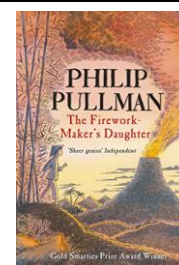


**Title:**

The Firework Maker's Daughter.

**Author:**

Phillip Pullman

**Blurb:**

Lila longs to become a Firework-Maker like her father. Against his wishes, she runs away to the volcano, Mount Merapi, to find Royal Sulphur, a task all Firework-Makers must complete. Lila meets many challenges during her journey up the mountain. Her encounter with the Fire-Fiend determines once and for all whether she will become a Firework-Maker.

**Author background:**

A former teacher, Philip Pullman was born in Norwich in 1946 and worked in Oxford. His father died when he was seven and his fondest memories from childhood are of his grandfather. Pullman started writing for adults but it is his children's books that have been the most popular. The first book of the *His Dark Materials* trilogy is called *Northern Lights*. It was published in 1995 and the books have since been turned into a play, a film and a television series.

**Cultural background:**

The book does not mention when or where it is set, only that it is '*A thousand miles ago, in a country east of the jungle and south of the mountains*'. The buildings, clothing, food and natural environments suggest that it is set somewhere in Asia. Fireworks were invented in Asia around the early 9th century and people believed they scared away evil spirits.

**Literary terms:**

**Fairy tale** - A fairy tale is a traditional story for children that usually involves magic, imaginary creatures, royalty and fantasy elements. There is often a happy ending. For example, Lila becomes wise and happy by the end of the novel.

**Fantasy** - Fantasy stories involve magic, good and evil characters and adventures. For example, this book features a talking elephant and a Fire-Fiend called Razvani.

**Onomatopoeia** - Words that sound like their meaning, such as '*sizzling and bubbling*'.

## BOOK ANALYSIS

**Sensory descriptions** - Authors use the five senses of hearing, sight, smell, taste and touch to help readers imagine the scene. For example, the book describes *'the occasional rumble from the mountain, which was so deep that she felt it through her feet'*.

**Third person** - A text that is written about a character or object, such as *'Lalchand had the uneasy feeling that he'd been tricked'*.

### Vocabulary examples:

Harsh, barren, cavern, grating.

### Benefits for our children:

This book gives the children a real insight to life in another place to which they may not be familiar. The setting is unidentified, but the influence is far-eastern conjured by the jostling streets full of rickshaws and food stalls and the jungle full of dangerous noises and ferocious tigers. Huge credit goes to Pullman for treating his young readers with respect as they begin to grapple with some thought-provoking, yet challenging themes such as gender inequality, family bereavement and betrothals. Whilst also fueling themes of courage, determination, perseverance, and friendship and crucially the powers they hold for our main character, Lila. Not only is the book filled with a compelling, dangerously exciting storyline, but also rich vocabulary and exposure to new cultural language to expand their minds about the world around them.