Format : Paperback 144 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Young Adult, Fiction, Science Fiction, Steampunk, Short Stories

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From Reader Review Once Upon a Time in the North for online ebook

Erin says

Do yourself a favor, and read this quick little story.

A fantastic little read in a very well presented format. Pullman has a command of language not to be missed. In this little tale we get a beguiling introduction to Lee Scoresby and his dæmon Hester, and who doesn't love Lee and Hester--a wry Texan with a heart of gold and his delightfully sarcastic companion.

A sample-- after crash-landing his newly acquired air ballon:

The pilot gingerly untangled his fingers from the rope he'd been holding on to, worked out which way up he was, shifted the tool box off his legs, wiped the oily water out of his eyes, and hauled himself upright.

'Well, Hester, looks like we're getting the hand of this,' he said. His dæmon, who looked like a small sardonic jackrabbit, flicked her ears as she clambered out of the tangle of tools, cold-weather clothing, broken instruments and rope. Everything was saturated.

'My feelings are too deep to express, Lee,' she said.

Scott Cooperstein says

So that's it. I've read every bit of writing that exists in Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials* series. It's a sad day for me. I loved the whole thing, and I wish there was more to it. I've seen the movie (regrettably), read the original three books, and now these two side-stories. I cannot recommend the series highly enough. To me it's superior to Lord of the Rings, Harry Potter, Narnia, ect. The whole concept of this universe fascinates me. Books like these are why I fell in love with reading. Thanks Mr. Pullman.

Maciek says

This short, little tale is a prequel to Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials*, set decades before the events in *Northern Lights*. Here we meet Lee Scoresby and the armored bear Iorek Byrninson, and learn how they came to know each other.

Once Upon a Time in the North is a lovely story, and the title suggests a homage to Sergio Leone's *Once Upon A Time in the West*.

But the influence does not end there. Pullman's writing is fantastic and he conveys the steampunk atmosphere of a small port town perfectly; at such little amount of pages he is able to convey excellent descriptive narrative, fast-paced action and the development of many characters. Not a word seems to be missing, and the story is an adventure! Everybody loves an adventure, and there certainly is one here.

This short tale is signature Pullman, and reminded me a lot of *Northern Lights*, my favorite of his trilogy, in the sense of adventure and wonderful atmosphere. On such small amount of pages the novella manages to

encompass everything important; the plot might sound simple, but it works on multiple levels. The story is a standalone which can satisfy both fans of *His Dark Materials* and newcomers to Pullman's world.

Pullman's writing draws the reader into the story, and its length is perfect for an evening reading session, in a warm chair, with milk and cookies. It was good to feel the cold winds of the north again; it made me want to read *Northern Lights* again. The volume is beautifully illustrated and contains a number of bonuses, such as photographs of Lyra's Oxford dissection and a board game, *Peril of The Pole*. Pullman has taken his time with writing this story, but he delivered splendidly.

it'chy says

just incredible;
the fantasy elements are a bit too much for me, though

Jayson says

(B-) 68% | Satisfactory

Notes: Its supporting characters are undeveloped, the story is unremarkable, and it expects familiarity with previous books.

Kirstine says

It's been ages since I reread *His Dark Materials*, so I don't have a clear image of Lee Scoresby in my head - and I don't remember his, surprisingly kickass, daemon Hester at all. I'm ashamed of this, she is an energetic, cussing delight.

I do remember being incredibly intrigued by Iorek and the whole idea of armored bears, and of course, I think we all wondered how on earth those two ended up as friends. This story does it justice, I think.

It's very short, but it tells a fulfilling and engaging story, with a lot of really nice moments for the various characters.

To be honest, I think it's too short. Not because it rushes anything (it's perfectly paced - any rushing is Lee's fault for apparently being a firm believer in not doing tomorrow what you can do today), but because Lee is a proper adventurer, a good man and a ridiculous risk taker - a worthy combination - and I'd read countless books about his adventures if they existed, but alas. I'm happy we got this much.

Elizabeth says

"Nice piece of oratorical flamboyancy." (--Hester)

This book was a gift. I *love* the size and shape of it, its compactness, the cloth cover, the way it fits so

perfectly with its companion book, *Lyra's Oxford*, which I perversely keep with my guidebooks rather than my other Pullman novels.

I am almost certain I would have liked the actual text better had I not been *consumed with jealousy* over the presentation. The story is less than 100 small pages long, directed at no obviously definable reader of any age, and is surely nonsensical in places to anyone who doesn't know His Dark Materials. For all the story's artistry it would not be considered publishable if it hadn't been written by, well, Philip Pullman. Yet because it is Pullman's, it is illustrated with beautiful woodcuts and appended with faked photographs of newspaper clippings, letters and an actual board game folded in a paper envelope in the back. I know that this beautiful little book was expensive to put together.

Lucky book. I am jealous.

It is mean and childish of me. And reduces my own pleasure in the reading, which should be great--I adore Pullman and this world of his. In spite of my jealousy, I want about five more of these beautiful little books with their discrete tales from the world of His Dark Materials so I can stack them up with the rest of my guidebooks.

Andrew says

Ah so many distractions - especially when really I should be getting on with reading books I set out to read, but I guess when books like *Once Upon A Time in the North* come along you can sort of forgive me.

This is another short special set in the world of His Dark Materials. This time it introduces us to Lee Scoresby and how he started on the path that would eventually lead him to Lyra.

The story is short not reaching 100 pages however it does set the tone for what is to follow. He is a man on principles if prone to gambling (after all that is how he won the balloon that got him to this point) and this is something that earns him the respect and support you will see being drawn upon in the Dark Materials books.

For a story this short as you can imagine it is not very deep or challenging but it is a fun read and is what it is - if you enjoy the series then this is a fun distraction.

Rebecca McNutt says

Lee Scoresby is my favourite character in the *His Dark Materials* series, so it was great to discover that he was the central character of one of the books. With adventure, fantastic travels and unpredictable magic, this book is one of the best fantasy novels I've ever read.

Cyndi says

A novella that introduces the characters used in the series. This makes me want to read the rest of the series. I hadn't realized it would be so interesting.

Carmen de la Rosa says

Parecía ilógico no leer este pequeño volumen después de haberme introducido en todo lo relacionado con La Materia Oscura, y una vez más quedé encantada. Estas novelas de Pullman son tan atractivas, que te llevan de vuelta a este mundo enorme y complejo. Agregue a esto que Lee Scoresby y su daemon Hester siempre han sido mis favoritos, y es un ganador. Fue genial descubrir que él era el personaje central de uno de los libros. Con aventura, viajes fantásticos y magia impredecible, este libro es una de las mejores novelas cortas de fantasía que jamás haya leído.

El material extra al final le da otra capa a la historia, conectando a Lyra con esta narrativa y ofreciendo algunos detalles de su vida desde los eventos de la trilogía. ¡Encantador!

Veronique says

It seemed illogical not to read this small volume after having consumed everything related to *His Dark Materials*, and once again I was charmed. These novellas from Pullman are so compelling, pulling you back into this huge and complex world. Add to this that Lee Scoresby and his daemon Hester have always been favourites of mine, and it's a winner :O)

The extra material at the end gives another layer to the story, connecting Lyra to this narrative and offering some details of her life since the events of the trilogy. Lovely! I cannot wait to see what Pullman gives her in the second Book of Dust.

Lau says

3.5

NO LEER ANTES DEL LIBRO #2

Una aventura de Lee Scoresby de jovencito, en la época en que recién comenzaba sus andanzas como aeronauta...y aún no sabía aterrizar el globo.

Tiene su primer encuentro con Iorek, –aunque realmente interactúan bastante poco– y vemos un poco más su personalidad de aventurero temerario, siempre cerca de la quiebra y desoyendo los buenos consejos de su daemon.

Ahora lo vi como una mezcla de Cowboy con Indiana Jones y un extra de embaucador, pero un embaucador con buenas intenciones y un alto sentido de la justicia. Sería un lindo personaje para que tenga su propia saga sinceramente.

Orient says

A nice short story to remind about the prehistory of "His Dark Materials"

Trish says

I'm currently re-reading **Northern Lights**, the first in the *His Dark Materials* trilogy. Not too long ago I also found out about the two companion books and this is the first.

This little cloth-bound beauty tells the story of Lee Scoresby, the hot-air balloonist that helps Lyra in the first volume, and how he became friends (the best of friends in fact) with Iorek Byrnison, the panserbjørn. It tells of old rivalries and a conspiracy that Lee has to fight and although we already know the ending to this story, it is very fast-paced and thrilling.

Making this little book even more special are the illustrations

as well as the board game that is included in a back pocket

Personally, I love it when an author has his whole world shaped and fleshed out, filled with loads of interesting places and characters and Philip Pullman proves here that his world is indeed very much alive and detailed.
