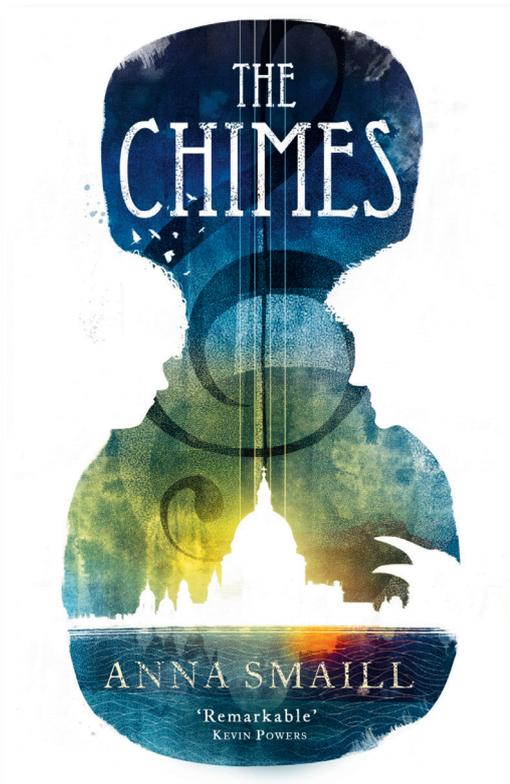


Reader's Guide



The Chimes
is Anna Smaill's first novel.

The Chimes Anna Smaill

Sceptre

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About the author

Anna Smaill was born in Auckland, New Zealand in 1979.

She left formal musical training to pursue poetry and in 2001 began an MA in Creative Writing at the International Institute of Modern Letters (IIML) at Victoria University of Wellington.

Her first book of poetry, *The Violinist in Spring*, was published by Victoria University Press in 2005.

She lived in London for seven years where she completed a PhD at UCL with Mark Ford and lectured in Creative Writing at the University of Hertfordshire.

The Chimes

Anna Smaill has created a world where music has replaced the written word and memories are carried as physical objects. Memory itself is forbidden by the Order, whose vast musical instrument, the Carillon, renders the population amnesiac.

The Chimes opens in a reimagined London and introduces Simon, an orphaned young man who discovers he has a gift that could change all of this forever. Slowly, inexplicably, Simon is beginning to remember – to wake up. He and his friend Lucien will eventually travel to the Order's stronghold in Oxford, where they learn that nothing they ever believed about their world is true.

Discussion points

In what ways does a sense of music permeate the novel?

The Chimes is set in the future, but is it 'futuristic'? How does it differ from other dystopian fiction you may have read, such as *1984*?

How much of the city of London did you recognise in the novel?

How does Anna Smaill capture the feeling of constant amnesia?

Can you imagine such a scenario ever happening in London?

Could you describe *The Chimes* as a love story?

Themed reading

Herman Hesse *The Glass Bead Game*
Philip Pullman *His Dark Materials Trilogy*
Bruce Chatwin *The Songlines*

Useful links

www.themanbookerprize.com
<http://www.annasmaill.com/>
<http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/features/anna-smaill-interview-when-she-thought-music-was-her-calling-writing-struck-a-chord-10044159.html>