

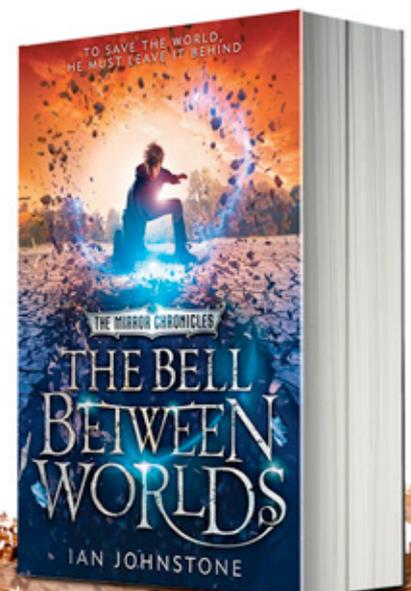
THE MIRROR CHRONICLES

THE BELL BETWEEN WORLDS



DISCUSSION POINTS/QUESTIONS

- The author opens the novel with a presentation of the ramshackle Gablety Row. With its labyrinth of ancient passageways you could imagine this as a setting described by Charles Dickens. What makes the reader aware that Sylas Tate is actually living in modern times rather than in earlier times?
- In many teenage novels parents are often in the background of the story or noticeably absent like Sylas' mother. Why do you think this is a common factor and in 'The Mirror Chronicles' does this provide any advantages for the writer and his plot line?
- Discuss Mr Zhi's motto 'Do not fear what you do not understand' and how this proves to be sound advice for Sylas during his time in the Other world.
- Following the first terrifying Ghor chase involving Sylas and Simia, Ian Johnstone introduces 'The Mutable Inn' and the magical blowing of vivid green smoke shapes. What does the author gain by inserting this brief interlude at this particular point?
- The bell is central to the linking of the two worlds in the novel. Explore the symbolic meanings of bells throughout different cultures. Discuss the symbolism that adds any extra dimensions to this story.
- What do The Epigraphs (head notes) presented like a banner at the beginning of each chapter add to the reading of each chapter?



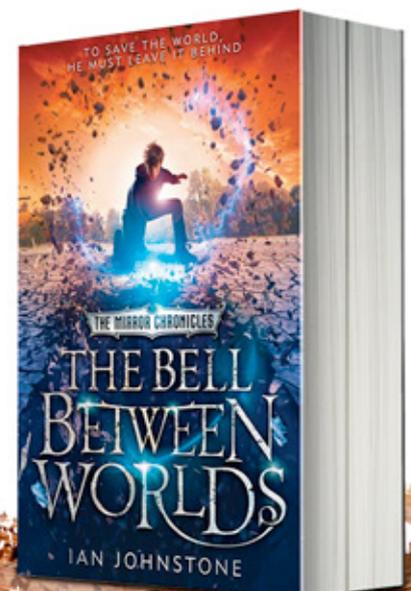
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DISCUSSION POINTS/QUESTIONS

- In sharp contrast to the paradise of the mill and gardens in their unspoiled state, the author presents the Barrens, a shocking landscape of utter devastation that reflects the stark realism of war. How does this place impact on Simia and on Syllas as they journey across it?
- How does the reference to 'The New World symphony' (and ideally listening to this music) increase the emotional content of / add to Paicion's and Syllas' magical presentation of Nature's own symphony in Chapter 36?
- Outline with reasoning who you see as the ultimate hero of this first book in the trilogy of 'The Mirror Chronicles'. Is it Syllas who discovers his true Essenfayle powers and who on each occasion when faced with the deadly enemies of the Suhl uses his powers to save others? Or is it Espen, who risks his reputation and possibly sacrifices his life to ensure The Glimmer Myth becomes a reality?



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DISCUSSION POINTS/QUESTIONS

- In the novel the mysterious Glimmer Myth suggests that we each have another half to our soul. How does that idea make you feel? What do you think this other part of our soul might be like? What do you think the author might be trying to achieve by introducing this idea?
- We are told that the strange magic of Essenfayle involves controlling the connections between natural things. Why do you think this is the chosen magic of Syllas and the Suhl? Do you think it has any parallels in our own world? How would you like to use Essenfayle?
- The novel describes takes place in two worlds that are both similar and different. What do you think are the main similarities and differences? Which world do you prefer and why? Does the Other world tell us anything about our own?
- The bell is revealed to be a portal to another world. Can you think of any other portals in fiction? What is your favourite and why? If you had to invent your own magical portal, what would it be?

