



## The Bell Between Worlds

*Ian Johnstone*

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## **The Bell Between Worlds** Ian Johnstone

Half of your soul is missing.

The lost part is in the mirror.

And unless Sylas Tate can save you, you will never be whole again.

Sylas Tate leads a lonely existence since his mother died. But then the tolling of a giant bell draws him into another world known as the Other, where he discovers not only that he has an inborn talent for the nature-influenced magic of the Fourth Way, but also that his mother might just have come from this strange parallel place.

Meanwhile, evil forces are stirring, and an astounding revelation awaits Sylas as to the true nature of the Other. As violence looms and the stakes get ever higher, Sylas must seek out a girl called Naeo who might just be the other half of his soul – otherwise the entire universe may fall...

## **The Bell Between Worlds Details**

Date : Published January 1st 2015 by HarperCollinsChildren'sBooks (first published May 20th 2013)

ISBN : 9780007491216

Author : Ian Johnstone

Format : Paperback 512 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Childrens, Middle Grade, Young Adult, Adventure, Magic

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## From Reader Review The Bell Between Worlds for online ebook

### Elaine says

An amazing new saga commences in this first book of 'The Mirror Chronicles'. It is one of the most eloquently written novels I have ever read; the carefully chosen language paints detailed scenes in the reader's imagination, enticing you to journey with syllabus Tate from his home in Gabblety Row to explore life in the 'Other'. In this alternative reality Science and technology are replaced by the ability to manipulate and harass natural powers, forces and materials. Here, such inborn talents are seen as 'normal', not magical.

In this fast paced, enthralling tale, Sylas escapes horrendous monsters, meets new friends, has action-packed, thrilling adventures and has his knowledge, beliefs, understanding and tenacity tested to the full.

Anyone who enjoys adventures involving children with developing powers and skills in an alternative reality will be captivated by this stupendous story. If you're looking for an author like Terry Pratchett or JK Rowling, look no further - the plot, language, characters and events in this are at least equivalent. A breathtaking, epic adventure that is a pleasure to journey through, I have no hesitation in highly recommending this fantastic novel to children and adults alike and hope to read the sequel soon!

Thanks to the author, publisher and NetGalley too,  
for letting me read an ARC in exchange for an honest review.

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### Nancy Steinle gummel says

The Bell Between Worlds by Ian Johnstone. is a first reads win and I'm giving my honest opinion. This book is a fantasy that's a little different in that mirrors and lights force the issues. Sylas Tate lives with his strict and harsh uncle since his mother died. One day Sylas meets Mrs. Zhi. He opened a variety store. he invites Sylas in and shows him a flight of birds. they're on mirrors. Mr. Zhi teaches him to use his imagination and the birds take flight. He gives Sylas a book and a scrap of paper. This is the clue to translate the book. The next night the bell rings calling him. a Ghor hound is chasing after him. He meets up with a fellow named Expend who help him flea from the hound. Expend gets caught up by the hound and tells Sylas to run.-

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### Rita says

3,5\*

Sylas é um rapaz um pouco isolado, que vive sozinho com o seu desagradável tio, desde a suposta morte de sua mãe. Os seus dias passam-se, sem grande novidade, a fazer recados e outro tipo de tarefas, até ao dia em que se desvia do seu caminho, intrigado com uma nova loja, vinda do nada: a Loja das Coisas. E é aí, nessa loja, ao conhecer o misterioso Sr. Zhi, que tudo muda para Sylas.

Num piscar de olhos, a sua vida corriqueira fica para trás das costas, tornando-se possuidor de um livro muito especial de runas, o Samarok, e começa uma desenfreada fuga, de estranhas e maléficas criaturas, que o leva a um Sino que o transporta para um mundo paralelo.

*O Sino Entre Mundos* é um livro de fantasia, dirigido a um público mais juvenil, mas capaz de agradar e entreter leitores mais maduros.

A história é interessante e bem conseguida e desenrola-se a bom ritmo: há muita acção, aventura, magia e mistério pelo meio, um conjunto de ingredientes no mínimo cativante, e melhor que isso, encontram-se bem equilibrados.

No entanto, não é uma história muito fácil de entrar de início, pois são-nos introduzidos muitos conceitos novos, criados pelo autor, nomes de espécies de criaturas, de certos grupos de pessoas, de vários tipos de magia, de categorias de praticantes da mesma, etc. Por isso dei por mim um pouco perdida em certos momentos, algo que me acontece muito raramente, o que me faz achar que o autor pode ter caído no erro de criar demasiados nomes para várias coisas e/ou tê-los introduzido na história, sem muito cuidado, praticamente uns atrás dos outros. Felizmente, apesar de levarem o seu tempo a interiorizar, todas estas palavras novas, inventadas, acabam por fazer sentido.

As personagens destas crónicas, acabam por ser algo simples, ou são totalmente boas, como Sylas e a sua amiga Simia, ou totalmente más, como o vilão Thoth e seus fieis seguidores, não há nenhuma que seja mais dúbia ou neutra, mais realista.

Estamos, portanto, perante uma clássica história do bem contra o mal, cujos traços gerais não nos trazem grande novidade, mas que tem as suas particularidades: como os diversos tipos de magia, o transporte entre mundos através de um sino ou círculos mágicos, os mitos e lendas presentes, como o Mito do Reflexo, que me parece de particular interesse, e que basicamente diz, que cada pessoa tem alguém no outro mundo que é o seu reflexo e que juntos se complementam. Pegando neste último detalhe, quero ainda dizer que gostei particularmente da ideia dos dois mundos desta obra serem o espelho um do outro: quando num é dia, no outro é noite; se num é Inverno, no outro é Verão; se um tem indústria e ciência, o outro é mais natural e com magia.

Posto isto, fica a intenção de continuar a seguir as Crónicas do Espelho e saber mais sobre a recém apresentada Naeo, descobrir o que sucedeu a à mãe de Sylas, Bowe e Espen, e claro, saber para onde irão Sylas e os seus companheiros e que rumo tomará a sua grande aventura.

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### **Louie Reynolds says**

Imaginative, intriguing and finely written. Great start to a new fantasy adventure trilogy. Very much looking forward to book 2.

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### **Arielle Walker says**

There's nothing particularly wrong with this book at all - other than a tendency to over-describe, which is not unusual, and the fact that it starts off incredibly derivative (it does get more original as the plot moves on) - I simply think that there are children's books that transcend genre and age, and ones that don't. This is the latter. My ten-year-younger self would have absolutely adored this book, though, especially the take on mirror selves and the ravel runes. Infinitely better than anything like City of Bones.

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## Micheline says

\*\*An ARC was provided by Harper Collins UK Children's in exchange for an honest review\*\*

When a book gets compared to big name works and titles that have come before it, it can really be a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it gives the reader an idea what kind of story to expect and it can get people's attention where they might not have gravitated towards a certain book otherwise. On the other hand though, comparisons set the bar pretty high - sometimes, impossibly so. When I stumbled upon **The Bell Between Worlds**, I was intrigued right away. Just by the cover, you can tell that it's children or middle-grade high fantasy - which we all know I love. Then, reading the blurb as you probably did just now, I became simultaneously giddy & terrified. *C.S. Lewis & Philip Pullman* are both beyond epic in their own rights as the authors of the *Narnia Series & His Dark Materials* respectively. Could **The Mirror Chronicles** really hold its own among such heavy-weights? After reading **The Bell Between Worlds** I can easily say that it did for me - and then some!

**The Bell Between Worlds** is the first installment in **The Mirror Chronicles** and it introduces us to a world so richly imagined & so completely fresh that it was hard to believe that this was author *Ian Johnstone*'s first book. In **The Bell Between Worlds**, we're introduced to Sylas Tate - a very lonely young boy in the care of his uncle since his mother passed away some years before. Sylas's life hasn't been easy but he's managed to make the most of it thanks to his inane imagination & creativity. Then, on a day like any other, Sylas discovers a strange new little shop selling a variety of oddities and 'things'; little treasures that stir the imagination and seem almost magical. And the wizened shopkeeper, Mr.Zhi seems to know an awful lot about Sylas...he even hints that he believes Sylas will embark on an adventure of his own soon. Before long, something seriously magical does happen; through a truly incredible and kind of scary set of circumstances, Sylas travels to an '*other*' world. A world that is very similar to our own but also strikingly different because in this world, real magic exists. It is in this '*other*' world that Sylas will embark the quest of a lifetime!

There are a few things I look for in children's/middle-grade fantasy. World building is probably one of the biggest determining factors in fantasy reads of all ages to be honest so let's start there. In children's/m-g fantasy, I like the descriptions of a magical new world to be rich and vivid without weighing the story down - simple but effective. This may sound pretty do-able but in reality, it's not an easy task to achieve. To me, **The Bell Between Worlds** accomplished it wonderfully. The way this '*other*' world is introduced is equal parts inventive, awe-inspiring and exciting. I was literally sitting on the edge of my seat as it all unfolded before my eyes with a huge smile on my face! The end result is wholly unique and from that point on, I was hooked.

Once Sylas had crossed over into '*the Other*', I continued to be impressed by the beautiful descriptions and the magical world as it unfolded before my eyes. I felt that the magical system itself was really original and chock-full of potential. The characters were diverse and likeable - it was easy to feel for them and understand Sylas' desire to not only get to know them all but also to help them out. And that's the kind of protagonist Sylas is. Beyond his imagination and wit, he's also inclined to want to listen others, to understand and to try and help in any way he can. It's hard for someone like me not to connect an MC who's best trait is his imagination but Sylas is much more than that - and the more I got to know him, the more I wanted to spend time with him! His choice in friends once he crossed into '*the Other*' only sweetened the deal; they ranged from funny, mysterious and even conflicted but they all had one thing in common: a perfect mix of bravery and hope.

The dark side of this magical world was pretty creepy right from the word go. Sylas is being hunted but

he soon finds out that this whole world is pretty much under a reign of terror brought on by some sort of age-old and horribly powerful being and his army of hellish hound creatures. Throughout the book, you're always reminded that nowhere is safe, those hounds can smell out anything and anyone and they are everywhere.

The best part of it was that it seemed like we got a lot of information on the villains but since this is the first book, I can only expect that we'll be learning a lot more. I love it when authors take time to fully develop both sides of the spectrum, only because it makes the story feel more balanced to me. And I'm big on balance >.<

**The Bell Between Worlds** was a surprising, promising and exciting debut from author Ian Johnstone and I am already eager to get my hands on the sequel. There were a few details I'd hope would have been fleshed out a bit more before the end but it seemed obvious to me that they will be addressed in the next book(s). The ending was a bit abrupt too but when I read the final words I already knew I would be tagging along for however many more adventures Sylas needs to go on. I think the best part for me was that despite the fact that it is indeed in the same vein as stories like *Narnia & His Dark Materials*, **The Bell Between Worlds** didn't have any preachy underlying religious themes. There were solid life lessons and good morals instilled in here but it was done with a light touch and in very good taste. **The Mirror Chronicles** promises to be an addictive and compelling series for the young and young at heart!

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### **Patty Zuiderwijk says**

Verhaal: 3/5

Karakters: 3/5

Schrijfstijl: 3,5/5

Herlezen: Zou kunnen, mocht ik ooit deel 2 tegenkomen.

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### **Anna (BooksandBookends) says**

*I received a free copy of this book by the book's publishers via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.*

Sylas Tate never thought that a trip from Gabblety Row to post letters for his uncle could change everything he ever knew. A trip into the mysterious new shop, 'The Shop of Things' and meeting a certain Mr Zhi alters everything Sylas ever thought possible. A humongous bell chiming and a magical journey could make Sylas finally see that his true destiny is in another world...

This was an amazing read that entralled me from the first page and there's not many books that do that! I quickly became immersed in Johnstone's worlds and enchanting characters. Sylas' plight is immersive and I rapidly felt myself being drawn to his unfair situation. The story is packed with well paced adventure, thrills, fantasy and excitement! A book that easily conjures images of the wonderful worlds Johnstone has created and their equally magical qualities.

This was a real page turner and I think this book will appeal equally to adults and children alike. If you enjoy reading books akin to the great fantasy writers such as J. K. Rowling, Terry Pratchett etc. you need look no further. The language used is exceptional and vividly brings the story to life.

I cannot recommend this book enough to you, and I'm sat here eagerly awaiting the second book in the series. I for one, cannot wait to see what is next for the young Sylas Tate...

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### **Kushnuma says**

**I received a free ebook copy from NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.**

The Bell Between Worlds is book 1 in the Mirror Chronicles series.

I quite enjoyed reading this as it reminded me of the Chronicles of Narnia at some points. However, sometimes I thought the story was going too slowly. I did like most of the characters and I liked the idea of the Ravel Runes and Nature being involved.

Overall, a good read.

Thank you to NetGalley and Harper Collins UK, Children's for providing me with a copy.

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### **Susan says**

A glorious epic fantasy in the grand tradition of CS Lewis and Philip Pullman, and a major publishing event, The Mirror Chronicles will take you into another world, and on the adventure of your lifetime...

Half of your soul is missing.

The lost part is in the mirror.

And unless Sylas Tate can save you, you will never be whole again.

Sylas Tate leads a lonely existence since his mother died. But then the tolling of a giant bell draws him into another world known as the Other, where he discovers not only that he has an inborn talent for the nature-influenced magic of the Fourth Way, but also that his mother might just have come from this strange parallel place.

Meanwhile, evil forces are stirring, and an astounding revelation awaits Sylas as to the true nature of the Other. As violence looms and the stakes get ever higher, Sylas must seek out the other half of his soul – otherwise the entire universe may fall...

This book had a lot to live up to; it has been compared to Phillip Pullmans brilliant series Dark Materials, that I still crave more of, and classics such as Narnia. When that is done, it gives expectations that are often broken and not fulfilled. This time it's true, this is a really good read and a series I am going to enjoy and

hope the wait is not too long for the next one in the series.

The Mirror Chronicles introduces us to Sylas Tate, who is living with his uncle in Gabblety Row, the description of which leaves me wanting to explore this place much more, and especially the Shop of Things, that he enters and in which he discovers some amazing things.

I don't want to spoil this read for new readers, so that is all I will say about this, but over the course of the next few hours everything will change for Sylas and he will find himself drawn by the bell between worlds to the other world, different but similar, and an adventure that will see Sylas begin to learn more about himself, his past and his mother that he thought was dead.

Well written, descriptive, the author has beautifully built these worlds and the characters in such a way as to illustrate to us the reader, where we are going and who with. The book sweeps us along with plenty of action and interesting creatures and beings that make up the worlds with vivid description.

Magic, good versus evil, and friendships that hold the story together and make this such a good read.

Sylas learns he has the ability to read runes and to do magic, that might be my only little quibble, it was all too easy, and it would have been nice to see this ability slowly brought to light and developed, rather than suddenly he has them.

This is an amazing read, and I would recommend it to anyone that enjoys fantasy tales.

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### **Cindee says**

This book was ok it was really boring and so very slow paced it was a chore to finish it the writing was fine also the synopsis gave away too much it lost all mystery and was just boring. The characters were just fine the writing was good but the story was way too slow paced for me to stay interested. While I was reading I

found it a chore to read it was just so slow I will more than likely not read any more of this series it is just not that interesting to me. So overall this book was just ok and nothing more not interesting in continuing.

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### **Trelawn says**

DNF at p.119. Not a bad book by any means just not grabbing my attention at all. I can see why it appeals and it is well written but I just had to keep forcing myself to pick it back up

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### **Vincent Ripley says**

Book review will be posted on my blog first..... <http://mrripleyenchantedbooks.blogspot.com>...

This book is definitely the belle of the ball - it is taking fantasy literature literally by storm this year. It is a book that, in my opinion, should certainly see Ian's name in the fantasy hall of fame.

After flying through the first chapter I had a tingling feeling that this book was going to be really special and I was not wrong. The more that I read, the more I became totally immersed in an amazing world of painted words - it is a story that's breathtaking and an absolute joy to read. I feel that it will be a book that you will reflect on for the rest of your life. Just like when you first read the Hobbit or Sabriel or took your first stroll along the story path of Terry Pratchett. It's a reading journey that will take you to another world and one that you will remember for a very long time. Fantastically exciting to read, but you may feel a great sense of loss when it has ended, as I did.

Sylas Tate leads a lonely existence since the death of his mother - it is not a happy life. However, an figment of his own imagination draws him to a strange shop called The Shop of Things. There he has an encounter with an even stranger owner, Mr Zhi, who from that point onwards whips the story up into a thrilling, action-packed ride. The tolling of the giant bell draws both him and the reader into another world known as the 'Other'. Here he discovers that, not only does he have an inborn talent for the nature-influenced magic, but that his mother might also have come from this strange parallel place.

Meanwhile, evil forces are stirring and an even more astounding revelation awaits Sylas regarding the true nature of the Other. As violence looms and the stakes get ever higher, Sylas must seek out a girl called Naeo who might just be the other half of his soul – otherwise the entire universe may fall...

This story is beautifully written and captured through fantastic imagination. Ambitious in its telling, it is has a whole host of characters that you will fall in love with. Humour and humanity, compassion and despair, dark and light - all are classic attributes found within this story. It will leave your senses and emotions running on autopilot whilst the timely action sequences will leave you in awe.

One particularly fantastic part of the story can be found in the chapter entitled 'Nature's Song'. It is told like a classical symphony with the conductor controlling the elements to the tune of Antonín Dvořák's "New World" Symphony. This is the best chapter that I have read in a very long time - magical, vivid and exhilarating. It was so good that I actually read it twice and enjoyed it equally as much the second time.

Half of your soul is missing. The lost part is in the mirror. And unless Sylas Tate can save you, you will

never be whole again.

This is a debut epic masterpiece which is due to be published in June. Quite simply, it is possibly the best book that I have or will read this year. I really can't wait to see what comes next....

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## Melanie says

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### 3.5 stars

**Thank you HarperCollins Australia for the copy. No compensation was given or taken to alter this review.**

*'You are able to see the world as it is promised for us.'*

While I could cherry pick out the flaws easily, there were several aspects of *The Bell Between Worlds* that I appreciated to a great extent. However, I'll have little qualm and banter here about the synopsis. For me, I felt like it either gave away too much or the plot was too slow. Regardless, a little less in the synopsis would've been beneficial.

Sylas Tate has had a pretty monotonous and uneventful life so far, all until the day he met Mr. Zhi. Once Sylas finds himself thrown into another world- also known as the Other- he learns things beyond his imagination. Beyond what he dared to believe. And maybe even discover the strange occurrences about his mother. A journey filled with light and dark. Good and evil. Imagination and magic, a story about a young boy to save the world. This novel left me somewhat mildly pleased.

One of the key points that were enjoyable was the characters. All personalities were unique and sensitive, in the essence that they could feel so vivid and alive. For Sylas, his perceptiveness and straight mindedness shone. While he had an unfortunate and messed up past, he pushed away this and got on with his task and kept a determined attitude. At times, I did feel that he came out as oblivious to situations but, I guess that's just what builds a character to be more real as he is a little younger than the age I'm prone to reading.

Our relationships with supporting characters were another cogent part. Two that I cannot to thinking about are; Sylas and his uncle. Virtual opposites, Sylas is full of youth, imagination and brightness. His uncle, on the other hand leads a pessimistic life filled with sneering remarks and demands. The way these two character interacted was fascinating and in many lovely way, pitiful. Sylas and Simia was another connection I adored. Being a MG genre novel, this was not necessarily a chemistry romance. It was a new born friendship that endured evenly and steadily as the novel progressed. Whether this develops into something more in the next instalment, I'm still very impressed that Ian Johnstone could create a believable friendship so quickly, besides, MG romances rule if they take long book lengths to spark.

For the next part, I can not exactly pin point whether it's positive or negative. Both have its perks. The writing was beautiful, descriptive and illusional. However. I could feel myself becoming bored as it dragged

on and on, sometimes pointless. This basically lead to be skimming half of the novel. Fortunately enough, the perk was the world building. One of the best worlds I've seen constructed so magnificently and creatively. I could feel myself engrossed and living in the Other world.

Overall, *The Bell Between Worlds* is a fantastic MG debut novel that had magnificent world building and connections. A little less detail in the synopsis and writing would have made this book much more readable and less predictable. Recommended to lovers of *The Golden Compass*.

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### **Suze Lavender says**

Sylas is living with his unkind uncle. His mother died and he misses her terribly. She was the light in his life. When one day he stands in front of a new shop in town he's being introduced to a world of magic. It immediately changes his life completely. Soon a bell is calling him and reaching it isn't easy. There are plenty of obstacles on his road to get to it. The bell will take him to the Other, a geographically similar world to his own, but otherwise very different. Here Sylas learns about magic and how to use it. He has a mission and with the help of several new friends he's trying to accomplish it. It isn't an easy task as they're being hunted and they constantly have to be on the run. Sylas has to succeed, otherwise it could mean the Other will completely fall into the hands of an evil force.

*The Bell Between Worlds* is a fantastic adrenaline rush. I could hardly keep up with my eyes as I constantly wanted to read faster and faster. I had to know what would happen next. I enjoyed this book very much. The world building is really good, the main characters are both fun and interesting and Ian Johnstone knows how to write. There are so many action packed scenes that there is hardly any time for the reader to breathe, which worked really well for me as it felt like I was running with the main characters. It made me want to go on and on until the end of the story. I liked the magical creatures, the way the magic works and the philosophy behind nature and the essence of things.

I admire Ian Johnstone's cleverness, he's definitely a skillful writer. Every word is right and all the scenes are well thought through. I could picture everything that happened in the story so well that it sometimes felt like I was watching a movie. I'm happy there is a second part as I'm not ready to say goodbye to Sylas and his friends yet. If you like fantasy I think this is a must-read. It's been a long time since I've read such an amazing book about magic. I can't recommend this story enough, it's a true gem and a wonderful read for both children and adults.

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