

Chapter 1

A thousand miles ago, in a country east of the jungle and south of the mountains, there lived a Firework-Maker called Lalchand and his daughter Lila.

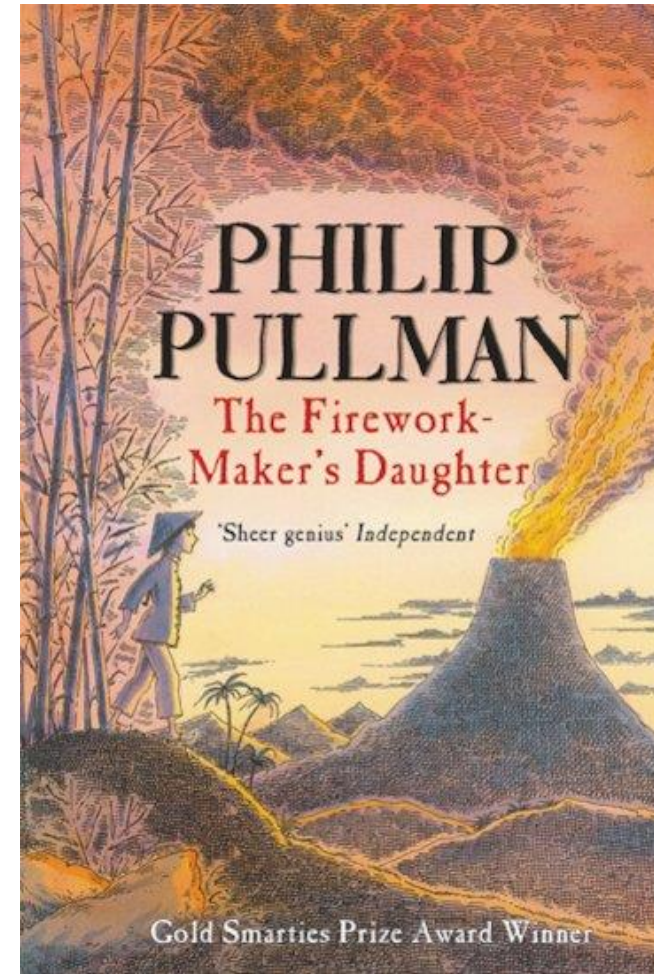
Lalchand's wife had died when Lila was young. The child was a cross little thing, always crying and refusing her food, but Lalchand built a cradle for her in the corner of the workshop, where she could see the sparks play and listen to the fizz and crackle of the gunpowder. Once she was out of her cradle, she toddled around the workshop laughing as the fire flared and the sparks danced. Many a time she burnt her little fingers, but Lalchand splashed water on them and kissed her better, and soon she was playing again.

When she was old enough to learn, her father began to teach her the art of making fireworks. She began with little Crackle-Dragons, six on a string. Then she learned how to make Leaping Monkeys, Golden Sneezes, and Java Lights. Soon she was making all the simple fireworks, and thinking about more complicated ones.

One day she said, 'Father, if I put some flowers of salt in a Java Light instead of cloud-powder, what would happen?'

'Try it and see,' he said.

So she did. Instead of burning with a steady green glimmer, it sprayed out wicked little sparks, each of which turned a somersault before going out.



'The Firework-Maker's Daughter'

Philip Pullman

1. What sort of words are fizz and crackle?
2. What is the firework-maker's name?
3. What is the daughter's name?
4. How many Crackle Dragon's fit on a string?
5. Describe Lila in three words. Explain why you have chosen each word.

Keep Calm and Carry On

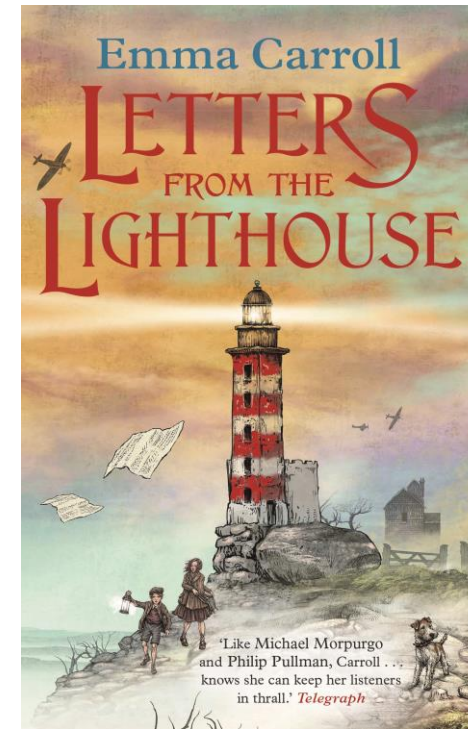
We were halfway through the news when the air raid started. It was a Friday in January: we were at the Picture Palace for the 6pm showing of *The Mark of Zorro*. All month the Luftwaffe had been attacking us, their bombs falling on London like pennies from a jar, so the fact they couldn't hold off for just a few measly hours made me hate the Germans that little bit more.

The cinema trip had been my sister Sukie's idea, as most things were. We were all in need of cheering up that evening: after the tea we'd just eaten at home it was a wonder we were still alive.

'It's like brains,' Cliff, my eight-year-old brother, said, lifting the pan lid to show us. It was probably only minced meat and potatoes, but you never knew with Mum's dinners, especially the ones you had to reheat when she was working late. And Cliff relished gory details, being the sort who'd pick scabs off his knee just to see what was underneath.

'Well, you *never* get scabby knees, Olive,' he once said to me, like it was the biggest character flaw in the world. The truth was I preferred reading books to running about in the street. I didn't see it as a weakness, either.

But we had to eat the horrid supper, of course. No one chucked food away with a war on, not even stuff that resembled brains. You simply pinched your nose and swallowed hard, then glugged down a glass of water. Afterwards, Sukie, being the eldest and in charge, said we deserved a trip out. She'd already seen the film last week with a friend.



'Letters from the Lighthouse'

Emma Carroll

1. When is the story set? How do you know?
2. What does 'bombs falling on London like pennies from a jar' suggest?
3. What is the name of the cinema the siblings visited?
4. Write a synonym for 'relished'.
5. Did the siblings enjoy their dinner? Explain your answer.

CHALLENGE: Why has a colon been used after evening in paragraph 2?