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Opening extract from

The Golden Compass: The Story of The Movie

Written by

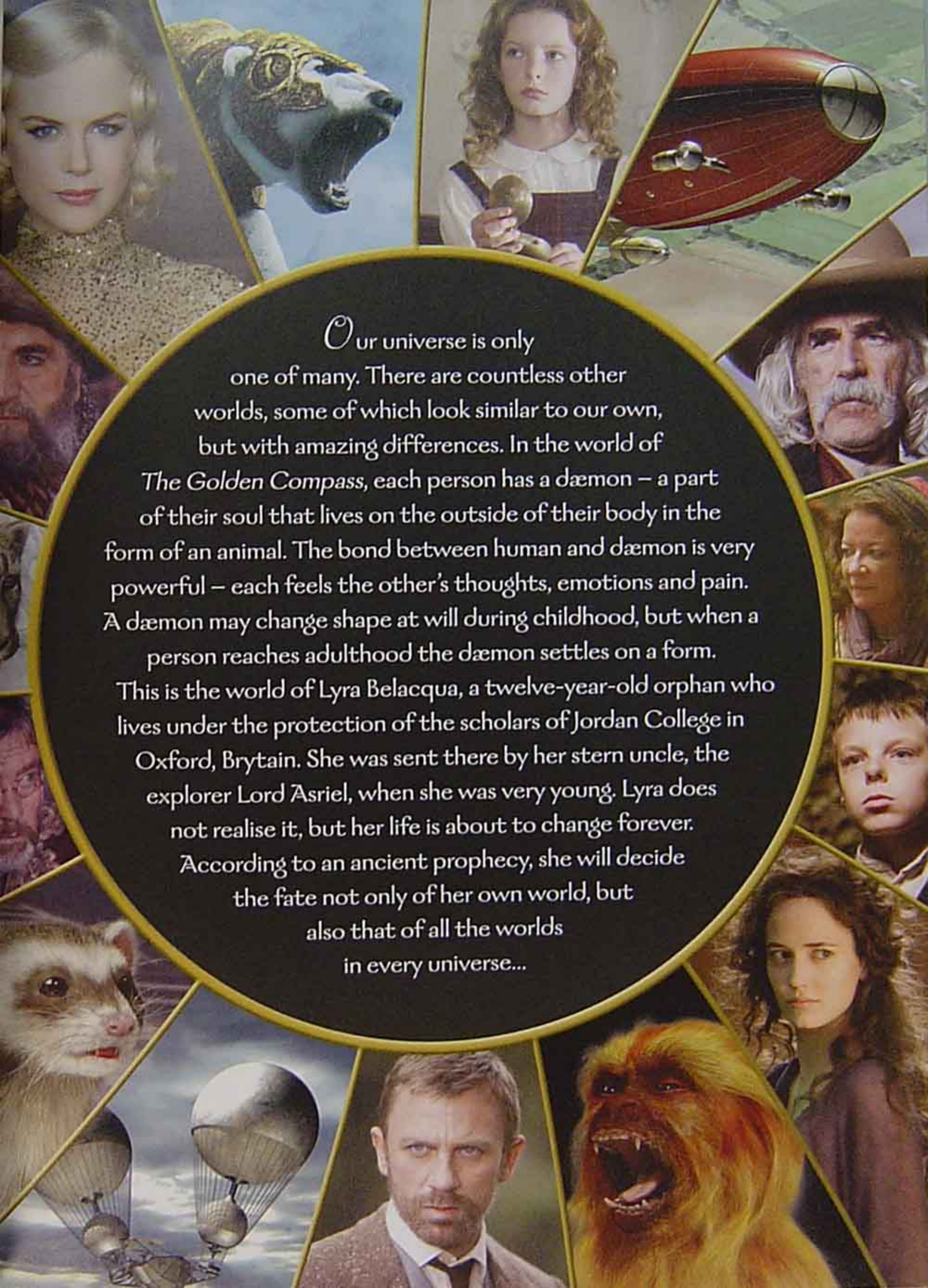
Paul Harrison

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Our universe is only one of many. There are countless other worlds, some of which look similar to our own, but with amazing differences. In the world of *The Golden Compass*, each person has a dæmon – a part of their soul that lives on the outside of their body in the form of an animal. The bond between human and dæmon is very powerful – each feels the other's thoughts, emotions and pain. A dæmon may change shape at will during childhood, but when a person reaches adulthood the dæmon settles on a form.

This is the world of Lyra Belacqua, a twelve-year-old orphan who lives under the protection of the scholars of Jordan College in Oxford, Brytain. She was sent there by her stern uncle, the explorer Lord Asriel, when she was very young. Lyra does not realise it, but her life is about to change forever. According to an ancient prophecy, she will decide the fate not only of her own world, but also that of all the worlds in every universe...

Lyra crept down the dusty corridors of Jordan College, through the Dining Hall and towards the mysterious Retiring Room. She was in a curious mood, and had decided to investigate the special chamber used by the Jordan scholars. She wasn't allowed in the Retiring Room – which was reason enough for her wanting to see what it looked like. As always she was accompanied by her dæmon, Pantalaimon, or Pan for short. "Stop clomping about or we'll get caught for sure!" Pan whispered.

"They're making too much noise to hear from the kitchen," retorted Lyra. "Stop being a coward."



Fra Pavel did not intend to take no for an answer. When the Master had gone, Pavel poured a white powder into the wine that had been left for Lord Asriel. Satisfied, he left.

"He's trying to poison Uncle Asriel," said Lyra, horrified.

"You don't know that," replied Pan, still thinking of the spanking they would receive if they were caught.



Any further discussion was swiftly abandoned when Lord Asriel himself strode into the room with his snow-leopard dæmon, Stelmaria. He poured himself some wine from the decanter and was about to take a drink when Lyra burst from the wardrobe and knocked the glass from his hand. Surprised and shocked, Asriel grabbed Lyra's wrist.

"It's poisoned!" she cried. "I saw the man from the Magisterium pour powder into it."

Asriel studied the decanter of wine, but there were footsteps approaching the room.

"Back in there," he said pushing Lyra and Pan back into the wardrobe.



