



The Golden Compass

PG13 -2007

Overview

Lyra Belaqua, living in Oxford's Jordan College, is not but a young girl living among scholars. Her world may seem diverse, from physical embodiments of souls that take the shape of an animal, but similar with people around you to become friends and enemies. She is thrown into a perilous adventure when she overhears a conversation of an extraordinary microscopic particle, Dust. This particle is said to unite different worlds, and is feared by many who want to destroy it forever. As Lyra is flung into the middle of this horrible struggle, she meets wondrous creatures both big and small, and villains who are not what they seem. Gobblers, that kidnap children, will turn out in the most unexpected places. And a magical compass of gold that will answer any question if one is skilled enough to read it. *(IMD.b)*

1. When Lyra tries to "read" the alethiometer, Farder Coram tells her, "You mustn't grasp at the answer. You must hold the question in your mind, but lightly, like it was something alive." Is this principle applicable in our own lives? How does it compare to, say, the way we pray or seek guidance from God? What does it mean for a question to be "alive"? Is the answer "alive"?

2. What is the nature of "authority" within the Church? What role, if any, is there for pastors, elders, deacons, priests, bishops, etc.? How is the nature of leadership described in, say, the Pastoral Epistles (1 & 2 Timothy, Titus)? What should we do when leaders overstep their bounds? How can we know when they have done this?

3. What is the relationship between God's authority and that of his followers? Why does Lord Asriel oppose the "Authority"—that is, the God—of his world? Many people in our world say they are spiritual or believe in God but they do not believe in organized religion or the Church; does anyone in the film believe in the "Authority" but not in the "Magisterium"? Would it make any sense for them to do so?

4. How does Lyra "master" her fear? How does Iorek model courage for her? How does she model it for him? Who has modeled courage in your life?

5. The leaders of the Magisterium say they are doing harmful things to children and others "for their own good." Does the film really give you the impression that they believe this? Would it be more effective if it did or didn't? When have you done things for someone else's good that might not have been so good after all?

6. The villains of the film are very thinly disguised members of a church-like organization which seeks to stamp out "heretics" and decorates its buildings with Christian icons. Did you get the impression that God and the church were taking a hit in this movie? Discuss.