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# Second Sight



## Synopsis

Washington, D.C., 1864: In a city that's weary of war and eager for entertainment, Joseph and his father's mind-reading act has become the toast of the town. Even President Lincoln comes to see Joseph demonstrate his amazing mental powers. It's all an elaborate hoax, of course, but Joseph is enjoying his fame. Then he meets Cassandra, a young girl who really does have second sight—the ability to foretell events. And she's having terrifying visions about the president. Someone is plotting to murder him. But who would believe such an accusation? It's up to Joseph and Cassandra to interpret the visions, expose the conspiracy, and save Lincoln's life!

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Grade 5-8—Blackwood weaves an absorbing tale of espionage, conspiracy, and political intrigue. Set in Washington, DC, in 1864, the story focuses on Nicholas and Joseph Ehrlich, a father and son who develop a mind-reading act using a secret coded alphabet. They become successful performers who skillfully trick audiences into believing that they have extraordinary powers. Through their show-business career, they become acquainted with John Wilkes Booth and other political activists. Eventually Joseph meets Cassandra Quinn, a girl who seems to have true powers of clairvoyance. Through her second sight, she senses that something terrible is going to happen to President Lincoln, and Joseph becomes involved with her in trying to prevent a catastrophe. It is at this juncture that Blackwood begins to twist history with some surprising results. This is a well-researched, engrossing story grounded in historical detail. Many true historical figures interact

with the fleshed-out fictional characters that move the story along. Overall, the narrator's conversational, candid asides are refreshing and entertaining, but at times they do interrupt the narrative flow. This is a minor drawback in an otherwise gripping tale that could be used as a springboard for some interesting class discussions. --Renee Steinberg, formerly at Fieldstone Middle School, Montvale, NJ Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Blackwood, whose novel *The Year of the Hangman* (2002) was set in an alternate-history world, follows the outline of history more closely here--up to a point. In fall 1864 Joseph and his father appear on the Washington stage in a skillfully performed mind-reading act. Their success eases the family's poverty and leads to Joseph crossing paths with fellow actor John Wilkes Booth and with President Lincoln, whose wife is attracted by the boy's supposed clairvoyance. Although their act is based on a verbal code, Joseph comes to believe that Cassandra, a girl who lives in the same boardinghouse as his family, actually does have psychic abilities. When she foretells the shooting of President Lincoln in a theater box, Joseph feels compelled to take action. The narrator's distinctive persona is that of an author who addresses the reader directly from time to time to explain what he is doing and, in some cases, why. Some readers will find this fascinating, while others will simply want to get on with a compelling story, which speeds along to a climax that few will forget. Pair this with Anna Myers *Assassin* (2005). Readers looking for more factual information about Booth may want to try James Cross Giblin's excellent *Good Brother, Bad Brother: The Story of Edwin Booth and John Wilkes Booth* (2005). Carolyn Phelan Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I really liked the author's style in this historical fiction book. It's not a typical narrative style. The narrator tells the story directly to you, as if you and the narrator are sitting in the room with characters, invisibly watching. It's very interesting. I don't think I've ever read a book quite like it. This is actually an "altered" or "alternate" history book, as what actually happened is changed. The main character Joseph, is involved in a mind reading act in Washington DC in 1865. It's merely an illusion, but then he meets a girl, Cassandra, who actually does have "second sight." She foresees that something terrible is going to happen to the president and she and Joseph must try to expose the conspiracy. It was a very suspenseful book, and though you felt pretty certain what the ending would be, you weren't quite sure. The author's style was amusing, and Blackwood has written other alternate

histories, which I would like to read.\*You can read all of my book reviews at my blog,[...]

As a Middle School Social Studies Teacher, I am interested in good historical fiction for students. I wish this type of fine writing was around when I was young and had hair. Gary Blackwood has created a intriguing tale of a young actor named Joseph Ehrlich who lives in Washington D.C. during the final days of the American Civil War. Joe and his father have a stage act in which they pretend to be mind- readers. In their adventures they meet a psychic who has visions of President Lincoln's death. In that context they come into the orbit of John Wilkes Booth. The book gives good background to the assassination plot. The conclusion is creative and entertaining. Young and old readers will enjoy this story.

Have you read Second Sight By Gary Blackwood? This wonderful story about President Lincoln puts you on the edge of your seat.....This little boy and his father learn to perform wonderful acts and try to change history! Read this book to try to save Lincoln too! I loved this historical Book and hope you will to!

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