

WHEN SIXTEEN-YEAR-OLD NAOMI WARD and her family head to a secluded cabin in Sparksburg, Virginia, for summer vacation and to heal the wounds of their past, they have no idea about the small mountainous town's violent history. But soon after arriving, Naomi starts to get a bad feeling—from the stares her family gets as practically the only Black people in town to frightening encounters with a local hellraiser who nearly runs her family off the road to the unyielding stench of the place, which only Naomi seems to smell.

After learning Sparksburg had once been a sundown town—where hundreds of Black people were brutally murdered without consequence when they were found within the city limits after sunset—Naomi's unease begins to make sense. But when the ghost of a young girl appears nightly at Naomi's bedroom window seemingly asking for help, and two teenage girls go missing, Naomi's unease becomes something more disturbing as she finds herself drawn into twin mysteries she's compelled to solve.

As Naomi gathers evidence of possible murders, she fears Sparksburg's dark history may be repeating itself. When the sheriff doesn't take Naomi's suspicions seriously and the ghost girl's pleas become more desperate, Naomi takes matters into her own hands, putting herself into the sights of a killer.

In this chilling mystery that draws inspiration from racial horrors of the past, one determined teen must confront her past trauma as a "missing girl" as she fights for her own survival and to save the souls of those long gone, in body if not spirit.

Gripping and triumphant, *Sundown Girls* is an important and unforgettable story of racial reckoning.

L.S. STRATTON is an NAACP Image Award-nominated author and former newspaper crime reporter who has written more than a dozen books under different pen names in just about every genre, from thrillers to romance to historical fiction. She currently lives in Maryland with her husband, their daughter, and their tuxedo cat. *Sundown Girls* is her first YA novel.

READ BY JADE WHEELER



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