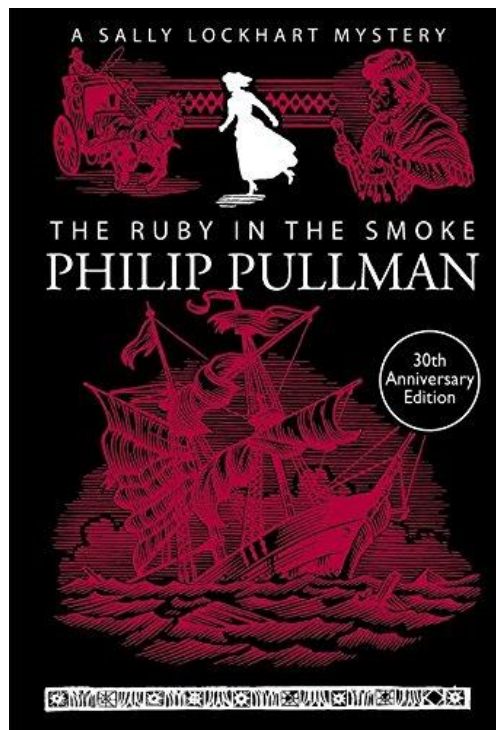


## The Ruby in the Smoke by Philip Pullman

As the story begins, we are introduced and attached to the character of 16 year old Sally Lockhart, who inadvertently finds herself entwined in a world of mystery and intrigue. After the death of her father, who drowned at sea, she begins to receive mysterious anonymous notes, which encourage her to find out about "The Seven Blessings". She soon learns that The Seven Blessings is dark and dangerous as it sounds. However, she finds herself in a difficult situation because she decides to leave her aunt, whom she hated, and is now homeless without any money to support herself, in Victorian London. To make life more difficult, most people she meets don't want to become associated with her, so don't prove to be helpful, making it inevitable for Sally to solve the puzzle. Sally then seeks friendship with Mr Fredrick and Mr Bedwell, who are willing to help her and she discovers that everything she knew about herself was not all as it seems and evil Mrs Holland wants Sally dead. So in order to save herself and her friends Sally must always be one step ahead and do whatever is necessary for her survival.

The author writes in a way that only divulges the relevant information. This creates a fast paced book, which contains elements of betrayal, murder, excitement and adventure, this heightens the reader's sense of curiosity and panic, allowing them to become connected with the characters, making it a real page-turner!



Book Review by Amani