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# Sigrun's Secret

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Editor's Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

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Sigrun Bjornsdottir is a 15-year-old Icelandic girl living in some undefined historical period. Her father is a trader and her mother a visionary and healer. She has a brother named Asgrim. Sigrun's mother suffers from sinister and ambiguous dreams about dark invaders. These dreams seem to be fulfilled when a stranger named Halfgrim turns up, accusing Sigrun's father of stealing his father's heritage.

In recompense for the supposed theft Sigrun's father is forced to undertake a three year exile, taking Sigrun and Asgrim with him. Sigrun is thus separated from Ingvar, a boy who has been a close friend and with whom she is now in love. Sigrun's mother is left behind, too weak to travel. The family settles in Yornvik, where against all expectation life is not too bad ? Sigrun begins to make a reputation for herself as a healer. But Halfgrim breaks the bargain and comes hunting for Sigrun's father. The story now revolves around the conflict between the avenger and his intended victim.

The characterisation of Sigrun and Ingvar is particularly strong. The reader is able to identify closely with Sigrun's struggles, as she gains in confidence. At the age of 15 she is delivering babies single handed and she helps a former slave, Maria, who is mute to speak. It would have been easy for Jensen to make of Maria nothing but a token of disability, whose role is merely to highlight Sigrun's virtues. Instead Jensen makes Maria a credible and independent character in the narrative.

This book has a complex narrative ? it is sometimes necessary to backtrack and check how we got to where we are - and uneven pace though it soon picks up again.

Running Order:

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