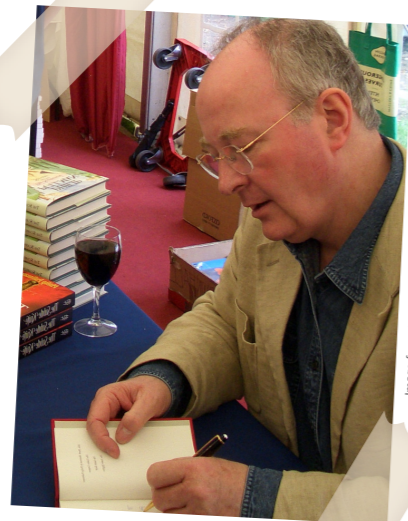


The Firework-Maker's Daughter

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

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.



Philip Pullman



Historical context

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.

Characters

Lila

Lila is a talented, confident character who knows what she wants and is willing to work hard and take risks to achieve it. Her impatience and bravery get her into trouble because she rushes off to find Razvani without knowing what she needs to become a Firework-Maker.

Lalchand

Lila's father, Lalchand, loves her very much but at first wants her to get married rather than becoming a Firework-Maker like him. He refuses to reveal the secret of becoming a Firework-Maker but soon realises that he may have made a mistake.

Chulak

Chulak is a loyal friend to Lila. He is a clever, cheeky servant who provides much of the humour of the story. He guards Hamlet, the talking elephant, and the two go on an adventure to help Lila with her mission. Though he means well, his lack of wisdom sometimes gets him and other characters in trouble.

Razvani

Razvani is a frightening Fire-Fiend who Lila meets inside the volcano. Lila travels to his Grotto to get the Royal Sulphur that all Firework-Makers need. He adds a touch of magic and fantasy to the story, striking fear into the fire-imps who live in the volcano with him.

Settings

Lalchand's workshop

The story starts in Lila's father's workshop. This is where Lalchand makes fireworks and teaches Lila how to make them. When Lila was a baby, Lalchand built a crib in the corner of the workshop so she could watch him work.



Mount Merapi

The volcano is where every aspiring Firework-Maker must go. They have to enter the Grotto of Razvani in the heart of the volcano. Lila sets off on the difficult journey to the volcano to prove that she can become a Firework-Maker.



The Palace

The King lives at the palace with his pet elephant, Hamlet. When one of the main characters is suspected of committing a crime, they are locked up inside the palace.



Themes

- courage
- determination
- friendship
- respect
- trust



Story timeline

These are some of the key chapters in the novel. When you read the chapters, use the questions as starting points for discussion.

Chapter 2

Lila sets off on an important journey. What do you think of her decision? Do you think she will succeed? Why?

Chapter 3

Lila meets some strange characters. Should Lila be afraid of them or not?

Chapter 4

Chulak meets a goddess. How does she help him?

Chapter 5

Lila reaches her goal. What are her first impressions of this location?

Chapter 7

The King watches several amazing firework displays. Which is your favourite and why?

Lalchand changes his mind about Lila's future. Do you think he makes the right decision?

Language

This novel uses sensory descriptions to vividly describe the setting. The reader is encouraged to '*listen to the fizz and crackle of the gunpowder*' and to imagine how the '*fire flared and the sparks danced*' in Lalchand's workshop. Onomatopoeia is used to bring the jungle environment to life. For example, the animals '*gibbered*' and '*screached*', while the fire-imps '*clanged*' and '*clashed*'.

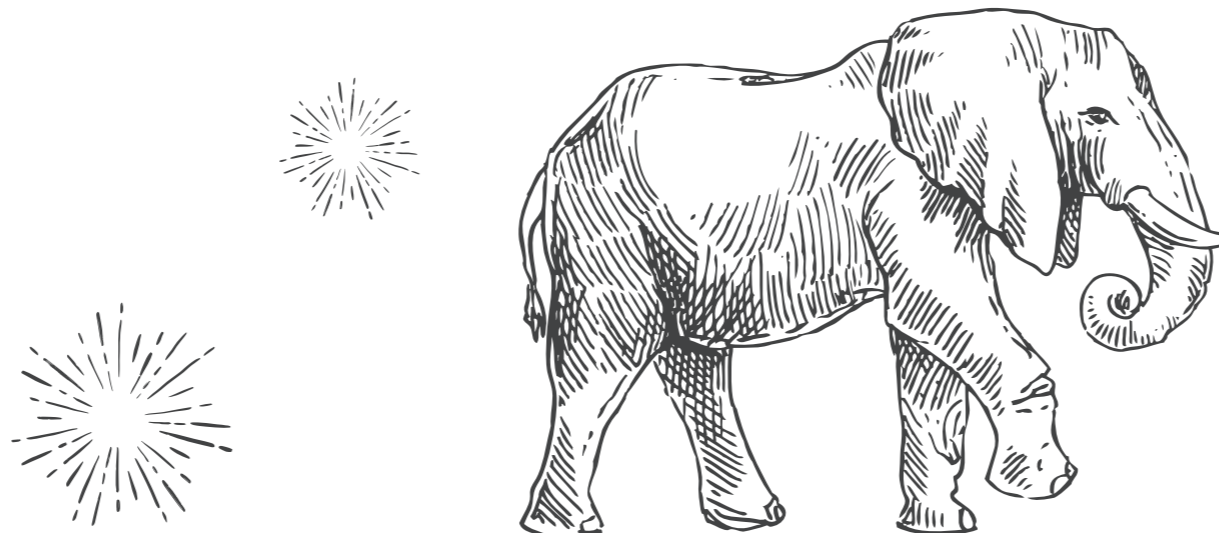
Structure

The Firework-Maker's Daughter is written in the third person, focusing mostly on Lila but also her friends Chulak and Hamlet. The novel is fast-paced and full of action. It has some features of the fantasy genre and some features of a fairy tale.



Modern fairy tale

The Firework-Maker's Daughter has some features of a fairy tale, such as fantasy elements, royal characters and a clear structure but it gives the fairy tale a modern twist. Lila is a headstrong, confident female character who does not want the traditional fairy-tale ending of getting married. She is an active character who takes charge of her future.



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*'.

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*'.

