THE

# S E C O/N D

BLIND

S/ON

AMYHARMON

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR

## THE SECOND BLIND SON

### The Chronicles of Saylok #2

A lost girl and a blind boy discover their greatest strength is their bond with each other in a beguiling fantasy by the New York Times bestselling author of The First Girl Child.

An insidious curse is weakening the Norse kingdom of Saylok, where no daughters have been born in years. Washing up on these plagued shores is Ghisla, an orphaned stowaway nursed back to health by Hod, a blind cave dweller. Named for a mysterious god, Hod is surrounded by prophecy. To Ghisla, he's a cherished new friend, but to Hod, the girl is much more. For when Ghisla sings, Hod can see.

Unable to offer safe shelter, Hod urges Ghisla onward to become a daughter of the temple, where all the kingdom's girl children have been gathered. But because of a magical rune, the two cannot be separated, no matter the time or the distance.

Now, subject to a ruthless king, Ghisla enters a desperate world of warring clan chieftains and catastrophic power struggles. Uncertain whom to trust, their bond strained by dangerous secrets and feuding loyalties, Ghisla and Hod must confront the prophecies that threaten Saylok while finding a way to save each other.



Publication date: July 20, 2021 Genre: Historical, Fantasy, Romance Recommended for ages: +16



## ATTENTION THIS DOCUMENT INCLUDES SPECIFICS YOU MIGHT WANT TO AVOID UNTIL YOU HAVE FINISHED READING THE BOOK.

BOOK CLUB KIT – THE SECOND BLIND SON WWW.AUTHORAMYHARMON.COM

#### **CHARACTERS**

Do you think the characters were realistically portrayed? Describe these character's personalities.

Which character do you relate to most?

Who did you like the least? Why?

Did a specific character remind you of someone you know?

How does the way the characters see themselves, differ from how others see them? How do you see the various characters?

Ghisla is described as "cold as ice and no one Hod meets seems to trust him. Do you agree with other's assessments of the characters? Do you view them differently?

Though Ghisla seems to think others dislike her, she is favored by the king and Hod. What draws people to her?

What did you think about Hod and Ghisla's relationship? Why are they a good match?

Were there any moments where you disagreed with the choices of any of the characters? What would you have done differently?

What is motivating the actions of the characters in the story?

What past influences are shaping the actions of the characters in the story?

Which of the character's customs were interesting to you?

Did you find anything strange?

Do the main characters change by the end of this novel? Do they grow or mature? What events trigger such changes?

What were the dynamics of "power" between the characters? How did that play a factor in their interactions?

## **QUOTES**

Discuss the following quotes.

"Fear called out to fate, and fate always answered."

"She'd found most thoughts were not usually kind. Not because people were unkind, necessarily, but because feelings were unguarded and . . . true."

Were there any particular quotes that stood out to you? Which ones and why?

## STRUCTURE, WRITING & GENERAL DISCUSSION

What did you think of the overall structure of the novel?

Have you read *The First Girl Child*? How did *The Second Blind Son* compare to you? What did you think of the concurrent storylines?

Were you engaged immediately?

How did the world-building enhance the story?

Did the Kingdom of Saylok seem realistic?

What did you think about the timeline and point-of-view? Did you prefer Ghisla's perspective or Hod's? How did you feel reading it?

Which emotions conveyed the story?

Did the story keep you interested?

Would you say this is a plot-driven book or does the story unfold slowly with a focus on character development?

Were you surprised by the plot? Or did you find it predictable?

As the climax approached, were you able to distinguish what Hod's role may be in the upcoming events?

How credible did the author make the setting and dialogue?

What scene did you find was the most pivotal for the book? How do you think the story would have changed had that scene not taken place?

What scene resonated most with you personally in either a positive or negative way?

Did certain parts of the novel make you uncomfortable?

Were there any scenes that made you laugh?

What were your thoughts on Ghisla's songs?

What is the significance of the title? Did you recognize it in the book?

Would you have given the book a different title? If yes, what is your title?

What surprised you the most about the book?

Based on the prologue, did you expect the ending or were you surprised?

Did you think the ending was appropriate?

How would you have liked to have seen the ending go?

Have any of YOUR views or thoughts changed after reading this book?

What do you think about the cover of this book? Would you change it? How?

Has this book changed you, broadened your perspective?

What did you learn from, take away from, or get out of this book? Did your opinion of the book change as you read it? How?

Did this book leave any lingering questions you're still thinking about?

If you were making a movie of this book, who would you cast?

Though this story is set in the past, how do the issues the characters face relate to today?

How original or unique was this book?

If you could hear this same story from another character's point of view, who would you choose?

## Discussion questions by chapter

#### **Prologue**

We are greeted with the desperation of a mother. Why do you think it was so important for her to receive a blessing for her son from the highest keeper?

What traits about the boy made Ivo soften and give further blessings?

#### Chapter 1

Can you imagine having senses as sharp as Hod's or being around someone who does? Would it be uncomfortable for you?

#### Chapter 2

Arwin believes "our weaknesses and our strengths are the very same thing. Two sides of the same sword." How can this be?

Did you know the stories of Baldr and Hod, Odin's sons, before reading? Why are the names Baldr and Hod significant to Hod of this story?

#### **Chapter 3**

What must the experience of "seeing" for the first time through Ghisla's songs be like for Hod? Can you imagine how you would feel?

When we meet Arwin, the tone changes completely. Why do you think he is so hostile? Does he have a right to be?

#### **Chapter 4**

Arwin warns Ghisla to guard her songs. Why do you think this is? How could people use her gift against her?

Hod and Ghisla will now be connected by a rune. What do you think this means for their future? Do you predict this connection will spell trouble for them?

#### **Chapter 5**

Ghisla is given her new name and though she doesn't hate it, she compares it to wearing Hod's old clothes. Do you think our names help shape our identity? Or are they "only a name"?

Why do you think this chapter ends on a note of doom and despair? Ghisla is not able to grasp the cause.

How does the scene with the king studying each girl make you feel?

The girls spend their first night in the temple and Ghisla wonders why she thinks of Hod, but chooses not to reach out to him. Do you understand her reasoning for not trying?

#### **Chapter 7**

In this chapter, we encounter old friends from a new perspective. Do these scenes make you see anyone differently, if you have read *The First Girl Child* prior?

Hod is trying to forgive himself and Arwin for sending Ghisla away. Do you think the decision to send her away will be best for everyone in the long run? Why or why not?

#### **Chapter 8**

Ghisla is challenged by her lack of alone time while living in the temple. Would this way of life be difficult for you? Why do you think the keepers live in constant companionship?

Ghisla finally shares her songs at the temple. Ivo tells her not to fear her voice. Do you think he knows the truth about her?

#### Chapter 9

When Ghisla speaks to Dagmar we can sense her fear about the future. She believes she has no choice about her fate. Do you suspect that will change? If so, why?

What do you think is the significance of Ghisla hearing the thoughts of others when they touch her? How will it help or hurt her in the future?

#### Chapter 10

Why do you think Ghisla's thoughts are protected from the king, but not vice versa?

Can you predict why Ivo may call on Hod in the future?

#### **Chapter 11**

Big changes and revelations happen in this chapter. What do you think will happen to the girls without Bayr's protection?

Do you think Ghisla should tell Ivo about the conversation she overheard as Hod suggested? Why or why not?

#### **Chapter 12**

Were you surprised by the king's actions in the night? Why do you think he made a spectacle of Bilge?

What do you think Ivo meant by, "Mayhaps, if the blind god wills it, you will return home too?" What was the purpose of Ivo and Ghisla's conversation?

Finally, we have the reunion we have been waiting for. Though brief, how did you feel reading about Ghisla and Hod's encounter?

Can you imagine seeing someone for the first time in years and feeling as if your love had only grown? Why was this possible for the pair?

#### **Chapter 14**

Can you imagine being able to share your memories with someone, as Ghisla is able to with Hod? Is there a specific memory you would share?

Why would Ivo question Hod's character?

#### **Chapter 15**

Ghisla and Hod's love and actions are creating a predicament for them. Can you predict what may happen?

Do you think Hod's discovery of Desdemona's runes will impact the future of Saylok? How so?

#### **Chapter 16**

Arwin declares the truth of who Hod's father is. Did this shock you? What will it mean for Hod?

What was your reaction to Ghisla's punishment?

#### **Chapter 17**

Ghisla loses many things in this chapter. Which loss did you feel the most? Why?

Why do you think Ivo is leery of Hod? What might Hod do to hurt Saylok?

#### Chapter 18

Do you think Hod must do as Arwin says or are his ramblings those of a delusional old man?

Were you able to decipher Hod's plan with the treasure and the Norsemen? What do you think he will do?

#### Chapter 19

There are whispers a betrothal may be in the works with the meeting in Berne. Who do you think the king plans to offer, if anyone? What is his motive?

Do you think it was a mistake for Hod to let his desire for Ghisla be known to Gudrun?

What was your reaction to Ghisla's secrets being revealed by Gudrun?

Would you be able to be as calm as Ghisla was during this situation?

#### Chapter 21

Can you imagine the restraint it took for Hod to deny himself the opportunity to speak to Ghisla outside? Would you have been able to resist if you were in his shoes?

What do you suspect is going through Hod's mind as he touches Ghisla's hand?

#### **Chapter 22**

Can you foresee how Hod will get out his alliances with Gudrun and Banruud? Will he and Ghisla ever find peace?

#### **Chapter 23**

Why might Ivo not be able to see Hod? Is this why he doesn't trust him?

Do you find it strange that Banruud trusts Hod completely, while others do not, and he hates Bayr though others love him? What does this say about Banruud?

#### **Chapter 24**

Ghisla unknowingly gave Hod his sight for a brief time. What was your reaction to this? Did you think that might happen as Ghisla was blind herself?

Hod says, "it is better to be blinded by love than by the runes," and he believes the keepers are blinded by them without seeing the reality in front of them. Does this remind you of anything in life? What are some things that blind us?

#### **Chapter 25**

Bayr's return is a joyous moment for everyone at the temple. Does this scene translate differently for you from Ghisla's perspective, opposed to Alba's in the first book?

Discuss your feelings as the North King inspects the supplicants. Would you have been able to stand his inspection as the girls did?

#### **Chapter 26**

Can you imagine Ghost's turmoil as she finally shares the secret she has kept for many years?

How do you think Ivo feels as he realizes so much of what he's seen and interpreted has been a lie?

Hod acknowledges "he could endure the end. But he could not fail." What would failure look like or mean? What is his primary mission?

As Banruud listens to the chieftains complaints, can you imagine why he would still be compelled to be king though most people are against him?

What is Ghisla's purpose in telling Dred that Bayr isn't Banruud's only son?

#### Chapter 28

With so much uncertainty, can you see a way out for all of the characters as battle nears?

#### **Chapter 29**

How strange and disorienting must it be for Hod to use Ghisla's eyes in battle? Discuss this scene.

#### Chapter 30

Of all the people who wanted the king dead, do you think the one who brought him to his end was ideal? Why or why not?

Discuss Hod's mission being accomplished, though slightly different than he envisioned, as he crowns his brother king.

#### **Epilogue**

Why is it difficult for Hod to grow accustomed to happiness?

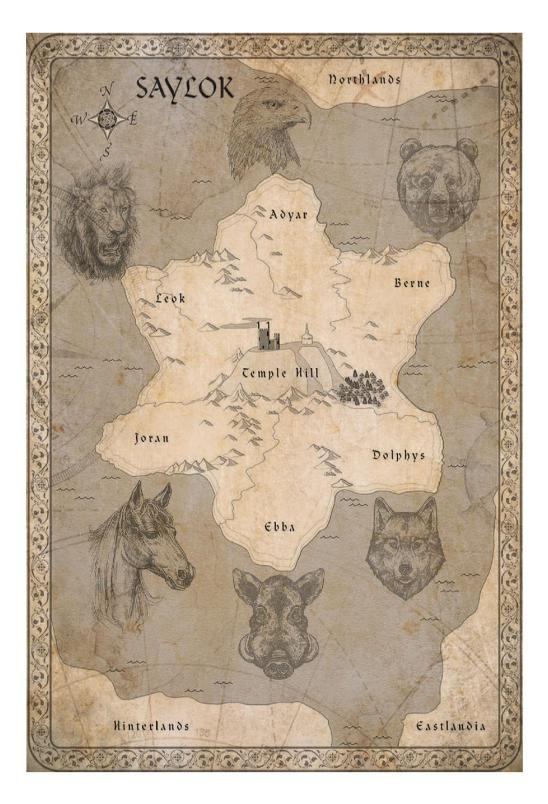
Do you think Ghost will come to trust Hod?

What do you think the future of Saylok will be?

Discuss the brothers' newfound relationship.

Discuss the author's note.

## Saylok



## BOOK CLUB KIT – THE SECOND BLIND SON WWW.AUTHORAMYHARMON.COM

