

Recently you sent me a very beautiful letter, which was a joy to receive. You might think that I had a special place, perhaps a brightly coloured folder, in which to keep your letters. And I would, except that my inexhaustibly delicious wife has put your letter somewhere so safe that we no longer know where it is! My advice to you is never to let your mother put your things away - safely, so to speak. That's the last you'll see of them until as you sit in the shade of a towering fig tree in the afternoon sun, with a blessing just as cute and cuddly as you are sitting on your knee, your mother, granny, will produce all your stuff and say: "Do you remember this, darling?" and you will look at her blankly because this will only be the second time you have seen it, the first being as it moved from wrapper to safekeeping!

I'm told you are a Harry Potter fan. I've never read any Harry Potter. Judging by the last book you have to be a weight lifter to succeed at reading Harry Potter. Perhaps the publishers run introductory *How To Pick Up Your First Harry Potter Book* courses for beginners like me. I am, however, a Lyra fan. If you like weird things like parallel universes, armoured bears, daemons, witches and so on, then Lyra is for you. She is in a trilogy written by Philip Pullman called *His Dark Materials*. Now I shall tell you a story about this.

Last Christmas, The National Theatre adapted the three books into two plays. I went to see them with Emily and a young boy called Kit. Our seats were in the front row of the circle in the Olivier Theatre. If you sit there, you can see that there is a big drop down to the seats below in the stalls. In fact, they ask you not to put things on the ledge in case they fall down and injure people sitting below. Well, about three quarters through the second play there is a ghostly scene. The lights are very dim and there are lots of dead people, phantoms and spectres wandering around the stage, as well as eerie music. Suddenly, a mad person sitting behind me, affected by all this, climbed over me and then started to climb over the ledge as if to throw herself into the audience below. Instinctively, I grabbed her and held on tight. She was quite small so there was no way she could escape. I mean there's nothing like a suicide to ruin one's evening at the theatre, I'm sure you will agree. After a couple of minutes of this, with my wondering what on earth was I going to do now, she turned around to me and hissed "LET ME GO". Guess what? She was an actress, part of the show, and she was supposed to be doing all this dare devil stuff. There was much merriment from the people around me and I felt a bit of a tit. Well, actually, I felt more like a bleeding albatross but I defend myself by pointing out that it all happened very quickly, I really did think that she was a lunatic about to plunge to her death but she wasn't going to do it on my patch!

That's enough excitement for one day

Look after yourself, and your mama